Regional News

Wellington

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News

DIY fabulousness

Think you could bring a dazzling, diamond-dappled burlesque performance to the stage for under $1000? The Great DIY BurlesKiwi challenges competitors to get creative and serve fabulousness on a budget. Costume, props, music... it's all got to come together in one winning routine without costing a velvet-gloved arm and a stilettoed leg.

Now in its 12th year, The Great DIY BurlesKiwi will sparkle and shine at The Fringe Bar on the 6th of June. Once again, performers from across the motu will compete. This year's event stars Joe Withanee, Hester Hawthorne, Anubis Alkali, Natasha Halliday, Jonny Raven, and Blue Virtue from Wellington; Tenacious Venom [pictured], Mrs Jones, and Ryder Dailey from Palmerston North; Madam Magenta from Napier; Lance Briefly and Coco La Moane from Auckland; Angel Blush from Nelson; and Frankie Bordeaux from Christchurch.

The Great DIY BurlesKiwi is produced by The Pinot Sisters – Constance Craving and Mz Debbie Twinkle – who boast a combined total of 60 years in the entertainment biz.

"We love the creativity and unexpected materials that these amazing performers pull out of their heads for DIY", Mz Debbie twinkles. "We have had sequins made from beer cans, fans made of chip packets, and the Earth made from a Swiss ball and paint, just to name a few".

To name a few more... previous winners have stitched costumes together from papier-mâché, macramé, net curtains, and bed sheets, while 2025 Great DIY BurlesKiwi winner Delilah Deluxe took to the stage in a repurposed pair of stinky old denim jeans. She rescued them from the tip, washed them five times, and hung them on the line for three weeks before turning them into a stunning collection of gloves, underwear, skirt, and top. Delilah returns as a guest performance this year, with Constance as MC and Diamante Doll joining as a guest judge and performer.

Dilly Dallying

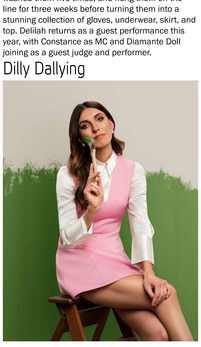

Photo by Mel Appleby.

From an unlikely start with her 200,000-follower Tumblr blog Meladoodle, Melanie Bracewell has become one of New Zealand's most successful and decorated comedians and writers.

Bracewell began her career winning Aotearoa's RAW Comedy Quest, 7 Days Comedy Apprentice Award, Breakthrough Comedian of the Year Award, Best Newcomer Award, and the prestigious Billy T Award in just three years before heading across the ditch with much of the same results.

When the pandemic hit, she set her sights back on social media, earning millions of views and followers with her impressions of former prime minister Jacinda Ardern. Bracewell made the move to Australia in 2021 to host a new, now award-winning TV show called *The Cheap Seats*, adding to her impressive CV comprising writing credits for *Wellington Paranormal*, *Time Bandits*, *The Rumours Are True*, and more.

With regular appearances on *7 Days* and *The Project*, Bracewell became a mainstay of New Zealand television. She has performed in Montreal, New York, and LA, and in 2024 toured the UK with her critically acclaimed show *Forget Me Not* before bringing a sell-out run of *Attack of the Melanie Bracewell* to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. She rounded out her year on *QI*.

Following her globetrotting and comedy ladder scaling, Bracewell will be *Dilly Dallying* for the foreseeable future on tour, bringing her shenanigans to Welly Opera House audiences on the 19th of June. Yet to write a proper bio for her show, Bracewell says that she is "back with a brand-new hour about returning to unfinished things later in life". Now, back to her sudoku.

Cover: The Marriage of Figaro, NZ Opera.

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The views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect those of *Regional News*.

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Love, lies, and chaos

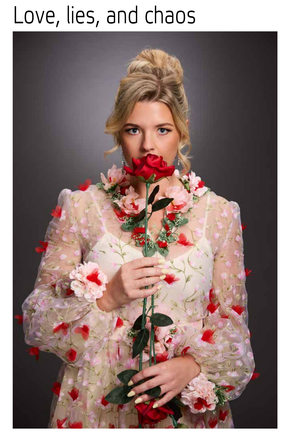

Photo by Sacha Stejko.

The Marriage of Figaro, originally written as a play by Pierre-Augustin de Beaumarchais sometime in the late 1770s before being turned into an opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte in 1786, has captivated audiences for over 240 years. Often described as the cultural precursor to the French Revolution, with its open critique of the aristocracy and depiction of intelligent servants outwitting their corrupt, titled masters, the opera is a comic whirlwind of love, lies, and chaos.

Set over a single day, *The Marriage of Figaro* follows the story of the clever valet Figaro and his sharp-witted fiancée Susanna as they attempt to navigate their wedding day while Count Almaviva tries to seduce the bride and exploit his 'aristocratic privileges', and other conniving characters do their best to prevent the marriage. What ensues is a web of mistaken identities, secret trysts, and upstairs-downstairs antics, as the household's women and servants band together to out-manoeuvre the nobility.

Described by John Daly-Peoples of the *NZ Arts Review* as "A dazzling piece of theatre with extraordinary voices and inspired acting", NZ Opera is bringing *The Marriage of Figaro* to Te Whanganui-a-Tara for the first time. Directed by Lindy Hume, with set and costume design by Tracy Grant Lord and lighting design by Matthew Marshall, the long-awaited operatic production will be performed in the ornate St James Theatre on the 17th, 19th and 21st of June.

Leading the cast as Count Almaviva is acclaimed New Zealand baritone Julien Van Mellaerts (*Così fan tutte*, *Madama Butterfly*, *La bohème*). Opposite him as the Countess Almaviva is soprano Felicity Tomkins, who won the 2024 Melbourne Opera Herald Sun Aria. James Clayton (*Star Navigator*, *Macbeth*) plays the title role of Figaro, joined by UK-based New Zealand soprano Sophie Sparrow (*The Railway Children*, *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*) as his bride Susanna.

Bringing Mozart's renowned, sophisticated masterpiece – composed at the height of his power – to vivid life is the esteemed musical director emeritus of the NZSO James Judd, conducting Orchestra Wellington and the Freemasons Foundation New Zealand Opera Chorus. Head along this June to witness the wit, revolutionary spirit, and brilliance of this enduring and masterful production.

Love and laughter

Hilarious, heartfelt, and a touch risqué, Wellington Comic Opera's newest touring showcase will take audiences on a trip through time, wandering through hidden gems from comic operas, musicals, and art songs.

In *Tell Me the Truth About Love*, WCO seeks an answer to the mystery that is love. Originally the Wellington Gilbert & Sullivan Society, it will harken back to its roots in this two-hour performance with several songs from the iconic duo featured in the programme, including numbers from WCO's recent productions of *Pirates!* (2023) and *The McCardo* (2025). Favourites from *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Merry Widow*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, and *South Pacific*, plus familiar cabaret numbers from Gioachino Rossini, Tom Lehrer, Cole Porter, Stephen Sondheim, Kurt Weill, and others will also take their place in the vast and varied programme.

While some of Wellington's finest singers and actors from opera and musical theatre bring the show to life on stage, the audience will be seated around tables enjoying afternoon tea and scrumptious nibbles. Savour songs and snacks along the tour, which leaps and bounds into Newtown Community Centre on the 6th of June and St Peter's Village Hall in Paekākāriki on the 7th of June.

Don't miss your chance to enjoy a funny, cosy, and intimate afternoon at *Tell Me the Truth About Love*.

Flip it!

If you've picked up Regional News over the past decade, you might've spotted that every year around this time, we close the office for two weeks so our staff can hibernate over winter or chase summer around the globe. In 2026, our break is set for the 1st to the 15th of June.

We don't want you to miss out on Welly's wonderful happenings while we're away, so we've created this bumper paper to cover what's on, where to go, and what to do for a whole month. The half you're holding now features events till mid-June. When you've finished, put the thing down, flip it, and reverse it to read about the next two weeks of goodness.

After our time off, we'll jump straight back into our fortnightly cycle. Our next regular edition of Regional News comes out on the 30th of June, and it's BAU from there. See you then!

Quick thinking, big swings

Emma Jean (left), Katy Borrows (right).

The first rule of Fight Club is you do not talk about Fight Club. That gets tricky when your words are your weapons. Returning for Round 3 of Fight Club on Thursday the 11th of June at The Fringe Bar is Pōneke's wildest comedy showdown. Facing off in a gladiator-style clash of improvised arguments are four of Wellington's hottest comedians: Ralph Hilaga, known for his commitment to the absurd; Lydia Sainsbury, bringing her high-octane chaos; Oliver Pol, with his anxious energy that commands the room; and Zach Mandeville, flexing his international experience and seasoned edge.

With no scripts and no safety net, just quick thinking, big swings, audacious arguments, and questionable logic, these four comedians – bringing a combined share of awards and NZ International Comedy Festival slots – will argue topics that are equal parts ridiculous and revealing. The crowd decide who wins, who loses, and who walks away with the bragging rights. Fight Club guarantees an evening embracing the bold and the unhinged, all within the competitive chaos of a boxing ring.

Brought to you by Flash of Jeanius Productions, your host is Katy Borrows aka Kath the Dominator, ringleader of the Underground Debate League and architect of the competition. Emma Jean aka Jeff the Ref will be the overly earnest referee, applying his highly specific and sometimes baffling standards with total conviction.

Get ready to scream, the fate of the competition is in your hands.

Improvisational space collage

Photo by Todd Weaver.

"I am certain I speak / A new language / As is always the first sign / Of a new age", says Saul Williams in the opening track of the album *Saul Williams meets Carlos Niño & Friends at Treepeople.* This experimental, spiritual jazz album features improvisations from Williams and Carlos Niño alongside a seven-piece group of LA-based jazz and ambient giants known modestly as the 'friends', which includes the likes of saxophonist Kamasi Washington, poet and lyricist Aja Monet, and keyboardist Surya Botofasina.

Williams and Niño are bringing their transcendental, GRAMMY®-nominated album to San Fran on Monday the 8th of June. Audiences can expect the urgent, revolutionary spoken word poetry of Williams sitting on a bed of cosmic sound.

Niño is an experimental composer, producer, and percussionist, known for his co-production of *New Blue Sun*, André 3000's solo album composed entirely of wind instrumentals. He describes his sound as a "spiritual, improvisational, space collage".

Williams' multidisciplinary career spans music, literature, and film. He first emerged from New York's slam poetry scene, introducing the movement to the world through his 1998 film *Slam*. Since then he has been a vital voice in alternative hip-hop, collaborating with the likes of The Roots, Erykah Badu, and Gil Scott-Heron.

Together they created an album described by *WIRE Magazine* as "Musically ambitious, exploratory, and principled... a necessary statement of our times".

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Gallery news

by Isabella Smith

In their gardens

Editha, 2025,

In one photo, Editha smiles at the camera, the white of her umbrella disappearing into the sky as she stands beside a multicoloured row of orchids. In another, Elizabeth stands on her concrete driveway looking at the camera over her shoulder, upon which she balances an enormous, curved, pale green tromboncino.

Kababayan translates to 'fellow countrymen' in Tagalog. A familiar term, it recognises a person who lives in the same town and comes from the same country. In 1986, Abigail Legg's mother Elizabeth was the fifth Filipino to move to Feilding, Manawatū. Since then a growing Filipino diaspora community has flourished, gathering together to continue traditions from their culture, bringing home a little closer.

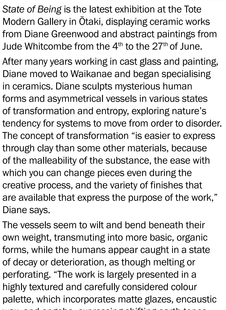
In this photography exhibition curated by Russell Kleyn, on at Twentysix Gallery until the 6th of June, Abigail has captured portraits of her titas (aunties) in their gardens in Feilding, offering a glimpse of their daily lives. In an Aotearoa climate, these women have cultivated Philippine flora, like ampalaya (bitter melon), sitaw (string beans), and orchids. Caring for the whenua they stand on, and building greenhouses that allow these plants to survive, these photos are celebrations that tell a story of endurance.

The women are often caught mid-laughter, eyes twinkling. Despite the cool tones, the greens of the gardens are almost irredescent. "I look for colours", Abigail says. "Composition is always important too. I try and seek out something that may be out of the ordinary. In this location of work, the garden means we can play around with many backdrops and add different components. Shooting with a medium format film camera slows down my process and I am restricted to the roll of film that is loaded in there."

After attending a lecture on *Through the Shaded Glass: Women and Photography in Aotearoa New Zealand 1860-1960* by Lissa Mitchell, Abigail thought about her own bi-cultural experience in Aotearoa, and the difficulties in finding resources that reflected them. "From there I started to photograph those who I consider family", she says, setting up photoshoots at their houses when visiting. "I have always imagined these photographs shown in the form of an exhibition. Large photographs of my aunties taking up space in a room that they wouldn't typically. As a way to honour them and show respect to my elders."

"My pamiliya (whānau) are a strong unit of Filipino people", Abigail says. "The door is always open, the kettle on, and you never go home empty handed. My connection to these women is through coming together to eat, entering their gardens, through their children. But it is more than that, these are the people that have shown up for me, come to every birthday party without fail, held me as a baby, and ensured that I was looked after and fed. That is a reflection of who this community is, they show up for each other and anyone else they consider kababayan and family."

Various states



Sculpture by Diane Greenwood.

State of Being is the latest exhibition at the Tote Modern Gallery in Ōtaki, displaying ceramic works from Diane Greenwood and abstract paintings from Jude Whitcombe from the 4th to the 27th of June.

After many years working in cast glass and painting, Diane moved to Waikanae and began specialising in ceramics. Diane sculpts mysterious human forms and asymmetrical vessels in various states of transformation and entropy, exploring nature's tendency for systems to move from order to disorder. The concept of transformation "is easier to express through clay than some other materials, because of the malleability of the substance, the ease with which you can change pieces even during the creative process, and the variety of finishes that are available that express the purpose of the work," Diane says.

The vessels seem to wilt and bend beneath their own weight, transmuting into more basic, organic forms, while the humans appear caught in a state of decay or deterioration, as though melting or perforating. "The work is largely presented in a highly textured and carefully considered colour palette, which incorporates matte glazes, encaustic wax, and engobe, expressing shifting earth tones – a transformation taking place under the cover of shade."

Jude's abstract paintings are both intuitive and controlled. She is greatly influenced by the works of Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, and Robert Ryman, and her works are often situated in the space between science and art. Her exhibition is born from a curiosity about humankind's survival and evolution across history, and the shifting of paradigms as our perception of our place within the cosmos evolves. Together their works express the only constant in the universe, which is change.

Ossify

Vagabond, 2023.

Telly Tu'u's paintings feel like energy captured mid-flight. But the longer you look at them, the more the strokes of colour take on a structure and formality that tell their own stories.

Ossify is Telly's latest exhibition, showing at Bowen Galleries until the 27th of June. The exhibition features a selection of paintings in his signature style: visceral and atmospheric explorations of abstraction. Born in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Telly is of Chinese, Samoan, Tokelauan, and Tuvaluan descent, and his art is influenced by the patterns of traditional Samoan tapa cloth and pe'a (tattoo) and the patterns abstracted from nature found in these art and storytelling forms.

Process is central to Telly's practice, which is almost entirely intuitive. His forms organically structure themselves, with Telly following where the marks lead him. Paint left over on the palette dictates the colour and direction of the next work.

The paintings invite audiences to pause, to view them slowly, following lines of colour and resting a moment on the deliberately positioned hard-edged forms – which are either added at the beginning of the process as a catalyst, or right at the end to give the work a finishing touch. Parts of the image can remain hidden before making themselves known only to those who look for long enough.

Telly starts a conversation in the studio, which continues between the viewer and the painting when the works are exhibited. His role is to prompt – not to tell people what to think.

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News

Advice from Alan

Fences and retaining walls

by Alan Knowsley, consultant, Rainey Collins Lawyers

The Fencing Act 1978 generally governs the building and maintenance of fences. In some cases it will apply to retaining walls, if they are operating as a boundary fence. Building consents are required for fences over 2.5 metres high and for retaining walls over 1.5 metres high. There may be restrictions in covenants on the land, e.g. on the materials with which a fence may be built, or the colour.

An easement may be needed if a retaining wall encroaches or relies on a neighbour's land (e.g. by the use of rock anchors under the land).

Usually, neighbours on either side of a boundary fence will equally share the costs of building or replacing a fence unless the fence is damaged by one of the neighbours or there has been agreement on cost sharing.

If agreement is not reached, you can issue a Fencing Act Notice to the neighbour where the current fence is not adequate. This must include the description of the boundary to be fenced, type of fence, method of construction, estimated total cost, how materials are to be purchased or supplied and paid for, and the date for commencement of work.

Your neighbour has 21 days after receiving the notice to object and make counterproposals – i.e. suggest a different type of fence, or dispute that a new fence is needed – via a 'cross notice'.

If the building of the fence was not urgent, and you did not notify your neighbour in advance via a fencing notice, your neighbour can refuse to pay their share of costs.

If you have provided the correct notices to your neighbour, but cannot agree, you can try mediation, or seek a decision through arbitration, the Disputes Tribunal, or the District Court.

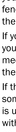
If the fence needs immediate urgent repairs from something like storm damage and your neighbour is uncontactable, you can carry out urgent work without giving your neighbour notice and they must pay half of the cost.

Fences and retaining walls can be a complex area, so getting advice might be necessary if you cannot reach agreement.

Tech talks with Pat

Avoiding the subscription trap

by Pat Pilcher



I'd signed up to a software package a few months back and found I wasn't using it much (and that my inner scrooge really disliked paying ongoing fees for something that just a few years back I could have purchased once and owned outright). I tried cancelling the subscription via emails (the company ignored them and kept charging me). In the end, I got my bank involved. The entire fiasco cost me money and time I didn't have to spare, not to mention stress.

It's what regulators call a 'subscription trap'. These are where services are easy to join but a nightmare to leave, relying on confusing terms, hidden renewal dates, or unresponsive support. The Commerce Commission says subscription contracts must have clear terms, including how long they run and how you can cancel, and standard form consumer contracts must comply with the Fair Trading Act.

Free trials are often where the 'fun' starts. A classic move is the 'free' trial that silently rolls into a full-priced subscription unless you cancel in time, sometimes helped along by a pre-ticked box you never noticed when signing up (read sign-up forms very carefully). The Commerce Commission has seen a rise in complaints about these practices and has made shoddy online sales conduct an enforcement priority.

The good news is that NZ laws give you some protection (at least when dealing with NZ-based traders). The Consumer Guarantees Act covers most digital services, which must be fit for purpose and provided with reasonable care and skill. The Fair Trading Act bans misleading or unfair practices in trade. If you are repeatedly charged after cancelling, and like me are dealing with a foreign business, your bank can challenge or block recurring payments.

Avoiding my circle of subscription hell is possible. Set a calendar reminder to cancel before the free trial ends, screenshot sign-up pages, and use low-limit credit cards. Cancel early, in writing. Keep a record of every email. If a company buries the cancel button or ghosts your messages, treat that as a red flag and talk to your bank and the Commerce Commission.

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Small towns of New Zealand

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Pātea

Havelock North

Tūrangi

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Ōtorohanga

Masterton

Stratford

The name Stratford is etched into everyone's mind as the birthplace of William Shakespeare. Beneath the eastern slopes of Taranaki Maunga sits Aotearoa's very own Shakespearean-inspired town of the same name. Wander through this rural service hub and you'll notice many of the streets share their name with some of Shakespeare's most beloved characters and plays, making it a great place to live for fans of the British thespian. The glockenspiel clock tower stands proud on Broadway Street, where the star-crossed lovers Romeo and Juliet emerge on the balcony to confess their love to one another when the clock chimes 10am and 1, 3, and 7pm.

There is much to love about Stratford: the peaceful ever-presence of the maunga, the affordability of homes, the spirited and tight-knit community, the agricultural economy, the wide range of schooling options and public amenities, and the proximity to New Plymouth and Whanganui. What nature lovers, farmers, and young families alike all love is how close it is to the great outdoors. Easy access to the surrounding national parks means there are so many reasons to live in this peaceful yet adventurous region.

Population: 6,430

Known for: Shakespearean themes

Climate: mild temperatures, high rainfall

Location: 30 minutes from New Plymouth, 90 minutes from Whanganui

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Small towns of New Zealand

Pātea

Did you know that Pātea was once the largest cheese exporting port in the world? There is so much more to know and love about the South Taranaki town of Pātea. It first became world famous in New Zealand when Pātea Māori Club released the beloved hit single *Poi E* in 1987. A small rural town with a rich Māori and European history, on the main street you'll find the Aotea Waka Memorial commemorating one of the first waka in which Māori migrated to Aotearoa.

With stunning beaches, rivers, and views of Taranaki Maunga, the population of Pātea has been on the up and up. It's no wonder when you learn that housing prices there are some of the lowest in the country. With its relaxed feel, close community, and easy distance from Whanganui, Hāwera, and New Plymouth, Pātea is a town where the future is looking bright. You need only stop by for Paepae in the Park – a free, family-friendly music festival held on Waitangi Day – to see how welcoming the locals are, how culturally rich the place is, and why you should consider it when making your next move.

Population: 1,290

Known for: Pātea Māori Club

Climate: mild coastal climate

Location: 80 minutes from New Plymouth, 45 minutes to Whanganui

Havelock North

Arriving in Havelock North is like stepping into a charming, boutique village. Located at the foot of Te Mata Peak, Havelock North is a quaint, tree-lined township that is full of incredible food, art, scenery, and people. Situated in one of the world's great wine capitals, the town is bustling, yet still has the small-town feel where neighbours help out neighbours.

Whether you're after a home in town or a lifestyle block a little further out, you're never far away from a breathtaking view, a walking or biking track, or a world-class vineyard. The area is known for its excellent schools and gracious homes, and the town is highly walkable, with a Hawke's Bay climate that makes that possible all year round.

Moving to Havelock North is making a lifestyle change without having to sacrifice the benefits of a city. With Napier a short 20 minutes away, it offers a much slower and more relaxed pace with an easy commute. Not to mention, Hawke's Bay's long list of stunning beaches are all within a half-hour drive. There is a reason why so many families are heading east.

Population: 15,000

Known for: award-winning wines

Climate: sunny and dry with mild winters

Location: 20 minutes from Napier

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Small towns of New Zealand

Tūrangi

There are so many reasons why you should want Tūrangi to be your new home town. Located on the banks of the Tongariro River, near the shores of Lake Taupō and framed by Tongariro National Park and Kaimanawa Forest Park, this unique area has something for everyone. Whether you're after an outdoor paradise – with plenty of spots for fishing, tramping, hunting, skiing, and boating – looking to join the vibrant arts community, a local club, or just wanting somewhere quiet with affordable housing and great amenities, Tūrangi and the southern lakeshore settlements should be top of your list.

Centrally located on SH1, only 45 minutes from the Taupō township and a stone's throw from nearby Motuoapa, Pukawa, Omori, and Kuratau, Tūrangi is known for its friendly small-town atmosphere, as a year-round visitor destination, and for being a great base for adventure. It has indoor heated swimming pools, parks, schools, sports facilities, play areas, excellent medical care, a pharmacy, and a large supermarket – all the things you need, without having to navigate the hustle and bustle of a big city.

Population: 3,960
Known for: fly-fishing capital of the world
Climate: crisp, clear winters, warm summers
Location: 45 minutes from Taupō

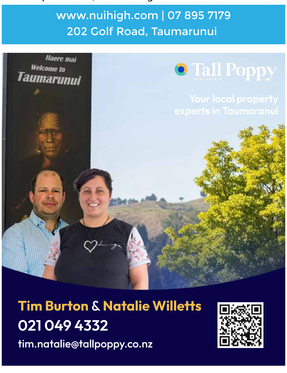
Taumarunui

Found on the upper reaches of the Whanganui River on the picturesque Adventure Highway (SH4), Taumarunui sits in the heart of King Country. Part of the Ruapehu District, it has stunning views of Mount Ruapehu, Tongariro, and Ngāuruhoe, is a stone's throw away from Whanganui National Park, Tongariro National Park, and the Ngā Haerenga Great Rides of New Zealand-listed Pureora Timber Trail, and is connected to the rest of the North Island via its active rail network.

Surrounded by all this natural beauty, the people of Taumarunui are passionate and proud of their town, with its rich heritage, bustling town centre, and busy local calendar. Taumarunui has plenty of facilities, groups, and clubs that keep everyone engaged and involved in local happenings. According to Trade Me, it is the most affordable place in Aotearoa to get on the property ladder, with the average housing price significantly lower than the rest of the country.

It's no wonder that people are heading to the Central Plateau in search of a manageable mortgage that not only comes with loads of space but also with a tight-knit community, a wealth of outdoor activities, and a lovely temperate climate.

Population: 4,940
Known for: railway heritage
Climate: warm summers, cool crisp winters
Location: 90 minutes from Taupō



Small towns of New Zealand

Wairoa

Located near the mouth of the Wairoa River, the rural township of Wairoa sits in the northernmost district of Hawke's Bay. The houses are cheap, the sun is always shining. Wairoa is surrounded by rolling hills and stunning beaches, and steeped in heritage and history. It's no wonder that the people of Wairoa are proud of the place they call home.

Wairoa means 'long water'. Folks with a love of the ocean, lakes, and rivers can experience all three in a variety of ways, be it rowing, waka ama, or water skiing along the river, fishing and diving off the rugged coast, soaking in the mineral hot pools at Mōrere Hot Springs, or catching a wave on the Māhia Peninsula – one of Aotearoa's most reliable surf destinations.

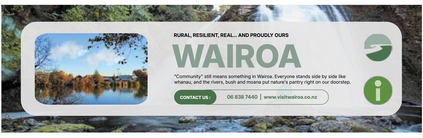
Arriving in Wairoa, you can feel the vibrancy of the town. The area is a major centre for Māori culture, with 37 marae in the district. Other arts and cultural sites include the Wairoa Museum; the iconic Gaiety Cinema and Theatre, host of the Ahurei Kiriata Wairoa Māori Film Festival; and the community centre, home to an indoor pool, stadium, and gymnasium. The town's calendar is always full!

Population: 4,720

Known for: Māori heritage

Climate: long, dry summers, short mild winters

Location: 90 minutes from Gisborne



Ōtorohanga

Maybe it's in the air, or maybe it's in the water, but studies from 2015 show that Ōtorohanga has the highest life expectancy in the Waikato Region. Whatever it is, the locals have got it by the bucket load, and there's a reason why they all say that Ōtorohanga is a slice of paradise that they never want to give up. Located in northern King Country, Ōtorohanga is Aotearoa's official Kiwiana town. Stroll down the main street and you'll find displays paying homage to the classic quarter-acre-pavlova-Weet-bix culture.

This beautiful rural hub has a strong agricultural backbone, a relaxed atmosphere, tight-knit locals, and everything you'll ever need always within two hours' driving distance. The stunning Kāwhia beach is under an hour away, while Hamilton is just 50 kilometres up the road. As the gateway to the Waitomo caves, Ōtorohanga also has opportunities to work in the tourism industry. The average house price is considerably lower than other parts of the country and there are wonderful amenities, including schools that cater from Years 1 to 13, an outdoor swimming pool, and the Jim Barker Memorial Playground that'll keep kids of all ages entertained.

Population: 3,240

Known for: Kiwiana culture

Climate: warm summers, wet winters

Location: 45 minutes from Hamilton, 20 minutes to Te Awamutu

Affordable, fun and spacious group accommodation. 28 bed lodge with bunk rooms & 13 bed Park House, both with bathrooms & kitchens. Plus a range of other accommodation & camping options available. Heated indoor/outdoor Swimming Pool & Spa Pools for year round fun.

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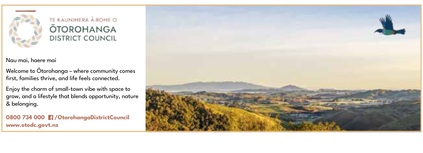

Small towns of New Zealand

Masterton

To live in Whakaoriori Masterton is to have your cake and eat it too. The largest town in the Wairarapa, life there means you're spoilt for choice – reaping the benefits of a large centre while getting to experience the spaciousness and quietude of the countryside, with pristine, rugged beaches like Castlepoint and Riversdale only a hop, skip, and a jump away.

One of the most affordable towns in the North Island, Masterton caters to every lifestyle, whether you're after a town house, beach house, first home, homestead, or lifestyle block. With loads of schooling options and a growing economy, it is the perfect place to raise a family, start a business, and put down roots. Masterton is home to the international Golden Shears competition, bringing thousands of spectators flocking to witness Aotearoa's premier sheepshearers, and it was named New Zealand's most beautiful city by Keep New Zealand Beautiful in 2017.

There are so many reasons why city folk from Wellington are packing their bags and heading east. Whether they're after a slower pace, better weather, affordable living, or to be closer to beaches, bush, and farmland – Masterton truly has it all.

Population: 22,600

Known for: sheep-shearing capital

Climate: hot summers, crisp winters

Location: 90 minutes to Wellington

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Film news

by Isabella Smith

Wonderful wāhine

Still from My Favourite Cake.

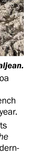
"To walk in someone else's shoes is one of the great privileges of movie going," says Andrew Armitage of Aro Video – the beloved cornerstone of movie rentals for Pōneke cinephiles – and the curator of the Paekākāriki Film Festival this year. When making the selection, Armitage tells me he considers the voices that need to be heard and develops a theme around that.

Across three Sundays in June – the 14th, 21st, and 28th – St Peter's Village Hall will host three films under the theme of Wonderful Wāhine.

With Iran being at the centre of the world's concerns, *My Favourite Cake* (Iran, 2024) offers insight into Iranian culture before and after the revolution, following 70-year-old Mahin as she seeks to revive her love life. Preceding the screening will be the short film *Women Rising* (2023) by Pōneke-based filmmaker Sahar Fanian, about female emancipation. Next is *Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk* (Palestine, 2025), a documentary displaying the horrors of Gaza through a series of videocalls made between filmmaker Sepideh Farsi and the heroic young Palestinian photojournalist Fatima Hassouna. Finally, *Thelma* and *Louise* (USA, 1991), which Armitage says "not only a landmark feminist film" but "one of the best films of the 90s".

Audiences can "look forward to seeing something they might not otherwise choose to see, and that will stay with them as an experience", he says. "To share the experience with an audience of other curious humans is also a privilege."

Vive le cinéma!



Still from Jean Valjean.

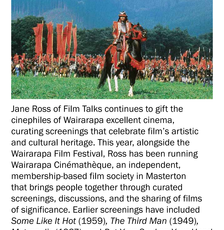
The L'Oréal Groupe French Film Festival Aotearoa returns to Pōneke screens this June, bringing another compelling lineup of hand-selected French films that audiences fall in love with year after year.

Running from the 3rd to the 28th, some highlights of the festival include *The Richest Woman In The World*, directed by Thierry Klifa, depicting a modern-day scandal that captivated the French nation involving the L'Oreal heiress Liliane Bettencourt; *The Stranger*, François Ozon's adaptation of Albert Camus' 1948 absurdist novel about a young expatriate on trial for murder in 1930s French-colonised Algeria; Eric Besnard's *Jean Valjean* that charts the origin story of the protagonist of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*; and the opening night's *Colours of Time* from Cédric Klapisch, where four estranged cousins are reunited by the unexpected inheritance of a house in Normandy, blending 19th century Belle Époque France with present day themes around identity and legacy.

Festival director Fergus Grady says, "We're seeing audiences really embrace the festival experience, coming back multiple times and trusting the programme to deliver something special each visit. This year's lineup continues that tradition, with something for everyone to discover."

With French box office hits, Cannes favourites, and award-winning talent, including Pierre Niney in *Guru* and Angèlina Jolie in *Couture*, June will see packed-out theatres and captivated audiences getting a taste of the best that French film has to offer. Vive le cinéma!

A world in flames



Jane Ross of Film Talks continues to gift the cinephiles of Wairarapa excellent cinema, curating screenings that celebrate film's artistic and cultural heritage. This year, alongside the Wairarapa Film Festival, Ross has been running Wairarapa Cinémathèque, an independent, membership-based film society in Masterton that brings people together through curated screenings, discussions, and the sharing of films of significance. Earlier screenings have included *Some Like It Hot* (1959), *The Third Man* (1949), *Metropolis* (1927), and *Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk* (2025).

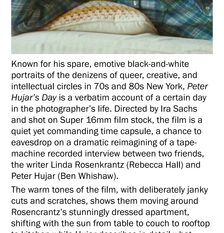
Showing at Regent 3 Cinemas on Sunday the 7th of June is Japanese director Akira Kurosawa's late-career masterpiece *Ran* (1985). Inspired by the story of *King Lear*, it is a 162-minute historical epic set in 16th-century Japan chronicling the catastrophic fallout when Hidetora Ichinonji, an ageing warlord, divides his kingdom among his three sons.

"We're watching, in the hands of a master (a sensei), a great metaphor of the apocalypse, a world in flames whose chaos is made strangely beautiful", Michael Wilmington of *The Criterion Collection* says. "But in showing all this horror, Kurosawa leaves us one great consolation: the beauty of the art with which he reveals it all."

With breathtaking landscapes, symbolic colour design, and devastating emotional power, *Ran* is Kurosawa's "way-of-the-warrior' cinema at its most potent and tragic. Head along to Wairarapa Cinémathèque to witness film excellence from one of the most influential action directors of the 20th century.

Peter Hujar's Day

M
76 minutes
★★★★
Reviewed by Isabella Smith



Known for his spare, emotive black-and-white portraits of the denizens of queer, creative, and intellectual circles in 70s and 80s New York, *Peter Hujar's Day* is a verbatim account of a certain day in the photographer's life. Directed by Ira Sachs and shot on Super 16mm film stock, the film is a quiet yet commanding time capsule, a chance to eavesdrop on a dramatic reimagining of a tape-machine recorded interview between two friends, the writer Linda Rosenkrantz (Rebecca Hall) and Peter Hujar (Ben Whishaw).

The warm tones of the film, with deliberately janky cuts and scratches, shows them moving around Rosencrantz's stunningly dressed apartment, shifting with the sun from table to couch to rooftop to kitchen while Hujar describes in detail what he did the day before. It is gentle and meditative, affectionate and slow. The pace gives space to the audience to consider the mechanisms of memory and legacy, the sieving effect of time, and the tragic loss of not only a brilliant photographer, but a human being with aches and pains and concerns around money, health, and work – just like the rest of us.

What marks his day as different from anyone else's are his phone calls with the likes of Susan Sontag and Fran Lebowitz, his appointment with Allen Ginsberg to photograph him for *The Times* – who was cool, distant, and took to chanting at every available moment – and his plans to photograph William S. Burroughs the following day. Otherwise, he takes several naps, puts off his work, eats Chinese takeout, and only seems to come alive after midnight, when he practices Bach on the harpsichord.

While perhaps only compelling to fans of Hujar, or audiences interested in artistic process, Whishaw and Hall do an incredible job of what would be a complex performance to pull off: the subtle embodiment of quirks and mannerisms of two historical figures to make it appear effortless and documentarian. Each frame feels like a picture, and for me the 76-minute runtime was the perfect length. Running like an alternate reel the entire time is a sense of loss, knowing that Peter Hujar, among many of the friends he photographed, died of AIDS in 1987 in the midst of the crisis, the devastating effects of which had profound effects on his artistry and legacy.

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Less maintenance, more living, the benefits of a serviced apartment

Bonnie chose to move into a Summerset serviced apartment when maintaining her previous home started to feel overwhelming. She wanted a place that would support her future needs and give her family peace of mind.

"I was living in a lifestyle village worrying about the maintenance of that place and realising that as you got older, you were going to need more help. I looked around and thought, I want something that's going to keep me safe so my kids can just relax and not have to worry," said Bonnie.

With her loyal dog, Flash, by her side, Bonnie has found joy and companionship in her serviced apartment, fully embracing this fresh chapter and friendships.

"This place, it's got a bit of magic. It feels like you've arrived somewhere where everybody's buoyant, like I'm on holiday on a cruise. Every day you can have fun," said Bonnie.

"It's just so vibrant. You wake up in the morning and there's noise and life going on. You want to hear this place. They're laughing, joking and enjoying themselves. And really, where else do you see that at eight or nine o'clock in the morning? I can be sitting outside my place, and somebody will come along and say, 'Hello Bonnie, how are you?' And invite me along to an activity. It's the availability of company, all the time. That's what I like about it. Everybody's so nice." Surrounded by a vibrant community, Bonnie feels confident knowing her future is secure thanks to caring and supportive staff.

"The staff are so empathetic and caring, they sort of ooze it. You can see by the looks on the Nurse or Manager's face, how much they really do care. That's the part that I like, you'll get a bit of sympathy when you need it, and you get care when you need it."

Knowing she's in the right place and busier than ever, Bonnie encourages others to make the move while they can still enjoy everything village life offers.

"For us older ones, if you don't do something about it sooner rather than later, you don't have the same options. So, think about it and think about what's best for your family. Do it while you can enjoy it."

Want to see what serviced apartment living could look like for you? Pop into Summerset Boulcott or Summerset Waikanae for a chat with the sales team, or find out more at summerset.co.nz

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Thank you for the many ways you help patients and whānau feel cared for when it matters most.

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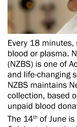
Lifesaving gift

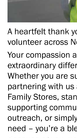


Every 18 minutes, someone in Aotearoa needs blood or plasma. New Zealand Blood Service (NZBS) is one of Aotearoa's most important and life-changing services. Founded in 1998, NZBS maintains New Zealand's system of blood collection, based on the principal of voluntary, unpaid blood donation.

The 14th of June is World Blood Donor Day. Celebrated on the birthday of Karl Landsteiner, who discovered the ABO blood group system, it is a heartfelt recognition of the generous volunteers who donate their blood and plasma. In Wellington, there are 13,345 donors. Each blood donation has the potential to save up to three lives. Every single week in the capital, we need over 400 donations of blood from across all blood groups, and over 450 donations of plasma, to help keep up with hospital and patient demand.

There is no substitute for blood. At present, only four percent of eligible New Zealanders are registered to donate. On World Blood Donor Day, give thanks to those who volunteer their lifesaving gift of aroha.

It takes an army



A heartfelt thank you to every Salvation Army volunteer across New Zealand.

Your compassion and commitment make an extraordinary difference in communities every day. Whether you are supporting a faith community, partnering with us as a business, work in our Family Stores, standing with a collection bucket, supporting community programmes through outreach, or simply being there for someone in need – you're a blessing to us in our mission.

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As a volunteer we honour and celebrate you. Thank you for your committed service and kindness. It takes an army and we're so sincerely grateful to have you as part of it.

Find out more at www.salvationarmy.org.nz

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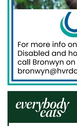

Hutt Valley NZRDA

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National Volunteer Week 14-20 June

Community connector

Since opening in Wellington in 1992, we have helped thousands discover how they can make a difference through volunteering. We support over 300 not-for-profits, community groups, and grassroots organisations to run stronger volunteer programmes through professional development workshops and networking hui.

Volunteer Wellington is not just a matching service or an online directory. We are the trusted infrastructure behind successful volunteerism in the region. We take a people-centered approach, supporting both individuals looking to volunteer and the organisations that rely on volunteers to deliver their services. Our mahi makes volunteering accessible, inclusive, and impactful for everyone.

Volunteers are the heartbeat of our communities – they bring compassion, creativity, resilience, and mana to every space. By spreading celebrations and recognition of volunteer contributions across International Volunteer Year through our different events and projects, we hope to create more moments of connection, recognition, and joy.

Making a difference

Adrienne Smith, volunteer.

National Volunteer Week is a chance to celebrate the people who help ensure no one faces cancer alone. At the Cancer Society Wellington Division, volunteers support our community in many ways. In the past year, 136 volunteer drivers provided more than 3,000 drives to treatment, covering an incredible 181,650 kilometres across the region. For people facing cancer, these journeys provide not just transport, but reassurance and connection during a difficult time.

People also contribute in other ways, from volunteering in the oncology department at the hospital, to collecting on Daffodil Day, helping with admin in our community hubs, providing short-term support for home-based clients living with cancer, hosting accommodation for out-of-town patients, and more.

As demand for support services continues to grow, so does the need for volunteers. This National Volunteer Week, we thank every volunteer who generously gives their time and encourage others to consider getting involved.

National Volunteer Week

As part of National Volunteer Week from the 14th to the 20th of June, we proudly celebrate our amazing Blind Low Vision NZ volunteer community. Alongside 53 percent of New Zealanders, and more than one billion worldwide, our volunteer community give up their time, skills, and energy to make a difference to our member's lives. Every day, they help make independence, inclusion, and opportunity possible for blind and low vision people across Aotearoa New Zealand.

This year's National Volunteer Week theme, Tōu tau ki te tūao – Your Year to Volunteer, invites everyone to recognise the contribution of those who freely give their time, and consider how they might get involved too.

The theme also aligns with the United Nations International Volunteer Year 2026 (IVY), a global initiative recognising the vital role volunteers play in strengthening communities, supporting wellbeing, and driving positive social change globally and here in Aotearoa.

THANK YOU

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1. Wang Z et al. Meclizine metabolism and pharmacokinetics. J Clin Pharmacol. 2012;52

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Puzzles

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	6			5	4	1		9
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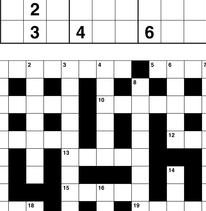


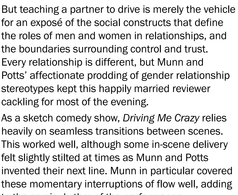
Across

1 - Formal curse by a pope (8)
5 - Fencing sword (4)
9 - Large wading bird (5)
10 - Mathematical rule (7)
11 - Group of gunshots (5)
12 - Excavate (3)
13 - Biological taxonomic grouping (5)
15 - Bonds of union (5)
17 - Anger (3)
19 - Faith in another (5)
20 - Slanted characters (7)
21 - Wide (5)
22 - University in Connecticut (4)
23 - Gathering (8)

Down

1 - Ease of use or entry (13)
2 - Used to one's advantage (7)
3 - Written in pictorial symbols (12)
4 - Small cake (6)
6 - Strike repeatedly (5)
7 - In an inflated manner (13)
8 - Overwhelmingly compelling (12)
14 - Unit of electric charge (7)
16 - State of the USA (6)
18 - Electronic message (5)

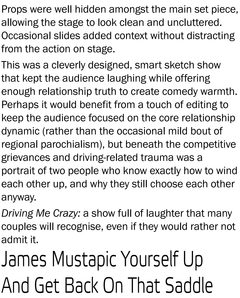
Answers to the puzzles on this page



Reviews

Driving Me Crazy

Created by Mo Munn and Q Potts
BATS Theatre, 20th May 2026
Reviewed by Oliver Mander



Wellington-based comedy couple Mo Munn and Q Potts put their relationship on show in this sketch comedy performance. Most couples would likely cringe at the thought of teaching their partner to drive, and that makes the core premise instantly relatable.

But teaching a partner to drive is merely the vehicle for an exposé of the social constructs that define the roles of men and women in relationships, and the boundaries surrounding control and trust. Every relationship is different, but Munn and Potts' affectionate prodding of gender relationship stereotypes kept this happily married reviewer cackling for most of the evening.

As a sketch comedy show, *Driving Me Crazy* relies heavily on seamless transitions between scenes. This worked well, although some in-scene delivery felt slightly stilted at times as Munn and Potts invented their next line. Munn in particular covered these momentary interruptions of flow well, adding to the comic rhythm of the performance.

Each sketch added to the emotional range of the show, moving from domestic argument to parody, physical comedy, and genuine affection. Potts offered some of the best comic timing of the night during a parody of *Greased Lightnin'*, with a simple repeated line that contrasted with Munn's exuberant performance. Munn, meanwhile, was especially strong when ordinary anxiety tipped into full catastrophic fantasy.

Props were well hidden amongst the main set piece, allowing the stage to look clean and uncluttered. Occasional slides added context without distracting from the action on stage.

This was a cleverly designed, smart sketch show that kept the audience laughing while offering enough relationship truth to create comedy warmth. Perhaps it would benefit from a touch of editing to keep the audience focused on the core relationship dynamic (rather than the occasional mild bout of regional parochialism), but beneath the competitive grievances and driving-related trauma was a portrait of two people who know exactly how to wind each other up, and why they still choose each other anyway.

Driving Me Crazy: a show full of laughter that many couples will recognise, even if they would rather not admit it.

James Mustapic Yourself Up And Get Back On That Saddle Girlfriend

Created by James Mustapic
The Hannah, 22nd May 2026
Reviewed by Dani Yourukova

I'm hectic by the time I arrive in the foyer of The Hannah for James Mustapic's newest solo show. I've been battling the bus timetable, one of my jobs has just imploded, my date cancelled last minute, and I've got a little smear of hoisin sauce on my shirt, which I've spilled out of a bao bun over dinner. So, I am primed and ready to experience James Mustapic.

Because, as it turns out, James Mustapic has been having a hard time too. The full story unfolds over the course of the hour in a gloriously labyrinthine, multimedia yarn of new boyfriends, poorly received *Seven Sharp* segments, driving lessons, chlamydia, deranged flatmates who may or may not be on meth, exorcisms both metaphorical and literal, and a plethora of other failures and vulnerabilities, including his own mum showing up late to the show. "Janet?" he asks the packed theatre, hopefully. No answer.

The show is extremely personable, and desperately relatable throughout. I was invested in every trainwreck flatmate who moved in, and felt gleefully malicious towards every commenter on Mustapic's Facebook post. I laughed maniacally all through his opener, which was essentially a PowerPoint presentation about being unpopular with old people on the internet. And when Janet finally joined us, 20 minutes in, we all went wild.

James Mustapic Yourself Up And Get Back On That Saddle Girlfriend is a show that's fundamentally about trying, and failing. Correspondingly, the tone is casual, haphazard, and genuinely intimate. Mustapic leaps between bits, occasionally stopping to show you a captioned text message or a funny video, and it's all a little like listening to your very funniest friend telling an anecdote. Although Mustapic is, I think, a deceptively organised storyteller. Structurally, the wandering anecdotes always come back around, building surprising connections and landing increasingly esoteric punchlines. "And *that's* what air fryers have to do with being *gay*," Mustapic says triumphantly at the show's conclusion. By the time you get there, it all makes perfect sense.

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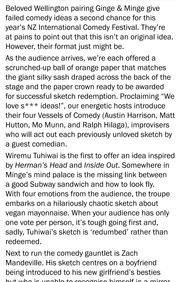
NZ International Comedy Festival

Redemption

Presented by Ginge & Minge
BATS Theatre, 15th May 2026
Reviewed by Tanya Piejus



Beloved Wellington pairing Ginge & Minge give failed comedy ideas a second chance for this year's NZ International Comedy Festival. They're at pains to point out that this isn't an original idea. However, their format just might be.

As the audience arrives, we're each offered a scrunched-up ball of orange paper that matches the giant silky sash draped across the back of the stage and the paper crown ready to be awarded for successful sketch redemption. Proclaiming "We love s*** ideas!", our energetic hosts introduce their four Vessels of Comedy (Austin Harrison, Matt Hutton, Mo Munn, and Ralph Hilaga), improvisers who will act out each previously unloved sketch by a guest comedian.

Wiremu Tuhiwai is the first to offer an idea inspired by *Hermans Head* and *Inside Out*. Somewhere in Minge's mind palace is the missing link between a good Subway sandwich and how to look fly. With four emotions from the audience, the troupe embarks on a hilariously chaotic sketch about vegan mayonnaise. When your audience has only one vote per person, it's too good-going first and, sadly, Tuhiwai's sketch is 'redumbed' rather than redeemed.

Next to run the comedy gauntlet is Zach Mandeville. His sketch centres on a boyfriend being introduced to his new girlfriend's besties but who is unable to recognise himself in a mirror. Hilaga does a particularly well-developed job of taking on the role of the boyfriend who keeps trying to order drinks from his own reflection. I decided this clever idea was worthy of my orange ball and flung it at the end along with many other audience members, so redeeming Mandeville's sketch and earning him the paper crown.

Last up was an improvised musical from Lia Kelly called *Pacifist Praying Mantis Wedding*. The on-the-spot songs were a little hit and miss, but Harrison and Hilaga's arm-swaying duet with fabulous backing vocals was a winner. Sketch redeemed!

With a fresh spin on improv, vibrant hosts, and a talented cast, *Redemption* is another success for an award-winning duo.

Hoani Hoani Hoani Must Be Funny in a Rich Man's World

Presented by Hoani Hotene
The Fringe Bar, 19th May 2026
Reviewed by Zac Fitzgibbon

Hoani Hoani Hoani Must Be Funny in a Rich Man's World is Hoani Hotene's latest set and is filled with jokes that will increase on you like baked beans in a big breakfast (or the English in general). Just as humans gave lemons life, Hotene gives life to the room, with constant laughter after every joke.

Having previously performed his set in Auckland, Hotene now relates it to a Wellington audience, drawing on our café culture, what it's like being from Lower Hutt, and the famous moa button at Te Papa. He even infuses a fraught situation – the current state of New Zealand politics – with light and humour.

Crowd work is certainly one of this comedian's many forte's. Throughout the set, he improvises jokes based on our conversations, which not only engages us more but also makes things feel more genuine. It's nice to see a comedian tailor their show to their audience, even if there are disagreements about whether people attending a conference together are genuine friends.

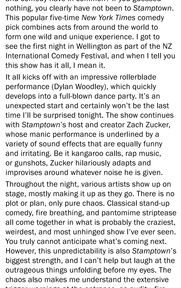
And just when you think he can't amp it up any further, Hotene brings out a guitar and plays a song that ties everything together in a perfect bow, making the audience buzz with laughter once more.

Another skill I commend him for is his ability to make his personal life hilarious. Hotene is able to use seemingly normal interactions, such as watching your three-year-old cousin learn about social clout, to make the whole crowd go wild. This is no ordinary feat.

You will laugh like you never have before watching this show. Don't be like someone who washes old toothbrushes around the house to reuse them. Instead, use the money you would've spent on a new toothbrush to buy tickets to *Hoani Hoani Hoani Must Be Funny in a Rich Man's World* at The Fringe Bar before it's gone like the moa.

Stamptown

Presented by The New Zealand Comedy Trust
The Hannah, 19th May 2026
Reviewed by Numi Stössner



What do ghost hunters, gangster rap, hula hoop, and comedy have in common? If you guessed nothing, you clearly have not been to *Stamptown*. This popular five-time *New York Times* comedy pick combines acts from around the world to form one wild and unique experience. Don't go see the first night in Wellington as part of the NZ International Comedy Festival, and when I tell you this show has it all, I mean it.

It all kicks off with an impressive rollerblade performance (Dylan Woodley), which quickly develops into a full-blown dance party. It's an unexpected start to a comedy show, but the last time I'll be surprised tonight. The show continues with *Stamptown*'s host and creator Zach Zucker, whose manic performance is underpinned by a variety of sound effects that are equally funny and irritating. Be it kangaroo calls, rap music, or gunshots, Zucker hilariously adapts and improvises around whatever noise he is given. Throughout the night, various artists show up on stage, mostly making it up as they go. There is no set of plan, only pure chaos. Classical stand-up comedy, fire breathing, and pantomime striptease all come together in what is probably the craziest, weirdest, and most intriguing show I've ever seen. You truly cannot anticipate what's coming next. However, this unpredictability is also *Stamptown*'s biggest strength, and I can't help but laugh at the outrageous things unfolding before my eyes. The chaos also makes me understand the extensive trigger warnings at the entrance, as nudity, fire, and flashing lights don't just appear; they happen all at once.

Judging by the reviews, *Stamptown* is something you will either love or hate. Either way, you will never forget it. Whether it is a circus, a comedy show, or performance art, I am still unsure. Is it, at times, obscene and insulting? Yes. Does it leave me dazed and confused about what I have just witnessed? Yes. Would I go again? Absolutely. Yes.

Oliver Pol: Featherbrained

Presented by Oliver Pol
BATS Theatre, 20th May 2026
Reviewed by Zac Fitzgibbon

The show begins as a rambunctious Oliver Pol plays centre stage, and as soon as this happens, we know that we are in for 60 minutes of pure chaos. *Oliver Pol: Featherbrained* is a no holds-barred comedy set destined to make you honk with laughter.

Pol has unwavering confidence and is unabashedly himself, which makes his set feel more personal and, as a result, more engaging. By the end of it, we know the details of his life, perhaps even more intimately than we bargained for (in a good way). He connects us to early 2000s culture in New Zealand, exploring the struggles of obtaining a pen licence in primary school, the 2007 *Guinness Book of World Records*, and the *Fish and Chip Song*, which was, apparently, the major craze at every school in the country apart from mine.

Pol is not afraid of the tricky stuff. He finds the humour in hard-hitting topics with tact and sensitivity – a delicate balance to strike. At the same time, he doesn't hesitate to talk about whatever seems to spring to his mind, giving the show a spontaneous and authentic feel. He will make you question the morality of a seagull eating a pigeon. His flair for comedy will leave an imprint on you like a hickey. I absolutely adore his unhinged cosmetic stylings.

Using props and a presentation screen adds to the performativity of the routine and further illustrates the passion Pol has for the topics he discusses. If only there was ventriloquism involving a goose... though that would reveal the innermost thoughts of said goose, in turn uncovering a brain possibly even more wonderfully chaotic than Pol's. And besides, this is a show about him, not about geese (though they do feature a lot).

This show will make you laugh more than an article on drunken geese in the 1881 *Lyttelton Times*. *Oliver Pol: Featherbrained* is a wild ride, and you would be a silly goose to miss its run at BATS Theatre this NZ International Comedy Festival.

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Tommy Emmanuel

Living in the Light Tour 2026
The Opera House, 22nd May 2026
Reviewed by Graeme King

Photo by Luciano Viti.

GRAMMY®-winning Australian guitarist Tommy Emmanuel is touring his 2026 album *Living in the Light*. Such is the quality of his musicianship that five of the 11 tracks were recorded in one take, then finished and mixed in one day.

The vibrancy of *Black and White To Colour* made it the perfect track to start. After *Young Travelers* and *A Dreamer's Heart*, also off this new album, Tommy said "No list here, I'm making it up as I go along". *Guitar Rag* followed, then segued into *Nine Pound Hammer* with Tommy saying "Take it boy! then proceeding to make a percussive, washboard sound by scratching his pick on his guitar while playing a rolling bass, accompanied by his deep, rough-edged vocals. Amazing.

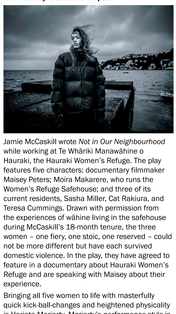
He preceded *Endless Road* with an explanation of a period in his life, when deep in pain and grief, his music kept him going. The Shoshone O'Neill classic Maxine followed, with Tommy's vocals evoking the sadness of the lyrics. On The Beatles' *Michelle*, the harpsichord-like harmonics were breathtakingly beautiful.

The vocal intro for *Angelina*, written for his daughter, was an added treat, as the original album track was instrumental only. Nat King Cole's *Mona Lisa*, in the jazz idiom and a favourite of Tommy's, was gorgeous. On Mordecai Smith's *Jack*, he wrote in Africa, he hit a light brush on his microphone while using his guitar to create complex percussive African rhythms. This jaw-dropping, almost innocentbeat technique left him breathless. Auckland singer Phil Madsen took up Tommy's challenge to sing John Farnham's divine *Burn for You*. Voice and guitar were inseparable. Tommy then quipped "Here's a celebration of a band I was once in", launching into a blistering version of Angelis's *Hard Sun in Cuba*, with the crowd joining in raucously.

Tommy welcomed back to the stage the superb support act, English finger style guitar player Mike Dawes, for Sting's *Fields of Gold* and Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit*. For John Mayer's *Slow Dancing in a Burning Room*, Tommy said "we're going to play a song to take you out tonight which will leave you with a lump in a good vibe, man. Just sorry, you've got some hokey pokey ice-cream, oh yeah… my drug of choice!" A good vibe indeed had by all.

Not in Our Neighbourhood

Written by Jamie McCaskill
Directed by Maaka Pohatu and Paul McLaughlin
Running at Circa Theatre till 13th Jun 2026
Reviewed by Madelaine Empson



Jamie McCaskill wrote *Not in Our Neighbourhood* while working at Te Whānikī Manawāhine o Hauraki, the Hauraki Women's Refuge. The play features five characters: documentary filmmaker Maisey Peters; Moira Makarere, who runs the Women's Refuge Safehouse; and three of the current residents, Sasha Miller, Cat Rakiura, and Teresa Cummings. Drawn with permission from the experiences of women living in the safehouse during McCaskill's 18-month tenure, the three women – one fiery, one stoic, one reserved – could not be more different but have each survived domestic violence. In the play, they have agreed to feature in a documentary about Hauraki Women's Refuge and are speaking with Maisey about their experiences.

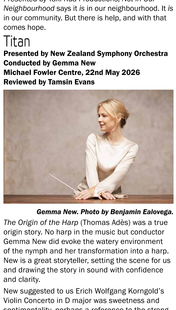
Bringing all five women to life with masterfully quick kick-ball-changes and heightened physicality is Mariata Mowhay. Mowhay's performance style is elevated and theatrical, especially during moments of direct address. The gifted actor starts at 100 and doesn't let up. Her energy is impressive, her passion palpable, her compassion and conviction clear. The whirlwind is breathtaking but dizzying. Due to the intimacy of Circa Two, and how close even the back row is to the stage, more moments of softness and stillness would serve to contrast against – and therefore amplify – the heavier scenes. I feel that distilling the delivery back in parts would allow the dialogue to breathe, thus giving vital messages more room to unfurl, to echo through the space, to impact.

Vital it is. *Not in Our Neighbourhood* is deeply affecting, and everyone's incredible mahi – from the wahine and the mahi ngā tō behind-the-scenes, creatives, cast, and crew members who have brought it to the stage, both now and in the past – should be commended and celebrated. One particularly powerful scene sees Moriarty sensitively deliver Cat's victim impact statement amidst a gorgeous and striking lighting state change from Emile Commarieu. This highlights one of the work's central tenets: the way we stigmatise, blame, and shame the victims of family violence needs to change.

Presented by Taki Rua Productions, *Not in Our Neighbourhood* says it is in our neighbourhood. It is in our community. But there is help, and with that comes hope.

Titan

Presented by New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
Conducted by Gemma New
Michael Fowler Centre, 22nd May 2026
Reviewed by Tamsin Evans



Gemma New. Photo by Benjamin Ealovega.

The Origin of the Harp (Thomas Adès) was a true origin story. No harp in the music but conductor Gemma New evoked the watery environment of the nymph and her transformation into a harp. New is a great storyteller, setting the scene for us and drawing the story in sound with confidence and clarity.

New suggested to us Erich Wolfgang Korngold's Violin Concerto in D major was sweetness and sentimentality, perhaps a reference to the strong influence his writing of film scores had on his classical works. Celebrated for bringing classical musical language to the movie soundstage, his Violin Concerto borrows back from some of his film soundtracks.

Soloist James Ehnes had every musical avenue covered whether sweet, sentimental, or serious. Ehnes' technique was impressive. There are some seriously virtuosic parts, especially in the final movement, and he played with a thoughtful and considered interpretation of the many aspects of this work. His encore, Eugène Ysaÿe's Sonata for Solo Violin in D minor, is a dazzling and spectacular performance piece and Ehnes' performance was as dazzling and spectacular as anyone could wish.

Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 1 in D major, *Titan* is an interesting musical miscellany. Mahler composed a symphonic poem, included previously written work, and subsequently revised and altered it over several years before it settled into the form we know today. Over four movements we traverse the natural world, a rustic community setting, an uneasy, distorted view of life and death, and a glorious finale.

New and her players had a lot to work with. Through clever interpretation and expert performance, they brought order to the somewhat jumbled narrative. New's open arms and open-hearted direction could be heard in the orchestra's sound, from the delicate opening harmonic in the violins, through a grim, minor key version of *Frère Jacques* with klezmer interlude, to a glorious finale, complete with standing fanfare of seven horns.

The Other Boleyn Girl

Adapted by Mike Poulton
Directed by Ewen Coleman
Gryphon Theatre, 28th May 2026
Reviewed by Dani Yoursikova

It seems only fitting that Wellington Repertory Theatre's centenary production (Mike Poulton's stage adaptation of *The Other Boleyn Girl*) is royal, indulgent, and completely lavish.

On the night, the atmosphere is heady. There's something period-accurate about the chaotic press of fellow theatregoers rushing to queue as we are swept towards our seats from the packed foyer of the Gryphon, but it's once we're inside the theatre that we're really transported. Soft lute music plays, the smell of incense hangs in the air, and the three leads (Ava Wiszniewska, Yasmine Alani, and Joseph Corbett as the Boleyn siblings) lounge onstage in silky underskirts and shoulder-baring gowns with other's hair. This is the first and last time you'll see them enjoying each other's company. Conniving, back-biting, sexual taboos, family dysfunction, and intimate personal betrayals rapidly ensue in this audacious historical melodrama set in the royal court of Henry VIII.

The production is extravagantly costumed by Anne De Geus in a wealth of colour and texture, with a little dash of humour. Highlights include the outrageous, hot-pink glitter explosion used to gark Anne Boleyn (in period-accurate silhouette, by the way), and pale, pouty goth Jane Seymour (Lyli Dalley), whose skirts are adorned with black lace skulls.

If you're not familiar with the story, the script is bonkers (there are gasps and renewed giggles in the crowd as some of the more extreme beats play out), but it's executed with verve by the cast. Alani is a bold and charismatic Anne, whose performance alternates between pride, vindictiveness, foot-stomping tantrums, and the occasional crackle of vulnerability. Wiszniewska plays the traitor 'other' Boleyn sister with sensitivity and dignity, providing a grounded centre to the mad drama swirling around her. Meanwhile, the superstitious and popular the world with lovers, enemies, political rivals, and worst of all, family. The machinating Boleyn elders (played by Kevin Hastings, Catherine McMeechan, and Mark Wilton) are a particular joy to watch.

It's a fun, ambitious, production and a rollicking good way to celebrate the centenary. Congratulations Wellington Repertory Theatre (and here's to another hundred years)!

Back to contents

Jundas Capone.

4th Jun. Alien Comedy: *Cavern Club, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. After seven years of *Alien Comedy* mostly at Moon Bar, this cosmic show touches down at Cavern Club with an extraterrestrial lineup of laugh-makers. Catch Ben Tafau, Hans Weston, Sanjay Parbhu, Archie Smith, Jack Gerards, Darryl Wilson, Jonathan Pierce, Jenice Jean Goveas, Shannon Gillies, Mike Ross, and Cole Waters with MC Jundas Capone.

In The Mids album art.

6th Jun. Sola Rosa: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Andrew Spraggon, the force behind one of Aotearoa's most enduring musical projects, returns with his eighth studio album *In The Mids*. Presenting new material and longstanding favourites, the live show incorporates a newly developed visual and lighting design that reshapes how the songs are experienced.

13th Jun. The Wooden Box Band: *Hilltop Private House Concerts, Upland Road, Kelburn* – 7pm. Winners of the New Zealand Folk Alliance Best Original Album in 2025, The Wooden Box Band blend rich harmonies, acoustic warmth, and electric flair. Their Aotearoa storytelling, layered with vocals and harmonies, makes for a performance steeped in craft and connection.

27th Jun. Alien: Rebirth – An Interstellar Drag Show: *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. Prepare for liftoff as the fiercest queens, kings, and extraterrestrial beings from across the cosmos take the stage in an out-of-this-world spectacular that blends high fashion, high camp, and high-tech fantasy. Take off with a show light-years ahead of its time.

What's on

Wairarapa

4th Jun. An Inspiring Evening with Dr Lucy Hone: *Cognitive Solvey Park, High Street, Masterton* – 5.30pm. In conversation with Sue Kelly, Dr Lucy will share insights from her powerful new book *We Will I Feel Better Through This*. It's a practical and deeply compassionate guide to surviving living loss.

7th Jun. Wairarapa Cinémathèque Presents: Ran: *Cinema 2, Queen Street, Masterton* – 7.30pm. Inspired by King Lear, Akira Kurosawa's late-career epic chronicles a feudal patriarch fallen when an aging warlord divides his kingdom among his sons.

8th Jun. An Evening of Acoustic Music with Shaun Preston: *The Runholder, Martins Road, Gladstone, Greytown* – 6pm. Gather your musical friends and settle in for a night of exceptional food, wine, gin, and acoustic performances by Shaun Preston.

27th Jun–28th Jun. New Zealand Festival of Christmas: *Various locations and times in Greytown.* Over the weekend of Greytown's festival of fun, enjoy holiday cheer featuring light-up vintage tractors, night markets, rural games, the Illumination Night Walk, and more.

Kapiti

20th Jun. Ossia: *Te Manaia, Mahara Place, Paraparaumu* – 6pm. New ensemble Ossia creates space for music to evolve beyond its original form – stretching into improvisation, reinterpretation, and moments of spontaneous connection.

Events

6th–7th Jun. Wellington Baby Expo 2026: *Lower Hutt Events Centre, Laings Road, Lower Hutt* – 10am. Calm attendees and wee ones! This expo is the best all-in-one pregnancy and baby expo under one roof.

7th, 21st, 28th Jun. Sci-Fi Sundays: *Space Place at Carter Observatory, Salamanca Road, Kelburn, Wellington.* Cult classics *Running Man, Mandy,* and *Tank Girl* come to life on the domed planetarium screen for an out-of-this-world experience.

24th Jun. Tahati Cavers Expo NZ: *TSB Arena, Queens Wharf, Wellington Waterfront* – 10am. Talk back to fear with a wide range of exhibitors, industries, government departments, and training institutions at the Tahati cavers expo.

27th Jun. The Royal New Zealand Ballet Presents: Spring Day 2026: *St James Theatre, 77 Willis Street, Place, Te Aro* – 10am. Bring your whānau and spend the day exploring creative choreography the world of dance, and celebrating the joy of being uniquely you.

27th Jun. Zinefest Winter Zine Market: *Te Ngangahau Waka – Victoria University School of Design, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 11am. Take a peek into the fascinating zine scene and get swept up in the local creativity and ingenuity showcased at over 60 stalls.

Music

5th Jun. Blindfolded and Led to the Woods: *Bowlas, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 7.30pm. New Zealand progressive death metal act Blindfolded and Led to the Woods again brings their sophomore album *The Hardest Thing About Being God Is That No One Believes Me.*

5th Jun. Byron the Aquarian: *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. A master of live frequencies, Byron the Aquarian brings a rare, mesmerising approach to the dancefloor by blending deep house, Detroit house, and Italo disco into a hypnotic mix of pulses, fluid, human, and deeply felt.

6th–7th Jun. Scarlet: *Khandallah Hall, Wellington; St Peter's Village Hall, Paekākāriki* – 7.30pm. Jack Van Helen and Lorcan combine haunting vocal harmonies, top-class fiddle, and rich, driving accompaniment on bouzouki and guitar.

6th Jun. Saul Williams meets Carlos Niño: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Visionary poet, musician, and cultural icon Saul Williams joins forces with acclaimed percussionist, producer, and author Lorcan Carlos Niño.

7th Jun. Wellington Community Choir Presents: *St Paul's Church on Willis, Willis Street, Te Aro* – 4pm. Embark on an epic journey in song – from the shifting landscapes of Georgia to the rolling shores of the Caribbean and the inspiring freedom celebrations of South Africa – eight languages, 11 countries, one unforgettable adventure!

20th Jun. Smokehouse: *Smokehouse* **Wellington National Final:** *The Great Hall at Massey University, Buckle Street, Mount Cook* – 12pm. New Zealand's nationwide, live, original music show gives rangatahi the opportunity to perform live on a stage in a professional setting.

20th Jun. Late Night Mass: *Waihalla, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 9pm. Church of Dance is back for a sweaty dance featuring Joey Illah, Lucas Del Olivo, and Critical with the focus on the underground bass culture, community scene.

21st Jun. Wellington City Orchestra: *St Andrew's on the Terrace, The Terrace, Te Aro* – 2pm. Wellington City Orchestra, alongside Ewan Clark and Wellington City Choir, perform works by Clare Dowen, Edward Gregson, and Amy Beach.

27th Jun. Sweetness Now Nu: *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Iconic Anglo-French avant-pop group Sweetness plays Wellington for the first time in years.

4th Jul. Deafheaven and Nothing: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. American black-metal trailblazers Deafheaven have spent the last decade and a half pushing at the emotional and sonic boundaries of metal.

3rd NZ. NZSO National Youth Orchestra Presents: *Michael Fowler Centre, Jervois Quay, Te Ngākau Civic Square* – 6.30pm. The NZSO National Youth Orchestra brings together some of New Zealand's best young musicians to perform four exceptional works conducted by Peter Jarman.

4th Jul. The Veils: *Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Following the critically acclaimed release of *Asphodels* in 2025, The Veils return with a band that invigorated new album *Fragile World*.

Performance

2nd Jun. Wellington Improvisation Troupe Presents: The Ferris Wheel – Improv with a Spin: *Paekākāriki Hall, Collins Avenue, Te Ara* – 7pm. The Ferris wheel, this unique show will star a rotating cast of improvisers whose stories are woven together.

6th Jun. Wellington Comic Improvisers Presents: Tell Me the Truth About Love: *Newtown Community Centre, Wellington; St Peter's Village Hall, Paekākāriki* – 3pm. Wellington Comic Opera will take audiences on a trip through time, wondering if modern love differs from comic operas, musicals, and art songs in this new, interactive, and risqué showcase.

11th Jun. Fight Club: *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Wellington's gentlemen's fighting showdown, hot takes regular punches and the audience is judge, jury, and executioner.

16th–20th Jun. Don't Look Now: *BATS Theatre, Kent Terrace, Te Aro* – 7pm. A critically acclaimed collection of short stories about a crumbling climate, focusing on empowering community, they ask: how can we make an impactful difference to the climate crisis?

19th Jun. Sex Lessons Laughs with Jones: *Mustapic and Samoena Zetea: The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Sex educator Samoena Zetea will have you giggling between sets in the lead-up to Valentine's Day.

5th–11th Jun. Kids'Stuff Presents: Sakabaqat!: *Tararua Tramping Club Clubrooms, Wellington; Te Raukura ki Raukura, Paraparaumu* – various times. How will an apprentice MatteMagician and a fire Chief from Bondie save the village from the Flobberflamm? With some Mathemagics of course!

12th–14th Jun. Pop Up Theatre: Pop Up Theatre Presents: Dwell: *Pop Up Theatre, Kent Terrace, Te Aro* – 6.30pm. Locally inspired by La Rondo, Arthur Schnitzler's 19th century satire about relationships, Dwell explores the ways people are drawn in chain of debt and difficult conversations.

20th–27th Jun. Kaitoke Laughs with Jones: *Mustapic and Samoena Zetea: The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Sex educator Samoena Zetea will have you giggling between sets in the lead-up to Valentine's Day.

21st–27th Jun. Kids'Stuff Presents: Sakabaqat!: *Tararua Tramping Club Clubrooms, Wellington; Te Raukura ki Raukura, Paraparaumu* – various times. How will an apprentice MatteMagician and a fire Chief from Bondie save the village from the Flobberflamm? With some Mathemagics of course!

23rd–27th Jun. Squash Co. Arts Collective Presents: Dwell: *Pop Up Theatre, Kent Terrace, Te Aro* – 6.30pm. Locally inspired by La Rondo, Arthur Schnitzler's 19th century satire about relationships, Dwell explores the ways people are drawn in chain of debt and difficult conversations.

27th Jun. Kaitoke Laughs with Jones: *Mustapic and Samoena Zetea: The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Sex educator Samoena Zetea will have you giggling between sets in the lead-up to Valentine's Day.

**5th–11

Regional News

Issue 270
June 16, 2026

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News

Dive into ballet

Pirouette into imagination, movement, and self-expression at the Royal New Zealand Ballet's Whānau Day. Taking place on the 27th of June at St James Theatre, this interactive experience is designed to bring families together through dance, storytelling, and creativity.

This year's event is inspired by the beautiful children's ballet *The Bomb*, based on the award-winning book by Sacha Cotter, illustrated by Josh Morgan. A powerful and uplifting story about finding your own voice, *The Bomb* follows a young boy determined to master the perfect 'bomb' dive. With the help of his Nan, a former champion, and through learning to trust himself, he discovers that true success comes from embracing what makes him unique.

At Whānau Day, there are plenty of free activities for all ages and interests that incorporate the central themes of the book, including dance workshops, First Steps movement introduction activities, storytime, a pointe shoes table, arts and craft stations, a face painting station, and a photobooth where you and your family can get a keepsake of Whānau Day!

RNZB's education and community engagement manager Alina Kulikova says that Whānau Day is "about creating a space where everyone feels welcome, inspired, and part of the magic. We want people to see that ballet is not distant or untouchable – it belongs to all of us, and there is joy in discovering it together".

"In a world that can often feel rushed, this is a chance to pause and experience beauty side by side. We can't wait to welcome families into the RNZB whānau and share a day filled with curiosity, creativity, and joy."

On your marks...

Get set. Go, Wellington!

2026 marks the 39th annual Gazley Volkswagen Wellington Marathon on Sunday the 28th of June, and entry is still open in the lead up to race day.

Established in 1986, the scenic trot along the capital's iconic harbour and waterfront is a mid-winter favourite enjoyed by professionals and amateurs of all ages and abilities. This year will include thousands of runners and walkers from more than 20 countries.

"The fact that we're tracking for close to 5000 starters from all over New Zealand and the world really does attest to the event's popularity and renown," event manager Michael Jacques says. "Hnry Stadium is a great venue and the course is incredibly scenic and also flat and fast. I think the big thing is that we cater for runners and walkers of all age and ability."

Last year, local standout Toby Gualter established a new race record in the half marathon, Australian Lester Smith finished his 215th attempt at the classic 42.2k distance, and Wellingtonian Des Young continued his reign as the only person to have finished every Wellington Marathon thus far.

"People come from different fitness backgrounds and have different goals. Not everyone has the time or inclination to train for a full marathon, but most people can achieve a half marathon or a 10k. And the Kids' Magic Mile adds a great family flavour," Jacques continues. "More than 25 percent of entrants so far are either recent new runners or first timers to the Wellington event. I think that speaks to the accessible nature of the Gazley Volkswagen Wellington Marathon."

Participants can also run or walk in support of the New Zealand Heart Foundation's official marathon charity programme Have A Heart, which helps raise money for heart health research.

Whether it's your first or your 101st time running a race, lace up for the 39th Gazley Volkswagen Wellington Marathon.

Cover: Takahē at Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne. Photo by Scott Langdale.

All editorial pages are headed only in red, other colours are advertising features.

The views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect those of *Regional News*.

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Connecting with nature and the stars

Photo by Tanith van Dyk.

The rising of Puanga and Matariki signifies the beginning of the Māori New Year and offers a special opportunity to connect with whānau, celebrate the year gone by, acknowledge those who have passed, and set intentions for the year ahead. It is a time for reflection, renewal, and togetherness. Spending time in nature can help clear the mind and create space to pause and reflect, whether on your own or alongside loved ones. Listening to birdsong, walking beneath the trees, and slowing down for a moment can all help reconnect us to te taiao/the natural world and to each other.

What better place to visit than Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne!

Next time you visit the sanctuary, make sure to grab a copy of our *Matariki mā Puanga Whānau Activity Book* for fun activities to enjoy both during your visit and at home. Take time to notice your surroundings as you explore the sanctuary, learn more about the stars of Puanga and Matariki, and set goals together as a whānau for the year ahead. This year's activities and events are themed around Waitā, the star associated with the ocean and kaimoana, celebrating our connection to waterways, marine life, and food gathered from the sea.

There's heaps happening at Zealandia throughout July for all ages, making it a great winter destination for families and friends. Activities include puppet shows, virtual reality ocean exploration, moana-themed face painting, and creative craft sessions inspired by Waitā, Matariki, and Puanga. Be sure to visit the latest photography exhibition by Māori artist Manaaki Barrett in Te Māra Toi, the stairwell gallery on the way up to Rātā Cafe. Once there, warm up with some delicious Matariki-themed kai from the café menu.

Want to spend time under the stars? Zealandia By Night tours and Kids Night Walks are the perfect after-hours experiences to discover the sanctuary in a whole new light.

Keep an eye on our website for all event listings: www.visitzealandia.com/whats-on

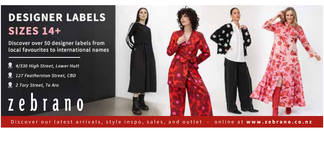
Mathemagical theatre

Tyro, an apprentice MatheMagician, can't get his spells right. So, when Fire Chief Fleet arrives with a mathemagical problem, they desperately need some help. Can maths help save the village from the Flabberfamish monster?

After sell-out tours, *Shalakazap!* went to Brisbane's Out of the Box Festival and was later remounted by Vancouver-based Axis Theatre. A riotous comedy with a heap of audience participation, the show is brought to the stage by KidzStuff just in time for the school holidays.

Written by the phenomenal Jenny Wake ONZM, founder of Calico Young People's Theatre and veteran of Aotearoa television and theatre, *Shalakazap!* is a 45-minute show that demonstrates the magic of live performance. Directed by Joel Baxendale, the creative director of Binge Culture, it features performances from local actors Adriana Calabrese, a musical theatre graduate and actor who has performed most recently in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Sense and Sensibility;* Amalia Calder, a playwright, director, actor, producer, and singer-songwriter who is currently the creative director of KidzStuff; and Haydn Carter, a Whitireia graduate with a passion for performing arts, having worked with the likes of Nextstage Theatre Company, New Zealand Film School, and Stagecraft Theatre.

Showing from the 6th to the 11th of July at the Tararua Tramping Club Rooms in Mount Victoria and on the 16th of July at Te Raukura ki Kāpiti Coastlands Theatre in Paraparaumu, this high-energy production will be a bundle of fun for the whole family.



Systems of power

Critically acclaimed play *Waenga*, produced by Te Rākau in partnership with Hurō Productions, invites audiences to consider their place within systems of power, and what it means to be an active participant in civic life.

Waenga is a whānau affair, created by sister and brother duo Hariata *(Cousins, Whakapapa)* and Tamati Moriarty (*After The Party*), directed by their father Jim Moriarty MNZM, with dramaturgy by their mother Helen Pearse-Otene.

The play premiered at Kia Mau Festival last year before being presented to hundreds of students across Aotearoa. *Waenga* has since expanded, with more songs, action, and important kōrero, and will be performed between the 19th of June and the 5th of July at the new Toi Pōneke art space on Market Lane, the first stop on their nationwide Theatre Marae tour.

The play follows Connie, a young wahine Māori caught in the legislative machinery of 'move-on' orders, who finds herself in a prison holding cell where everything is brought into question: her freedom, her future, and whether survival is even possible in today's political landscape. Witnessing the inequity's of Connie's experience, her friend Peyton begins to realise what a Tangata Tiriti partnership really means, while Grayson, a young Māori lawyer, navigates a justice system that demands more than it gives.

A sharp, resonant story of systemic violence, racism, and hope, *Waenga* explores the challenges of changing the system from the outside and within.

A better future

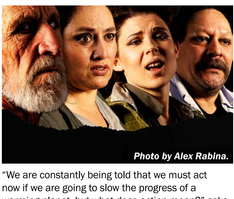


Photo by Alex Rabina.

"We are constantly being told that we must act now if we are going to slow the progress of a warming planet, but what does action mean?" asks playwright Angie Farrow.

In a world saturated in information, where truth is subjective, online platforms are but noisy echo chambers pitting people against one another, and communities struggle to grapple with the fallout of all these mixed messages – it is hard to imagine the solutions for a better future.

Don't Look Now is a collection of short plays about a changing climate written by Farrow and directed by David O'Donnell. A platform for discussions around how to make an impactful difference to the climate crisis, the play follows multiple perspectives that are familiar to any community: a parent concerned about their radical 'greenwashed' daughter, a man faced with rising waters in a small Pacific nation, an old woman who is forced to climb a tree. These plays say "so much about our human responses to the environmental crisis – our mixed emotions, our protests, actions, inactions, fears, frustrations, complacency, doubts", O'Donnell says.

With performances from Ralph Johnson, Liz Kirkman, Mairanga White, Bethany Miller, and Rob Lloyd, *Don't Look Now* will be on at BATS Theatre between the 16th and 20th of June. A panel discussion will be held on the 18th of June, where the Theatre for Climate Team will host an open forum featuring Hon Tamatha Paul, Hon Dr Deborah Russell, Professor Maria Bargh, and more.

Self-published, handmade

Photo by Vanessa Cone.

Lo-fi, DIY, personal, political, aesthetic. Zine-making is one of the most affordable artforms. As the organisers of Wellington Zinefest's Winter Market say, "It's incredible how much creative power can be expressed with just A4 paper", only to be "bought for a fiver".

Held between 12pm and 4pm (with accessibility hour at 11am) on the 27th of June in the atrium of Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington's Kelburn Campus, the Winter Zine Market will feature 60 stalls, all stocked with zines of every genre and subject imaginable. Creators from all ages and all walks of life – each with something unique to offer – will be running the stalls, making the art of the zine one of the few creations with no connection barriers: no algorithms, no middlemen, just self-published, handmade objects and in-person hangs. This year's theme is trade, with zines able to be bartered for with other zines or items of value.

Wellington Zinefest first kicked off in 2007. Local librarians Kyle Buck and Stephanie Poulopoulos got together with zinester Kim Gruschow to hold an event in the hall out the back of the Wesley Methodist Church. The organisers pulled together disparate groups of anarchists, feminists, comic artists, and a few lone wolves and thus, the zine scene in Pōneke was born.

When asked about zine artists the organisers are looking forward to seeing, they replied with, "I cannot believe you will make us choose, they are all good zines!"

Sonic skills

At the end of May, Sacred Heart College hosted the Wellington Regional Heats of this year's Smokefreerockquest. Local singer-songwriter Sofia Machray was one of this year's judges. "I was blown away with the standard of musical talent", she says. "The level of skill and enthusiasm within the groups made it hard to judge, as every single band brought something new and exciting to the stage sonically."

First and second place in the solo/duo category went to Jqime of Wellington High School (WHS) and Community Education Centre, and Stella Pittaway and Margaux Astrid Detera from Wellington Girls' College respectively.

First and second place for the Tangata Beats category – celebrating original music grounded in tangata whenua and Pasifika identity and culture – went to VAKA fom Bishop Viard College, and Aue from Hutt Valley High School (HVHS).

12 bands are headed to the Wellington Regional Final taking place on the 20th of June at The Great Hall at Massey University.

These are Lumerith and The Disciples, both from St Patrick's College Silverstream; Rock Resurrection and Capitol Hazard, both from Wellington College; Dude We're Screwed and Dependency, both from HVHS; Bluebell from Upper Hutt College; DOWNCAST from Aotea College; Groove Generation from Scots College and Hutt International Boys' School; Triple01 from HVHS, Whitby Collegiate, and Wellington College; The JayJs from WHS and Community Education Centre; and Lux from WHS and Community Education Centre and Tawa College. Head along to witness some extraordinary local talent as they battle it out to place in the semi-finals.

Music news

The great evolution

by Madelaine Empson

Photo by Frances Carter.

The Veils are an indie-rock band fronted by English New Zealand musician Finn Andrews, who delivers what is essentially a spiritual reckoning when he performs live. In concert, *Elsewhere Magazine* declares that he wings "his electric guitar like some Southern snake-handling pastor filled with righteous certainty and the spirit of his Lord".

Experience the awakening when The Veils tear it up at Meow Nui on Saturday the 4th of July in support of their eighth studio album *Fragile World*. Due out on the 19th of June, the record marks a striking tonal shift from 2025's critically acclaimed *Asphodels*, which saw them play the same Wellington venue last March.

Andrews says it feels right to start the *Fragile World Tour* "back home in dear Aotearoa... We can't think of a better way to dust off this moth-bitten black suit and hat and get the show on the road."

I last saw you play live at WOMAD in 2024, and there was this very sweet moment where the camera panned to your daughter, who was seeing Daddy play live for the first time.

That was one of the great moments for me, it really was.

It was so special to witness and that gig certainly stands out to me. My question is, what makes a gig stand out to you? Especially considering that you play all over the world.

That WOMAD show was particularly special, seeing my daughter from the stage and then seeing her up on the screen. And I think there was a guy dancing next to her dressed as an alien? Very surreal in a great, WOMAD-style way [chuckles]. There isn't really any formula, it seems, as to what makes a memorable show – sometimes a whole host of factors work in harmony together. It's very unpredictable. It can come from anywhere, that beautiful feeling. That's what keeps it exciting, never really knowing when it will ignite.

On the note of gigs that hopefully ignite something special... How did you find Meow Nui?

Honestly, we have loved playing Wellington since the beginning, and it was brilliant to come to such a great new venue. They had a proper grand piano, the sound was fantastic, and all the people running it were lovely. It was a real treat. I have such a fondness for Wellington. My partner's from Wellington, so I spend a lot of time there now as well. It will be a real joy to get to play there again.

This time, you're touring Fragile World. I've read the album described as possessing intensity but emotional clarity, which almost struck me as an oxymoron. To be so fiery, but precise and measured with that fire... how did you straddle such a delicate balance?

I don't know, I feel like I'm a bit like that! My interior world is kind of a messy, chaotic one. But this is, I suppose, the area of my life where there is the most focus. A lot of care and attention goes into these songs. This album was an odd one in that way, because it was probably the most instinctual. I'm known to labour over these things for a very long time, hence there being five or six years between a lot of our records. But this one was just a year after the one before, so it's very unique.

What do you think led to that immediacy?

I had a lot of songs left over from the last record, and there were a lot written since the last one came out. So I sort of trusted that I knew where it was going and didn't need to lock myself away for a few years to figure it out. A lot of the songs were pointing to quite a clear place. I was excited to go into the studio and figure it out while we were recording. I've realised also that I love recording studios; I love being in that environment more than anywhere else, really. I was keen to explore what kind of decisions I would make while I was in that world, rather than at home on the piano or in a rehearsal room with the band.

I have been thinking about how, when I was younger, I was so fraught with anxiety. Every part of this, I struggled to enjoy. I was always so preoccupied with my own failures and inadequacies. I didn't really ever enjoy being in the studio because I was just trying so hard to make sense of what was going on in my head, trying to be better but knowing I wasn't – it was a very self-flagellating process. It's only recently, as I've gotten a little older, that I'm trying to have a bit more confidence in what I'm doing. Just to go in and enjoy the incredible gift that it is, to be in a space like that with these amazing people.

Asphodels was such a hyper-controlled record. We did it in three days, and it was all live to tape. Very strict. I wanted to make this a bit of a rebellion against that. Explore the studio, spend time in there, see what happens. That was the initial instinct.

You said you felt like all the songs on Fragile World were pointing to a clear place – can you pinpoint what that place is, now that the record is finished?

I haven't got a huge amount of clarity on that yet. I find it's usually after touring them for a while that I start to understand the records more. I think this record reminded me of the first songs I was writing, because I remember feeling a similar way; in a state of overwhelm with the world around me, and retreating to the world of songs. I remember that feeling the most intensely when I was writing the first record [*The Runaway Found*, 2004], and perhaps the second [*Nux Vomica*, 2006]. That feeling of hiding away and not knowing what else to do but this. So I think it came out of need, initially: a need to go somewhere else and to try and process what I was feeling. I suppose it mutated as it went along.

Amazingly, I was just about to ask about your first record and how things have changed for you since 2004! It sounds like a huge part of it has been learning to enjoy the process, despite, or perhaps because of, the anxiety?

It's funny, eh? They call it impostor syndrome, but I don't think it was that, because I genuinely have been an impostor in this world for so long [laughs]. It's only recently that I feel like I have figured a few things out. Never felt comfortable calling myself a singer or a songwriter, let alone an artist. It's been hard won, this feeling of having any kind of control over what I'm doing or any sort of pride in it. It's all been a process of learning. I was thrown into this very young, without a clue. It's been very freeing to feel like I enjoy this and I love it and I need it, all at the same time. That's been a great evolution of my life.

Where pain meets poetry

Deafheaven have spent the past 15 years lacerating the emotional and sonic boundaries of modern metal. Formed in 2010 by childhood friends George Clarke (vocals) and Kerry McCoy (guitar), with drummer Daniel Tracy joining in 2012, guitarist and keyboardist Shiv Mehra in 2013, and bassist Chris Johnson in 2017, the American band uncloaked their sixth album last year. *Lonely People With Power* is both a culmination and a reckoning.

"A lot of making this album felt like doubling down on an identity it took a decade to fully understand," Clarke says. "Essentially staking claim to an assortment of ideas we've thrown together through the years that now feel cohesive."

On their previous records, Clarke says the band strived to challenge themselves at every turn. With *Lonely People With Power*, "there was actually a real comfort in looking back and feeling established in our own sound".

That sound is multi-faceted, Clarke continues, "which is why there's so many different things going on".

The record captures Deafheaven's innate ability to merge melody with brutality, and pain with poetry. Sonically, reflections on masculinity, inherited trauma, family, and self-perception translate to "black-metal bangers through and through" (*The Progressive Subway*), each one "brimming with pain and longing and wonder and fury" (*Angry Metal Guy*).

"The music is challenging alone in itself, we don't need to overexert ourselves to prove a point. Kerry and I were like, 'Let's just do us to the most us we can do it.'"

Revered for their transcendental live shows, Deafheaven will take to the stage with special guests, shoegaze renegades Nothing, at San Fran on the 2nd of July. Put black-metal trailblazers together with outlaw poets for a gig that splits the ears and stirs the soul.

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From the depths

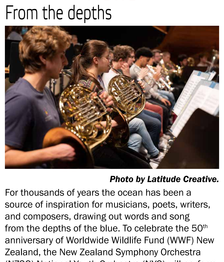


Photo by Latitude Creative.

For thousands of years the ocean has been a source of inspiration for musicians, poets, writers, and composers, drawing out words and song from the depths of the blue. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Worldwide Wildlife Fund (WWF) New Zealand, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO) National Youth Orchestra (NYO) will perform a potent and sweeping ocean-themed concert, *NYO La Mer*, on the 3rd of July at the Michael Fowler Centre.

Players in the NYO range from 11 to 23. Led by acclaimed conductor Dane Lam, the orchestra will perform four works that capture the beauty, power, environmental importance, and emotional resonance of our marine environment.

The programme features Claude Debussy's groundbreaking *La Mer* (the sea) and Benjamin Britten's *Four Sea Interludes* from his opera *Peter Grimes* alongside the New Zealand premiere of renowned Hawaiian composer Michael-Thomas Foumai's *Kealaikahiki Suite*, and the world premiere of *Pray for the wanderer* by NZSO NYO 2026 composer-in-residence Jack Bewley.

WWF-New Zealand's acting chief executive Jamie Fowler says, "Music has a unique ability to connect people emotionally to the natural world, and this concert will be a powerful celebration of the ocean that sustains us all."

The evening is expected to be full of talent, and a powerful reminder of Aotearoa's deep connection to ocean and our duty to protect our natural taonga.

Advice from Alan

KiwiSaver and your first home

by Alan Knowsley, consultant, Rainey Collins Lawyers

If you are wanting to use your KiwiSaver for a deposit on your first home, it is important to tell the agent and your lawyer so that special clauses can be included in the Sale and Purchase Agreement (SAP). When KiwiSaver funds are used for payment of the deposit, the seller's lawyer needs to hold these funds undisbursed until settlement, which is not what normally happens with the deposit. The standard practice is for the agent to receive the deposit once the agreement has become unconditional. After a holding period, the agent can deduct their commission from the deposit and transfer the balance to the vendor's lawyer.

If you are paying the deposit on a property using KiwiSaver (and/or superannuation funds), your agreement needs to include a specific clause confirming that the vendor's lawyer will undertake to hold these funds undisbursed until settlement. Your legal advisor can provide you with required wording to add to your SAP.

To withdraw KiwiSaver funds for the deposit, a purchaser's lawyer must give the KiwiSaver provider an undertaking that the funds will be held undisbursed until settlement and that if settlement does not go ahead (due to no fault of the purchaser), then those funds will be repaid to the KiwiSaver provider. Because a purchaser's lawyer needs to give these undertakings, they require an undertaking from the vendor's lawyer, as it is the vendor's lawyer who is in control of the deposit funds once received. Having a clause in the SAP recording this arrangement ensures that the vendor's lawyer will comply with the requirements.

If settlement does not occur through no fault of the purchaser, the deposit is refundable. The repayment undertaking confirms this and is important because KiwiSaver funds can only be used for the purchase of a property; the purchaser is not entitled to receive these funds personally. Therefore, if the purchase does not happen, the KiwiSaver funds must be returned to the KiwiSaver provider.

Camp competition

by Alessia Belsito-Riera

Calling all pop quiz crushers, all *Jeopardy* champs, all Trivial Pursuit pros – the challenge you've been waiting for is upon us.

On Friday the 19th of June, Wellingtonians can test their mettle in *Are You Smarter Than a Drag Queen?* where at Scotty and Mal's Cocktail and Lounge Bar, contestants will have the chance at chaotic glory.

Join Rosa Violeta and Yuri Guaii, star of *RuPaul's Drag Race Down Under* and *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula* in a trivia night unlike any other packed with fabulous prizes, outrageous drag shows, madcap banter, and questions that'll have you questioning everything. Whether you nail the answers or charm your way through the madness, you might just walk away with something fabulous… or hilariously useless.

Expect stunning looks, unhinged lip-syncs, and maybe even a heated debate over who really invented the pavlova from A-list queen Rosa Violeta and Yuri Guaii, Auckland's premier drag misfit who has been disturbing the scene since 2014 with their innovative looks, mystifying performance style, and eccentric demeanour.

"What started as two drag queens joking around over pop culture, random facts, and wildly competitive pub quiz nights quickly turned into *Are You Smarter Than a Drag Queen?*" Rosa Violeta says, adding that she can't wait to put audiences "to the test and prove once and for all whether they really are smarter than a drag queen".

As camp, cocktails, and competition collide, contestants will be crowned and Wellington will finally answer the age-old question: *Are You Smarter Than a Drag Queen?*

Silent epidemic

Dr Lucy Hone has spent the last two decades dedicating herself to the science and psychology of resilience, developing practical tools to equip people navigating tough times. *How Will I Ever Get Through This? A Practical Guide to Navigating Life's Toughest Times* was published earlier this year. Described as a much-needed guide to surviving the silent epidemic of living loss that sits outside of bereavement – the kind that follows divorce, illness, estrangement, redundancy, infertility, or any other life upheaval – this book taps into the uncharted territory of loss that can often be dismissed or ignored.

Hosted at Copthorne Solway Park in Masterton on the 4th of June, Sue Reid, owner of Hedley's Books and organiser of literary events, will sit down with Dr Hone for a fireside chat about her new book. Reid says, "Lucy's book is timely, especially in these ever-changing uncertain times. Straight to the point, candid, but deeply rooted in compassion, Lucy provides stories from others, starting points, and ultimately, a way to find what is still good in our life and what we are living for. It's ever hopeful but not in a patronising way."

Dr Hone is an internationally acclaimed author and TED Talks speaker with over nine million views. The conversation will be followed by a chance for audience members to meet Dr Hone, grab a copy of *How Will I Ever Get Through This?* or *Resilient Grieving*, and get it signed. Proceeds will go to supporting Autism Wairarapa Charitable Trust.

KIMI/You Are Here *by Isabella Smith*

In this new series, Isabella Smith meets the artists behind the sculptures dotted around our city.

Photo courtesy of Wellington Sculpture Trust.

Seung Yul Oh.

Located in the coastal planting area within the shipping dry-dock beside Waitangi Park, an inverted, stainless steel tear drop hangs suspended amidst the native vegetation. A mirror to the surrounding sky, trees, and waterfront, the sculpture reflects shifting weather patterns overhead and the faces of people standing before it.

Despite standing at five and a half metres, the softness of its curves and the purity of its surface somehow prevent it from feeling imposing. *KIMI/You Are Here* can be seen from many viewpoints around the six-hectare urban park, but the sculpture sits at the end of a concealed path. To find yourself staring at your own reflection is to make a small discovery, and become aware of your connection to place and to one another.

KIMI/You Are Here is like a giant location pin, reminiscent of the ones dotted over digital maps, a familiar symbol that reflects how people constantly try to orient themselves within the world. For New Zealand Korean artist and sculptor Seung Yul Oh, locating oneself is not only geographical, it is also emotional. The idea of the sculpture began with an image of releasing a small, gravityless droplet of soul into a site, "almost like a thought suspended in space", he says. He wanted to create something intangible that could "quietly settle into the city and begin forming relationships with people, light, weather, and memory."

"I was interested in creating something that feels emotionally open and responsive rather than fixed. Public art becomes part of people's daily rhythm and daily weather, and I wanted *KIMI* to exist gently within that flow."

Like all public works, many hands, hearts, and minds were involved in the fabrication and installation *of KIMI/You Are Here,* as well as an enormous amount of precision, craftsmanship, and patience. Beneath the sculpture's smooth surface is a highly complex, rigorously calculated internal structure – with every curve and seam carefully resolved to maintain "a sense of visual lightness". Led by Rob Janes of LT McGuinness, the sculpture took three weeks to install. The cleverly hidden foundations provide the stability needed to prevent the structure from toppling in Pōneke's renowned gale-force winds, all the while making the sculpture appear weightless, tapering down to an elegant point where it meets the earth.

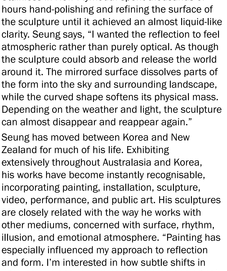
Kerry Fowler and his team of fabricators at Global Stainless in New Plymouth spent thousands of hours hand-polishing and refining the surface of the sculpture until it achieved an almost liquid-like clarity. Seung says, "I wanted the reflection to feel atmospheric rather than purely optical. As though the sculpture could absorb and release the world around it. The mirrored surface dissolves parts of the form into the sky and surrounding landscape, while the curved shape softens its physical mass. Depending on the weather and light, the sculpture can almost disappear and reappear again."

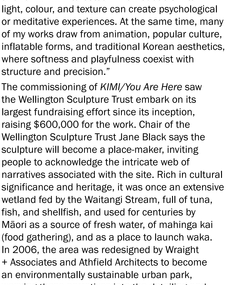
Seung has moved between Korea and New Zealand for much of his life. Exhibiting extensively throughout Australasia and Korea, his works have become instantly recognisable, incorporating painting, installation, sculpture, video, performance, and public art. His sculptures are closely related with the way he works with other mediums, concerned with surface, rhythm, illusion, and emotional atmosphere. "Painting has especially influenced my approach to reflection and form. I'm interested in how subtle shifts in light, colour, and texture can create psychological or meditative experiences. At the same time, many of my works draw from animation, popular culture, inflatable forms, and traditional Korean aesthetics, where softness and playfulness coexist with structure and precision."

The commissioning of *KIMI/You Are Here* saw the Wellington Sculpture Trust embark on its largest fundraising effort since its inception, raising $600,000 for the work. Chair of the Wellington Sculpture Trust Jane Black says the sculpture will become a place-maker, inviting people to acknowledge the intricate web of narratives associated with the site. Rich in cultural significance and heritage, it was once an extensive wetland fed by the Waitangi Stream, full of tuna, fish, and shellfish, and used for centuries by Māori as a source of fresh water, of mahinga kai (food gathering), and as a place to launch waka. In 2006, the area was redesigned by Wraight + Associates and Athfield Architects to become an environmentally sustainable urban park, weaving those narratives into the detailing and spatial composition. The name Waitangi Park was given to acknowledge the stream that was sent underground to become part of the wastewater system.

The Sculpture Trust sought permission from mana whenua and Wellington Tenths Trust and Palmerston North Māori Reserve Trust, who presented the sculpture with its second name, Kimi, alongside a whakatauki to enrich the work's context and significance. Kimi signifies the actions to seek, delve, search, or hunt. The whakatauki, 'Kimi horoa, kimi horapa – seek far and wide' advocates for the extensive exploration and pursuit of knowledge and understanding in a broad, sweeping manner.

Seung and his family moved to Seoul this year. He tells me, "Distance has changed my relationship to the work quite a lot. During the project, I was deeply focused on the physical realities of fabrication and installation, but now I experience the sculpture more through memory, photographs, and the stories people continue to share with me. I think a lot about how distance and memory shape our sense of place. The work has become a reminder that our relationship to a city is never static, it continues to shift through time, movement, and lived experience."





Close-up

by Madelaine Empson

The thespian of song

Photo by Greg Gorman.

Engelbert Humperdinck is a global icon. With record sales in excess of 150 million, including 64 gold albums and 35 platinum, four GRAMMY® nominations, a Golden Globe, and stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Las Vegas Walk of Fame, and Leicester Walk of Fame, he is known the world over as the king of romance.

"I just love singing, I love creating – that's my number one thing", he tells me when I ask about his remarkable career, which spans one shy of 60 years of countless chart-toppers and sell-out world tours.

Just last month, the *Release Me* balladeer turned 90 years old. Let *The Celebration Tour* commence! "I'm so looking forward to coming over and doing my thing", he delights of his Wellington concert at the Michael Fowler Centre on the 26th of June.

Hello, how are you?

Hello, here I am! I've just been out this morning taking in a little sunshine. I don't know what it is in Celsius, but it's about 88 degrees Fahrenheit here.

Ooh, it's about 10 degrees Celsius here.

Let me add that up... that's 48 degrees Fahrenheit! That's not much! Bloody cold [laughs].

It Is! It's been about seven years since you last toured here...

Seven years! Has the time gone that quickly? It's just whizzing by, isn't it! Already, I'm 90. I can't believe it myself. I love work and I love being on stage, dancing around, doing my thing. I can't sit at home and put my feet up and watch television, I have to be on the road. I'm a road warrior [laughs].

I bet seven years in the life of Engelbert Humperdinck would be remarkable.

It's been very good. Nothing has changed really, as far as my ability to work and to be on stage and travel around the world. I'm on the road all the time on world tours. Except for COVID, that's the only time I've had time off at home without working in... 59 years.

Wow. What is it that drives you?

I'm a thespian kind of song. I love to act on stage. I love to act upon the tools that God has given me, and the wonderful songs that I've recorded over the years, for the people who have made me who I am today by buying my records. About 15 years ago, we had a census about how many records I've sold around the world. It was over 150 million, and that's a wonderful number for any person. It doesn't happen in today's market, not at all, because of the different style of selling now – the internet, downloading, this and that. It's not the same. I used to love the past. I'd call up and say, "How many did we sell today?" It was so exciting. Now you don't know, it's all digital.

With so many things moving online these days, your music has experienced a surge on social media. Do you see the reels that people make with your songs?

I see what people are up to! I use social media quite a lot, because on a Tuesday I put out an all-round bulletin called Tuesday Museday. I say, "It's Tuesday Museday, and I'm talking to my friends around the world", and I give people the news about what's going on for me that week. So I see what's happening on Facebook and Instagram and all that business.

I understand you have new music out now and coming soon?

I've got a new single out right now called *I've Got You*, which is a great title. It was written by a gentleman called Larry Butler, who incidentally worked with Kenny Rogers on his number one hits. Unfortunately, Larry Butler passed away in 2012. I had lunch with Joel [Diamond], a producer I worked with about 49, 50 years ago on songs like *After the Lovin'* and *This Moment in Time*, and he said, 'It's time for us to do something'. I said, 'Yes, I need another *After the Lovin'*'. Because that was in 1976/77, and that was the most highly played record on radio, ever. Joel said, 'I'll play you a couple of songs', and I picked *I've Got You*. I said, 'I want that one!' Larry Butler did a great job. As a matter of fact, he had told Joel, 'I think this is probably the best song I've ever written'. That's on tape, on Joel's answering machine. I've heard it myself. So, we went into the studio and recorded it. In England, they've made a dance version of it. It's only been out a couple of weeks, but it's moving!

And I've got a new album coming out in July – not with this producer, with Cleopatra Records – of songs from the 80s that some of the big groups recorded: The Cars, Aerosmith, Kiss, Journey. I took singles from all their albums and recorded them my way. I think it's going to make quite an impression, because for a person like me, who's a balladeer, to get into that market... it's quite different.

When you perform in Wellington, will audiences get to hear any of the songs from the new album?

I'll be doing a couple from the new album, definitely! Plus I'll be doing the new single. I've got to promote, haven't I? [Laughs.]

When you get out on stage, can you describe what happens – that feeling of connecting with your audience?

First and foremost, I'm a basket case. Before I walk on stage, my hands are cold, I'm walking around doing all these [vocal warmups]. The microphone is switched off! I'm very nervous, and when I get out there, I don't touch the audience for about 10 minutes because I'm *freezing* – I don't want them to think, 'Oh, that guy feels as if he's dead'. After five or 10 minutes, once you get hit by an audience reaction, it charges your batteries immediately. You warm up to it and you know that they're gonna be fine, *you're* gonna be fine.

Do you have a favourite song to perform live?

I don't really – but I have to say that the song I recorded that made me what I am today, really, is a song called *Release Me*. And on the B-side of *Release Me*, my dear, is the national anthem of New Zealand.

Oh?

It's called *Ten Guitars*! [Laughs.] It might as well be, because little kids in the audience, they all know *Ten Guitars*. What a big hit that was...

We learned and sang that song in primary school as a whole class!

Of course, at that particular time, you didn't realise you were going to be talking to the guy who recorded that song! Well, here I am!

That's a huge pinch-me moment for me – what are the biggest pinch-me moments for you?

Believe me, I've got to pinch myself now! That after 59 years I'm still playing to audiences all over the world. *Release Me* started the ball rolling, I was nobody at the time, and I came along and stopped the almighty Beatles, who I'm a big fan of, from having their 13th number one. I remember the beginning. You have to remember your beginnings. *Release Me* still, to this day, is as fresh as it was when I recorded it 59 years ago.

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Family – school holidays

Discover holiday fun in Porirua!

Make a splash at Arena Aquatics

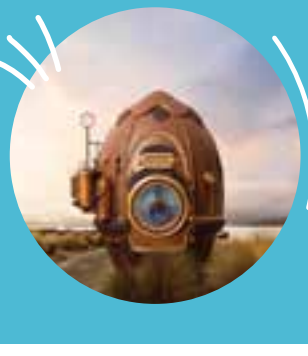
9–12 JULY
Don't miss the Matariki harbourside light display 5.30–9pm

Try the pump tracks at Aotea Lagoon and Postgate Park

Get yummy treats at Kai Tahi

Visit the friendly animals at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park

Test your detective skills at the Police Museum



7 JULY
Enjoy World Chocolate Day with Whittaker's chocolate at Pātaka Art + Museum 11am–2pm

7, 9 & 17 JULY
Enjoy outdoor games and loose parts play at Aotea Lagoon 11am–2pm

PoriruaNZ.com

poriruacity

Family – school holidays

Par2 Minigolf

Minigolf has been a staple of Napier's Marine Parade since the 1940s. What began simply as a large putting green has developed into Par2 Minigolf, guaranteed fun for you and the kids. Located adjacent to the local isite, you'll enjoy panoramic views of the coast of Hawke's Bay while you compete on one of two courses: Pacific Pro-Am or Deco Drive. The former is a quintessential minigolf course, full of wacky angles, tricky water hazards, and tree obstacles. Deco Drive is a complex course with organic curves and harsh slopes.

Hawke's Bay Museum

Visit Hawke's Bay's award-winning museum, home of the region's taonga and other treasures. Explore the artefacts in the Taonga Māori Gallery and discover the remarkable story of the region's recovery following the devastating earthquake in 1931. The museum showcases changing exhibitions of art, culture and social history. With activities for children, a gift shop, a jam-packed events calendar, and so much to see, the museum is a must-do experience for visitors and locals alike. Sharing the diverse voices and stories of Te Matau-a-Māui, entry is free.

Faraday Museum of Technology

Ignite your imagination at the Faraday Museum of Technology, where hands-on adventures await visitors of all ages! Discover interactive exhibits where you can touch, play, and explore the wonders of science, technology, and history in exciting ways. From historic appliances and engines to energy sources and games, there's so much to see and uncover. A magical place where history comes to life anew, the Faraday Museum of Technology offers an experience you won't forget that's perfect for families and anyone with a curious mind!

The National Aquarium of NZ

The National Aquarium of New Zealand is home to saltwater, freshwater, and land animal exhibits from New Zealand and around the world. The 1.5-million-litre Oceanarium, which you can experience with a walk through an underwater viewing tunnel, showcases the variety of aquatic species that exist in Hawke's Bay, including stingrays, kingfish, hāpuku, snapper, and more. Watch the famous little penguins feed and play in the Penguin Cove, and connect with native wildlife like tuatara and kiwi. ***Photo by Molly Rose Nilsson.***

Book your adventure with our Hawke's Bay experts today!

Our team can book accommodation, popular activities, bike hire and more. Trusted advice with no booking fees.

Call 0800 84 74 88
or visit napiernz.com

isite Visitor Information | NAPIER

Family – school holidays

Kennedy Park

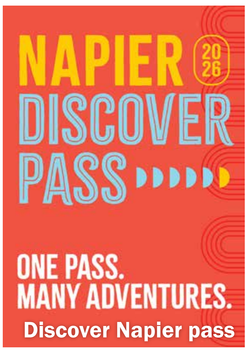
Located near the heart of Napier, Kennedy Park is an accommodation option that's fun for the whole whānau. There is so much to do onsite that you'll be tempted to spend entire days on the premises. Kids and adults will love the heated swimming complex, basketball half court, and giant outdoor chess board. Stroll the gardens or relax at the café while the tamariki let loose at the adventure playground and on the colourful jumping pillow. Spend time in the games room playing pool, table-top games, or air hockey together as a family.

Napier Aquatic Centre

You don't have to wait for hot summer days to enjoy a day in the water. Napier Aquatic Centre is open year-round for water-based exercise and fun. Three pools means everyone can jump in – choose from the five-lane 25-metre lap pool for walking and lane swimming, the disability-friendly six-lane Ivan Wilson Pool, or the learners' pool complete with toddler pool and mini waterfall. The complex also features waterslides, a spray park open from October to March, a beautiful outdoor area, and relaxing spas. Jump in and have fun!

Ocean Spa

Ocean Spa is Napier's premier heated pool and fitness complex located on Marine Parade. Boasting open-air, heated, and chlorinated pools and spas with panoramic ocean views, visitors can enjoy a range of options from the toddler pool to therapeutic pools with water fountains and pool jets. Visitors can unwind in spacious outdoor spa pools and refuel with a coffee or bite to eat at Bach Café. Centrally located, Ocean Spa is the perfect spot to relax and re-energise, rain or shine.



Discover Napier pass

Get adventurous and explore Napier with one simple pass! Take a journey through some of Napier's favourite attractions, from relaxing coastal experiences to hands on discovery and family-friendly fun. Visit five iconic venues across Napier, uncover marine life, roll into skate sessions, tee off by the sea, and bring fascinating machines to life. Choose where to return for a bonus visit and make the most of every experience. Get your pass at www.napiernz.com or instore at the Napier isite.

Family – school holidays

Inside your imagination

A little secret about Rotorua is that from this Kiwi town you can travel through time and space, around the world, and to places unknown... photographically, that is! 3D Trick Art Gallery is the only one of its kind in New Zealand and features over 50 life-size, realistic 2D paintings that come alive through your camera and your poses, changing them to 3D imagery. All you have to do is jump in to create epic pictures and fun memories.

There are five themed sections in the gallery. In Classic Art, visitors can step inside famous paintings. Kiwi Life is inspired by New Zealand culture and history. Visitors can explore glaciers and outer space while putting their creativity to the test in the Challenge section. Create your own mythical story in the Fantasy area. Grand Nature celebrates New Zealand's natural landscape.

Escape from the jaws of a giant crocodile, make a break from a great white shark, or leap from the clutches of a goliath octopus. Scale mountains and traverse waterfalls. Fancy a trip to the Moon? Or perhaps you'd prefer to explore Venice, a glacier, or fly away in a hot air balloon. Talk about an Instagram-worthy vacation!

Located on the grounds of Rotorua Heritage Farm just an eight-minute drive from the centre of town, 3D Trick Art Gallery is a fun, family-friendly activity come rain or shine. From within the dry and heated gallery, you can embark on countless once-in-a-lifetime adventures all in one day – the only limit is your imagination and creativity.

Celebrating the Māori New Year

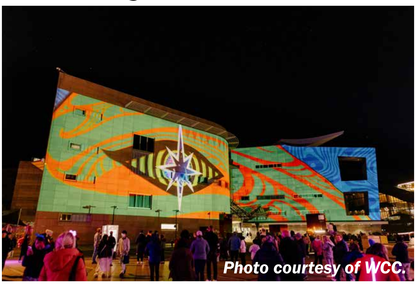


Photo courtesy of WCC.

Wellington City Council invites you to celebrate the Māori New Year with Matariki Ahi Kā from the 9th to the 12th of July, 6pm to 9pm on the Wellington Waterfront.

The event is an immersive walk-through experience with fire, projections, performances, and a special ceremony to honour those who have passed away since last Matariki.

As part of the ceremony, write down the names of loved ones, memories, and hopes for the future. Your messages will be offered to the flames to rise to the stars. Share kai with friends and whānau each night at one of the two vibrant food courts – at Odlins Plaza and near the marina at the back of Te Papa – and enjoy live music.

The rising of Puanga (also known as the star Rigel in Orion) and the Matariki star cluster (Pleiades, or the Seven Sisters) mark the Māori New Year. Puanga is the star acknowledged by mana whenua iwi Te Āti Awa while Ngāti Toa acknowledges the Matariki cluster. Puanga and Matariki can be seen in different parts of the Wellington region. The Māori New Year is a special time to get together, remember loved ones, share stories and kai, and plan for a sustainable future.

Bundle up the whole whānau for this spectacular free event and celebrate the Māori New Year in a uniquely Wellington way.

You can check out the Matariki Ahi Kā programme and view the map at www.wellington.govt.nz/matariki

Family – school holidays

A Memory of a Summer Dream

Catherine Warren with her painting Shelter.

Electric Gaze by Catherine Warren.

As winter arrives Katherine Mansfield House & Garden is offering visitors the opportunity to take a break from the colder weather and step inside *A Memory of a Summer Dream*, an exhibition of paintings and poetry by Thorndon artist and writer Catherine Warren.

From dawn until dusk, humble horizons, reaching branches, serene sunsets, and familiar words transport viewers to another season, unlocking their own cherished memories.

Warren explains, “Summer is a season longed for and revered in the collective Kiwi consciousness. All year we wait for summer to arrive, with high expectations of glorious blue skies.”

In Warren’s paintings it’s easy to spot the same landscapes that inspired the imagery in Katherine Mansfield’s story *At the Bay*, imagery that is quintessentially part of the New Zealand summer. The works were created between the summers of 2023 and 2026 and form Warren’s first solo exhibition, which runs until the 23rd of August.

“It’s really special to have this exhibition at Katherine Mansfield House & Garden,” Warren says. “Much like Katherine’s own writing, my work is grounded in a sense of place, nostalgia, and common experience. I’m excited to share it with visitors and spark conversation about their own summer memories.”

Visitors of all ages are encouraged to spend some time at the activity table and make a poem or collage to take away. A memory, or perhaps a dream, of a warmer time!

The exhibition space is in a former bedroom of the house and hosts around three exhibitions a year. Director of Katherine Mansfield House & Garden Cherie Jacobson says, “We honour Mansfield’s legacy by caring for her childhood home and having it open to the public as a museum, but we also love to support contemporary artists and writers as a way of celebrating Mansfield’s creative life and achievements.”

Celebrate creativity

With a rare opportunity to experience original Salvador Dalí etchings right here in Manawatū, the Art EXPO 2026 immediately captures the imagination and sets the tone for an extraordinary event. Now approaching two decades as the region’s longest-running art exhibition, the EXPO continues to celebrate creativity on an inspiring scale. This year features close to 100 artists from across Aotearoa and more than 1000 original works, offering a rich and diverse visual experience.

From established names to emerging talent, the exhibition strikes a dynamic balance between tradition and innovation, inviting visitors to explore everything from classical techniques to bold contemporary expression. Guest artist Hamish Macaulay, a Kāpiti Coast printmaker, further enhances the programme. More than an exhibition, the EXPO is a celebration of connection and a vital fundraiser for the Feilding and District Art Society – making it an unmissable cultural highlight.

Family – school holidays

Taking over Wellington Museum

Wellington Museum is inviting tamariki to take the lead for a special day of free whānau fun. At Tamariki Takeover on Saturday the 11th of July from 10am to 2pm, the museum will be taken over with activities inspired by the wonders of Matariki and new exhibition *Capital of Kai.*

Families can expect a day packed with bespoke museum tours, collage and weaving crafts, Matariki storytime, and a chaotic kaputī party with the vibrant characters of Fairy Cat and Friends.

Tamariki can explore hidden details and find fun food facts throughout the museum with the Tasty Treasure Hunt. These activity sheets are available for free from the front desk during the exhibition run.

Inside the *Capital of Kai* exhibition on the ground floor, you'll find 100 years of Wellington hospo history. Tamariki can feed their curiosity by getting up close to miniatures of Wellington's most renowned dishes and dream up meals on the lightbox drawing activity.

There's lots to see in the museum's Attic like the new kororā little penguin display. Here you'll learn about the vital role they play in our harbour's ecosystem, and how we can all help protect them. Other treasures in the Attic include Steven Adams' basketball boots and Ngā Hau – the museum's own Time Machine.

Capital of Kai is on now until Sunday the 6th of September. Wellington Museum is situated on Jervois Quay on Queens Wharf and open daily from 10am to 5pm. Learn more about what's on at wellingtonmuseum.nz

Make Matariki memories

Space Place is the place for Matariki with their accessible experiences throughout the July school holidays.

Matariki Together is Space Place's whānau day on Sunday the 12th of July. From 10am to 3pm, families can enjoy live Matariki star talks in the planetarium, storytelling with Moira Wairama, crafts, and more. Under-fives go free with discounts for rangatahi aged five to 17, tertiary students, and Gold Card holders. Tickets are limited, be quick to secure your place.

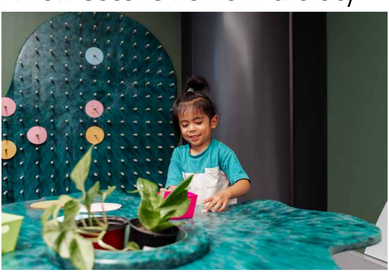
Space Place is open daily during the school break and will increase screenings of whānau-friendly planetarium films. For the Matariki season, most planetarium shows will wrap up with a live star talk about the Matariki cluster and the special Puanga star. You'll learn about their significance to Pōneke and how to find them in the night sky.

Young explorers can wander the galleries at their own pace with the Tamariki Star Trail free with admission. Pick up a space-questionnaire from the front desk and see if you can find all the answers hidden throughout the galleries.

If you're wondering how to get up the hill, the Take a Red Rocket to Space combo returns from Wednesday the 1st of July, giving you 20 percent off return Wellington Cable Car trips, 20 percent off entry to Space Place, and – just for the school holidays – 2-for-1 kids' pizzas at Cable Top Eatery. Find more details and book your visit at spaceplace.nz

Family – school holidays

A new second home in the city



Nōku te Ao Capital E's play space has quickly become a popular spot for whānau in the city since it reopened in Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui, Wellington Central Library.

In the first three months since reopening, more than 13,000 tamariki, caregivers, and ECE kaiako have visited to see what all the fuss is about.

Step inside and it's easy to see why... The free play space is designed for ages zero to five and their caregivers to enjoy together. Tamariki of all ages and abilities can explore a wide range of activities at their own pace, from costumes to crafts, and of course an ever-popular slide.

Designed with Te Āti Awa mana whenua engagement, the play space is inspired by the beloved local pūrākau of Ngake and Whātaitai, the taniwha that shaped Te Whanganui-a-Tara and Te Awa Kairangi Hutt River. As tamariki play they move through the pūrākau, experiencing the power of Ngake in the central slide, the gentle nature of Whātaitai in the quieter zones, and the transformation of Whātaitai into Manu Muramura, the spirit bird.

See what local whānau have to say:

"We love it here, we were here yesterday and back tomorrow."

"It's so hard to leave!"

"I wish I had another baby so we can keep coming back."

The play space is open Monday to Saturday from 9:30am to 3:30pm. Find it on the mezzanine level of Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui, Wellington Central Library.

School holidays for all ages

Whānau looking to stay busy this July will love Nōku te Ao Capital E's upcoming school holiday programme for ages zero to 14.

Now based inside Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui, Wellington Central Library, Nōku te Ao Capital E's upcoming programme invites whānau to immerse themselves in Matariki through weaving, crafts, digital media, and textiles.

Starting with the youngest, tamariki aged three to eight plus and their caregivers can learn raranga weaving on Saturday the 4th of July. In this free session taking place at Ngā Paiaka bleachers, the talented Ōtari Raranga Weavers will share tikanga and basic techniques using locally sourced harakeke. This age group will also enjoy weekly Make a Maramataka Journal craft sessions happening each Saturday in July in the play space on the mezzanine level. Using templates by artist Tayla Hartemink, whānau can create personalised journals to guide them throughout the year.

There are also two exciting opportunities coming up for older tamariki aged eight and up. Matariki Live! offers a behind-the-scenes look inside the OnTV studio, normally only open to school bookings. During this special open day, the MetService team will help tamariki present their own Matariki weather forecast in front of the greenscreen. Older tamariki can also book into screenprinting workshops in the Makerspace. At He puna ora, he wai ora, tamariki learn about the importance of protecting our moana before screenprinting their own creative designs onto recycled tees or tote bags. Visit ntace.nz for more.

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MATARIKI MĀ PUANGA KI TE MĀRA A TĀNE

Celebrate Matariki and Puanga at Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne

Activities for the whole whānau - connect with nature, reflect on the year gone and celebrate the year to come at Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne throughout July!

For more info on events, and to download our whānau activity booklet

Check out www.visitzealandia.com/whats-on

ZEALANDIA
TE MĀRA A TĀNE

Family – school holiday shows

Family fun in Porirua

Kai Tahi. Photo by Johnny Hendrikus

Porirua has a vibrant school holiday lineup, packed with family-friendly activities that guarantee to keep boredom at bay.

Celebrate Matariki with breathtaking evening light displays along the harbourside. Enjoy cultural events at Pātaka and crafty offerings at the City Library.

Foodies and shoppers cannot miss the Love Local Expo on Saturday the 11th of July, showcasing incredible local businesses, entertainment, and delicious kai.

Seeking fun for the whole family? Challenge their courage at Adrenalin Forest, race at the Porirua Indoor Raceway, or enjoy games at North City Tenpin and Pirate's Cove Mini Golf. The pools at Arena Aquatics provide all-weather fun, or you could snuggle up in front of a film at Lighthouse Cinema. Then top off your adventures at Kai Tahi, the ultimate local destination to eat, drink, gather, and play together.

Visit www.poriruanz.com and get your holiday plans sorted!

Whimsy and wonder

If you think you know *Alice in Wonderland*, it's time to believe as many as six impossible things before breakfast, because The Pantoloons have given the beloved Lewis Carroll tale their topsy-turvy treatment!

Now in their 14th year, The Pantoloons are a children's theatre company led by Amanda Stone, who writes and directs all the fabulous classics they perform across Greater Wellington. A typical panto features bright lights and laughter, topical jokes for the grownups, song and dance numbers for the littlies, and crazy cool costumes in spades… or should we say, hearts!

Alice in Wonderland stars all your favourite characters, but with a twist: the White Rabbit, the cheeky Khandallah Cat, the spooky Jabberwocky, the fiery Queen of Hearts, and, of course, curious Alice. Meet them all in the July school holidays at Southward Theatre in Paraparaumu on the 12th, Wairarapa Events Centre in Carterton on the 14th, or Little Theatre in Lower Hutt on the 17th and 18th… just don't be late for this very important date!

Ancient messages

Winter solstice has been celebrated since time immemorial, marking the moment when the Earth's axis tilts at the maximum point away from the Sun, making it the shortest day and longest night of the year.

There is no better place to witness this turning point – where light triumphs over darkness as daylight slowly begins to increase from here on out – than at Stonehenge Aotearoa in Carterton. Wairarapa is renowned as a certified International Dark Sky Reserve, making it the prime location to witness the winter solstice sunset and connect with ancient astronomical knowledge. On Saturday the 21st of June, Stonehenge Aotearoa invites you to rug up warm for an evening filled with wonder, learning, and celestial beauty. With a range of drinks and snacks provided, Stonehenge Aotearoa's storyteller will read messages from the heavens and tell tales of the winter solstice that will transport you back to ancient times.

About Kidz Oscar

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Answers to the puzzles in last issue

3	7	5	6	4	8	9	2	1
9	8	2	5	3	1	4	7	6
6	4	1	9	2	7	8	3	5
5	1	9	3	8	4	2	6	7
4	3	8	7	6	2	5	1	9
2	6	7	1	5	9	3	4	8
8	9	6	4	7	3	1	5	2
1	5	4	2	9	6	7	8	3
7	2	3	8	1	5	6	9	4

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He Tohu

A DECLARATION | A TREATY | A PETITION

St Mary's College (Wellington) students viewing the original Waitangi sheet of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Photographer: Mark Beatty

He whakapapa kōrero, he whenua kura – Talking about our past to make a better future

1835 He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni – Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand

1840 Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Treaty of Waitangi

1893 Women's Suffrage Petition – Te Petihana Whakamana Pōti Wahine

See these iconic documents up close at the National Library of New Zealand | FREE ENTRY

The He Tohu exhibition is presented by Archives New Zealand Te Ruā Mahara o Te Kāwanatanga and the National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa, which are part of the Department of Internal Affairs

Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NEW ZEALAND

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
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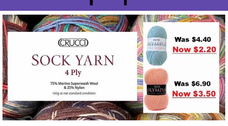

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Entries close Tuesday 23rd June.

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