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Miss Philippines NZ



By Frank Neill

Karori resident Margaux Detera has been crowned Miss Philippines New Zealand 2026.

The 16-year-old Wellington Girls' College student also won the Best in Talent award during the national Pistang Pilipino celebrations held in Wellington over labour weekend.

Continued on page 2.

Margaux Detera just after she was crowned Miss Philippines New Zealand 2026. Photo: Alan Raga Photography.

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Utterly shocked to win the crown

Continued from page 1.

She was, she says "utterly shocked" to be crowned Miss Philippines New Zealand.

"I felt so proud and thankful for everything that led me to that moment."

At the same time, she was "incredibly grateful for all the support I received along the way."

She received great support, particularly from her coach, Izzy Boo, and her make-up and hair stylist Marites Gaffney.

Winning the Miss Philippines title "means I have a platform to advocate for issues," Margaux says.

"I would like to advocate for and have a sense of influencing mostly human rights."

She is specifically interested in advocating for immigrants from the Philippines working overseas – the safety issues that they face, the lack of recognition and other Philippino diaspora issues.

"It is a really large diaspora and they face a lot of safety issues and a lot of human rights issues," she says.

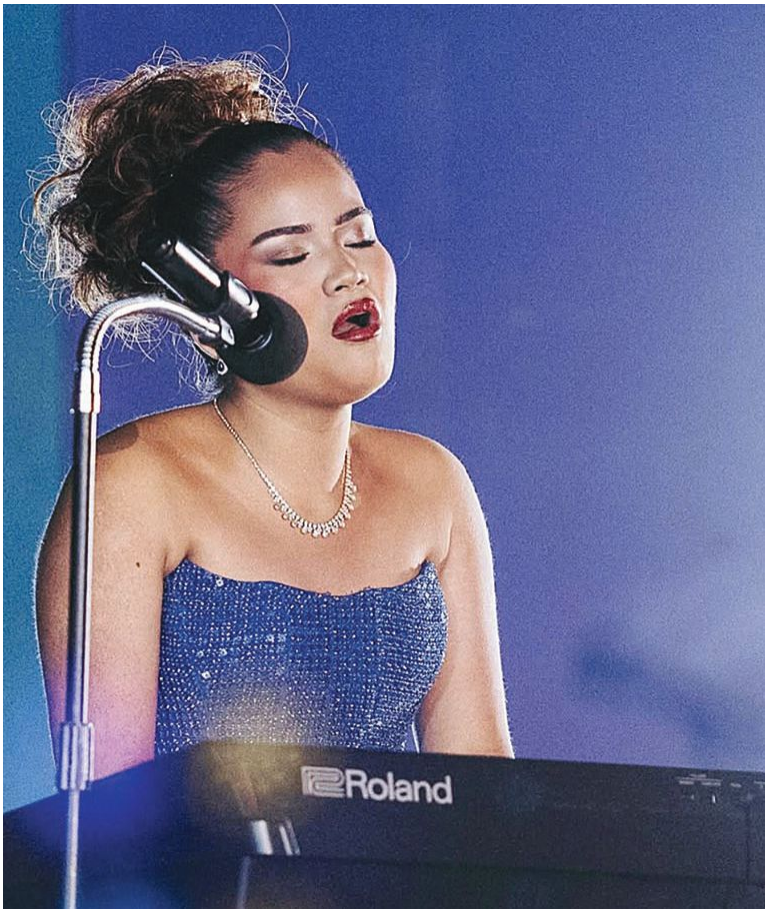
Margaux was born in Manila and lived there for six years before moving to New Zealand.

In the wake of being crowned Miss Philippines, Margaux hopes to use the platform to inspire young Philippino New Zealanders to connect with their cultural heritage and embrace their multi cultural identities.

During the cultural and talent night at the Pistang Pilipino celebrations, where she was crowned Miss Philippino New Zealand, Margaux also won the Best in Talent award.

She accompanied herself on the piano for her winning performance and sang a trilingual interpretation of Freddie Aguilar's iconic Filipino song "Anak'.

Margaux sang the song in Filipino, French and English.



Margaux Detera accompanying herself on the keyboard as she sings. Photo: Supplied.

Pistang Pinoy is a Filipino cultural celebration held worldwide, featuring parades, traditional performances, food festivals, games and community gatherings.



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Local resident wins personal trainer award

By Frank Neill

Broadmeadows resident Ashlea Scott is the winner of the 2026 Emerging Personal Trainer of the Year Award.

Ashlea, who is a personal trainer at Anytime Fitness Johnsonville, was presented the award at the 2026 Exercise New Zealand Industry Awards, held in Auckland on 20 November.

The award recognises outstanding personal trainers in the first three years of their careers.

The judges recognised Ashlea's maturity, clearly defined coaching philosophy and genuine connection with clients.

They were particularly impressed by her ability to help clients rebuild their confidence and establish sustainable exercise habits.

Despite being relatively early in her career, the judges also praised her professionalism and commitment to developing her knowledge and skills.

Winning the award came as a big surprise for Ashlea.

"I was in total shock," she says.

"I did not expect to win anything at all.

"It was awesome."

Ashlea joined the team at Anytime Fitness Johnsonville when it opened in September last year. Before that she worked for a few months at City Fitness in Porirua, where she started in February last year.

Ashlea's philosophy is that fitness isn't just about how you look, but how you feel.

"I try to take in every person's individual needs ... on a case by case basis," she says.

"My approach is always to be empathetic.

"You just want to be starting from the basics for everyone.



Ashlea Scott at Anytime Fitness Johnsonville. Photo: Supplied.

"That way everyone has the same starting point and from there supporting them as best as you can, adapting a plan for them, supporting them in whatever they need and just being a positive force in their lives," Ashlea says.

"One thing we particularly appreciate about Ashlea is her ability to make clients feel comfortable and supported while still challenging them to achieve things they might not have thought possible," says Anytime Fitness Johnsonville's owner-operator Craig Cawkwell.

"This was reflected in client feedback, which Ashlea shared as part of her nomination for the ExerciseNZ People's Choice Award.



Ashlea Scott and Johnsonville Anytime Fitness Manager Marcus Mellors just after Ashlea was presented her award. Photo: Supplied.

"Clients spoke about feeling listened to, being involved in their training and leaving their sessions feeling better about themselves," Craig says

Craig is also the owner-operator of Anytime Fitness Kent Terrace, which his family opened in November 2020.

As well as Ashlea's award, the family-run business won four other awards at the 2026 Exercise New Zealand Industry Awards.

Anytime Fitness Kent Terrace won the most prestigious award of the evening when it was named Supreme Facility of the Year.

Hannah Mitchell, from Anytime Fitness Kent Terrace, won Personal Trainer of the Year.

Anytime Fitness Kent Terrace won Reception/Front of House Team of the Year. Kent Terrace also won Franchisee Facility of the Year.

Churton Park off ramp closing

Repairs and resurfacing on the southbound State Highway 1 offramp at Churton Park will take place from Sunday 29 November to Wednesday 2 December.

Daytime and nighttime closures will be needed for the work.

Because the pavement at the top of the offramp is weaker than the pavement in the lower sections, the road has to be excavated to a greater depth and extra layers of structural asphalt need to be laid to ensure the offramp's pavement is properly rebuilt.

This means extra time is required to complete the job and it cannot be completed efficiently through night work alone. Two daytime shifts are needed to complete the rebuild, meaning the offramp will be closed during the day on Monday and Tuesday.

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Advertisement

Her hip had other plans

Rosemary had plans for her retirement. Morning walks with friends, afternoons in the garden, weekends chasing grandchildren around the park. Her hip had other ideas.

"It started gradually," the 68-year-old recalls. "First I'd feel it after long walks. Then after short ones. Eventually I was feeling it just lying in bed trying to get comfortable at night."

Her hip began dictating her days. She'd decline invitations, knowing she'd pay for it later. The garden grew untidy. Visits from grandchildren became something to manage rather than enjoy.

"My world was shrinking," she admits. "I was becoming someone who sat and watched rather than joined in."

Her daughter had noticed the change and left a bottle of Koru FX on Rosemary's kitchen bench after reading about the natural cream in her local paper.

"I wasn't expecting much," Rosemary admits. "I'd tried things before that promised plenty. But I massaged some into my hip and within minutes felt this lovely warming sensation, then a cooling that settled everything down. The edge came right off. I was pleasantly surprised to be honest."

The New Zealand-made cream contains 16 natural oils including mānuka, arnica and black pepper, designed to absorb quickly through the skin. Unlike sticky gels she'd tried before, this one felt pleasant with a light peppermint scent and no residue on her clothes.

What impressed Rosemary most was how quickly it worked. "I'd been putting up with this for months, modifying everything I did. Suddenly I had something that actually helped, and helped fast."

She began applying it before her morning walks, before gardening, before the grandchildren visited. The activities she'd been avoiding gradually returned to her routine.



"Last weekend I spent three hours at the park with them," she beams. "Running around, pushing swings, picking them up for cuddles. Six months ago that would have been unthinkable."

Even bedtime improved. "I used to dread lying down because my hip would niggle until I finally drifted off. Now I apply some Koru FX, settle in, and I'm away. It's not that the issue is gone, my hip just isn't screaming at me whilst I'm trying to go to sleep."

Her husband has noticed the difference. "He says he's got his wife back," Rosemary shares. "I'm doing things again, making plans, saying yes instead of making excuses."

She keeps bottles throughout the house now: bedroom, kitchen, hallway, and has introduced it to her mother-in-law and walking group friends.

"It's not about being twenty again," Rosemary reflects. "It's about your body not holding you back from the life you want. I wasted months accepting limitations that didn't need to be permanent."

"Simply having something that softens those rough edges of our aging bodies is gold. I really recommend it."



Always read the label and take as directed. If symptoms persist contact your healthcare professional. Koru Nutrition, Christchurch

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Gardens Magic returning

By Frank Neill

Wellington's hugely popular Gardens Magic will return to the Botanic Gardens and will run from 12 to 31 January.

All the Garden Magic events are free.

Gardens Magic will see a series of concerts at the Botanic Gardens ki Paekākā Soundshell between 12 and 31 January.

These concerts will feature the sounds of Wellington's vivacious talent.

The free concerts start with a warm-up solo act from 7pm, before the main act at 8pm.

Concerts are on Tuesday to Sunday each week, with Sunday afternoons from 1pm to 3.15pm kept as a rain back-up day.

The concert programme is on the Gardens Magic Facebook page.

On Mondays 18 and 25 January a relaxed solo performance will be held at the Duck Pond from 9.15pm to 10.15pm.

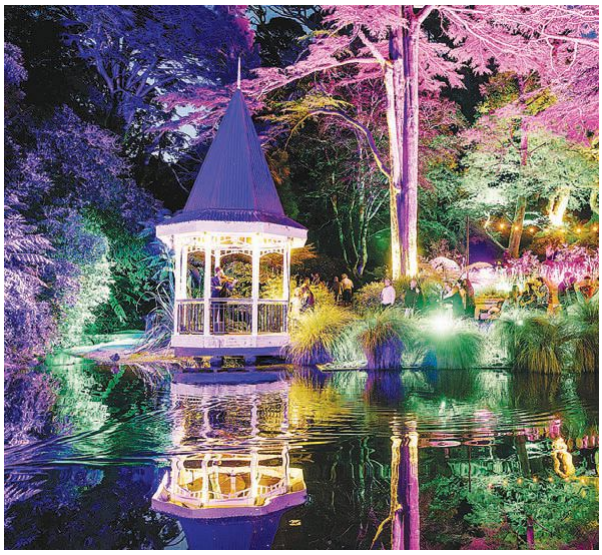
Along with the concerts there will be evening light displays at the Botanic Gardens, with a magical light display by MJF Lighting.

The light displays will take place between 9pm and 10.30pm daily from 12 to 31 January.

During the day, families can enjoy the Kids Garden Trail and Discovery Days.

They take place daily between 9am and 5pm from 12 to 31 January.

Kids Explorer Days will take place from 10am to 2pm on Wednesdays 13, 20 and 27 January at the Discovery Garden and on the Quad Lawn near the Soundshell.



Light displays at the Botanic Gardens during Gardens Magic. Photo: Wellington City Council.

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A scene from a past Thorndon Fair. Photo: Supplied.

Thorndon Fair returns

By Frank Neill

The Thorndon Fair returns again on Sunday 6 December, running from 10am to 3pm.

The Thorndon Fair is a huge street fair that highlights the charms of historic Thorndon.

More than 20,000 people and 250 stallholders gather for the fair, held on the first Sunday of December every year.

The fair operates in Tinakori Road, from Bowen Street to Harriet Street, and in Hill Street, from Tinakori Road to Selwyn Terrace.

The main fair entrances are at either end of Tinakori Road, or just up from Parliament on Hill Street.

As well as the stalls and food trucks the fair also features a kid's fun zone, held in the Premier House grounds.

Running since 1977, the Thorndon Fair is run by volunteers and is a fundraiser for Thorndon School. It is, in fact, the major fundraiser for the school.

It was set up by the Thorndon Society and then gifted to Thorndon School in 1983.

Entry to the fair is by gold coin donation at the gates.

More than 150 people from the school community volunteer on the day, and a Fair Committee works year round to bring the fair to the streets of historic Thorndon.

The fair is supported by Handy Rentals; Wilson Parking; The Shepherds' Arms; Premier House; Wellington City Council; Thorndon Dental Surgery; New World Thorndon; Rutherford and Bond Toyota, Centre Point, Sky Stadium, Lowe & Co Realty, Zealandia; and residents and businesses in Hill Street, Tinakori Road and nearby streets; family and friends of Thorndon School; and all the fairgoers.

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Bupa

This week at the libraries

From 'Falling Leaves Return to the Root' to 'Taking Root': The History of Chinese in New Zealand Since 1842 will be presented at Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library on Saturday 28 November from 3pm to 4pm.

This fascinating talk with Professor Zhiyue Bo provides a comprehensive overview of the long journey of the Chinese in New Zealand, from their arrival in 1842 until the present.

The talk traces the changes in core cultural mindsets: from early gold rush visitors who longed to 'return to their roots' (Sojourners), to those who endured systemic discrimination (such as the poll tax) yet remained resilient, and ultimately to settlers who, after generations of hard work, chose to 'take root' and settle in this land.

This talk is not only a history of Chinese immigration but also a story of the evolution of multicultural integration.

Professor Zhiyue Bo is a world-leading scholar on China's elite politics and a nominator for the most prestigious Tang Prize in Sinology (often regarded as the 'Nobel Prize' in Chinese studies).

He is the founder and director of the Bo Zhiyue Institute of Chinese Studies, and graduated from Peking University with bachelor's and master's degrees in International Political Science and Law, and earned a PhD in Political Science from the University of Chicago.

He has taught at many prestigious universities worldwide, including Peking University, the University of Chicago, American University, National University of Singapore, and Victoria University of Wellington.

A prolific scholar, he has published over 400 book chapters and articles, 16 books and delivered more than 300 lectures around the world.

Kua Tau A Life in Stories: Tainui Stephens in Conversation will be held at Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library on Wednesday 2 December from 5.30pm to 6.30pm.

"When we're young, we learn the stories of others. When we're adults, we create our own story. When we're old, we tell our story."

Tainui Stephens (Te Rarawa) is one of Aotearoa's most prominent Māori storytellers.

Across five decades he has been finding stories, in people, in place, and in the shifting shape of Māori life in Aotearoa.

Alongside a career in filmmaking, broadcasting and cultural advocacy, he has been finding himself.

Kua Tau gathers up a kete of his best writing on these subjects, drawing from his much-loved essays for the online magazine E-Tangata.

This event is organised in collaboration with Bridget Williams Books.

Summer Reading Adventure Launch Party will take place at Te Takapū o Patukawenga Tawa Library on Tuesday 1 December from 3.30pm to 4.30pm.

"Come along and bring your friends, we are having a Summer Reading Launch Party," Wellington City Libraries says.

"Staff will be on hand to help you register and show you how to participate.

"There will be stories, activities, and even some cookies and juice (kindly provided by Tawa Books and Post).

"Keep reading over the summer and earn rewards – this is just the first step.

This event is recommended for tamariki aged 5 to 13 and their caregivers.

All events are free and seating is limited. Wellington City Libraries encourages people to arrive early to secure a seat.

Nau mai rā tātou katoa. Everyone is welcome.



Tainui Stephens at Māoriland in Ōtaki. Photo: Supplied.



Whistling Frog: Your Ultimate Catlins Pitstop

Tucked away in the heart of the Catlins Coastal Conservation Park, the Whistling Frog Cafe & Bar is far more than a pitstop—it is the beating heart of the Southern Scenic Route. Whether you are chasing the mist at McLean Falls or emerging from the grand Cathedral Caves, this family-owned gem provides the perfect sanctuary for weary travellers. Step inside to find a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere where rustic charm meets culinary excellence. The kitchen serves up chef-prepared, casual dining favourites, from rich seafood chowders to hearty wood-fired pizzas, easily accommodating gluten-free and vegan guests.

Craft beer lovers can even sip a pint brewed with hops grown right on-site. With no public holiday surcharges and a stunning resort offering everything from powered RV sites to cosy chalets, it is the ultimate basecamp for your southern adventure. Open 365 days a year, the Whistling Frog is where unforgettable Catlins memories begin.





Polynesian Spa

For many Wellingtonians, summer is a chance to slow the pace, and Rotorua offers a natural place to begin that shift. Polynesian Spa has long been known for its dual natural springs, each with its own mineral qualities and a history of soothing visitors for generations. The warmth of the geothermal pools and the quiet lakeside setting create an immediate sense of calm, inviting guests to settle into the restorative qualities that have shaped the spa's heritage.

Those seeking a deeper sense of wellbeing often choose to add a spa therapy in the Retreat Day Spa, where the experience blends contemporary care with the long-standing tradition of healing waters. The 88Ra Café provides a relaxed spot to enjoy something light, and many visitors take time to explore the Spa Essentials Shop, which offers thoughtful wellness items and gifts, including the signature Rachel Oil collection. Staying in Rotorua becomes even more rewarding with a gentle, grounding start like this.

Beware! you might just find yourself hanging off a cliff, escaping a crocodile or being chased by a giant creature!

Welcome to Rotorua's 3D Trick Art Gallery, where YOU become part of the artwork! With more than 50 incredible interactive scenes, prepare for hilarious photo opportunities, unexpected surprises and memories worth sharing.

Perfect for families, couples and friends, this indoor, all-weather attraction is guaranteed to bring out your adventurous side!

Warm Weather Footcare

As the temperatures climb, our feet have to adapt to summer shoes and activities. Sandals offer a chance for the feet to breathe and stay cool. The best sandals are ones that have a strap or closed heel to help provide support to the foot. It is important to clean sandals occasionally to prevent problems such as tinea or athlete's foot.

Self-care in summer should also include using heel balm to keep the heels from drying out and cracking. Podiatrists help in maintaining summer feet by trimming off the buildup and helping to prevent these heel cracks forming, known as fissures.

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A leafy wellness retreat in Karori

Nestled among the natural beauty of Karori, The Sacred Firebird offers more than a wellness retreat – it is a place to pause, reconnect and rediscover a sense of inner calm.

Founded by Crystal Mihinui, a Reiki Master, Sound Healing Practitioner, Music Therapist and classically trained pianist with more than 30 years of experience in music and sound, the centre at her home studio brings together ancient practices and deeply personal care.

From crystal singing bowls, Reiki and meditation to forest bathing, women's circles, Lomi Lomi massage and nature-based experiences, each session is thoughtfully shaped around the people taking part. Journalling, oracle cards, cacao, blue lotus tea and shared kai can add further layers to the experience.

Crystal's work also reaches beyond traditional wellness spaces, including sound healing for older people, people with disabilities and residents living with dementia.

Every Friday morning a mums and kids group for sound healing and shared morning tea is held at 1030am.

Animal healing is another important part of Crystal's work, reflecting her belief that animals can also benefit from calm, nurturing and energy-based wellbeing experiences.

At its heart, The Sacred Firebird is about transformation, resilience and renewal – embodying its guiding philosophy: "Reconnect · Restore · Remember.

Contact Crystal on innerlotusholistichealing@gmail.com, threelittlebirds003@gmail.com or call 021 0238 1944.

Kiwis helping other Kiwis beat prostate cancer

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of New Zealand - Te Kāhui Mate Pukupuku Repe Tātea o Aotearoa Manatōpū, (PCFNZ) provides vital support, education and information to individuals, their families and whānau across Aotearoa New Zealand affected by prostate cancer.

PCFNZ provides a comprehensive portfolio of free in-person and remote support services to help those living with prostate cancer, at any stage of diagnosis, treatment and survivorship.

PCFNZ is also dedicated to reducing the impact of prostate cancer through raising awareness, funding NZ-based research and advocating for improved standards of care and investing in research that raises the understanding of prostate cancer and its effects on men, their families and our communities.

Find Your Balance at Anahata Yoga Studio

Tucked away in the heart of Petone Beach, Anahata Yoga Studio offers a welcoming sanctuary where you can pause, reconnect and restore balance.

Blending the ancient traditions of yoga with a modern, down-to-earth approach, Anahata provides a diverse range of classes designed for every body and every level of experience.

Whether you're taking your first steps onto the mat or are a seasoned yogi, there are specialty sessions, workshops and wellness courses that offer even more opportunities to explore holistic wellbeing.

At the heart of Anahata is its philosophy of connection, inspired by the heart chakra, which represents compassion, love and emotional balance. Guided by experienced instructors, students are encouraged to nurture their mind, body and soul.

More than just a yoga studio, Anahata is a place to breathe, grow and discover a healthier, more mindful way of living.

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MITRE 10

Handy tips to keep your garden looking great all year round!



DECEMBER

It's December! Christmas is just around the corner and you'll be starting to think about the holidays – but don't forget the garden.

PLANTING

- ☑ Christmas Plants
- ☑ Pōhutukawa
- ☑ Gardenia
- ☑ Summer Colour
- ☑ Groundcover
- ☑ Dead-head Roses
- ☑ Harvest Strawberries

MAINTENANCE

- ☑ Mulch
- ☑ Spray for Pests
- ☑ Spray for Powdery Mildew
- ☑ Spray for Buxus Blight
- ☑ Maintain Lawns
- ☑ Water Plants
- ☑ Install an Irrigation System

KEY POINTS

- Strawberries will start to ripen. Protect them from birds and ensure they get plenty of water.
- Keep planting salad crops for summer harvesting.
- Protect vegetable crops from white butterfly and insects.
- Continue to plant colour in pots and the garden for Christmas and summer displays.
- Sow seeds of summer-flowering annuals.
- Plant swan plants to attract butterflies into the garden.
- Indoor plants are a great Christmas gift. Poinsettias are a traditional favourite.
- Before the holidays, check that watering systems are working or install new ones.

MITRE 10 EASY AS

Scan to view the December gardening checklist

GARDEN TIPS & TRICKS

FRUIT

- Plant strawberries, blueberries and passionfruit.
- Keep citrus and passionfruit consistently watered as the weather warms. Apply mulch around the root zone to retain moisture, keeping it clear of the trunk.

VEGETABLES

- Continue planting salad crops, including mizuna, lettuce and mesclun, every few weeks for a constant summer supply.
- Plant basil, beetroot, beans, capsicum, carrots, celery, chillies, zucchini, cucumbers, eggplants, lettuce, pumpkins, radishes, silverbeet, spring onions, sweetcorn and tomatoes.
- Feed tomatoes every fortnight, stake them firmly, water consistently and remove side shoots while they are small.
- Mound potatoes as they grow and side-dress them with blood and bone, then water it in.
- Protect vegetable crops from white butterfly and other insects.

FLOWERS

- Continue planting colour in pots and the garden for Christmas and summer displays.
- Sow summer-flowering annuals, including asters, cosmos, cornflowers, petunias, marigolds, phlox, portulaca and verbena.
- Keep pots and new plantings well watered.

JOBS

- Check that watering systems are working before going away.
- Water less often but more thoroughly, ensuring the soil is wet to a depth of at least 5cm. Water in the early morning or evening to reduce evaporation.
- Continue mulching around shrubs, trees and roses to conserve moisture.
- Raise the cutting height on your lawn mower. Longer grass shades the roots and helps prevent the lawn from drying out.



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MITRE 10 MEGA

Gardening & HOME LIVING

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When it comes to protecting and maintaining a property, quality workmanship and experience matter. For family-owned Tuanui Membrane & Roofing Maintenance Limited, delivering lasting results is more than a job – it is a commitment to looking after the buildings and people who depend on them.

This summer, Tuanui is offering a special roof maintenance package for $7,650. It includes extensive membrane waterproofing, mid-scale iron repairs and roof recoating or painting where necessary.

The offer provides an opportunity to address wear, help protect your property from the elements and give your roof some well-deserved attention.

Led by owners Chris and Angela, the Wellington-based business brings together almost 25 years of roofing experience, seven years in business and a dedicated team of skilled tradespeople. Their knowledge and customer-focused approach help them deliver solutions suited to each property's needs.

Tuanui's reputation is backed by an impressive portfolio of projects, including Wellington Hospital, Wellington College, Johnsonville School, Wellington High School, Kilbirnie Pools, PSA House and Otago University.

Specialising in TPO, Torch-on, Butynol, liquid membrane and tanking systems, Tuanui provides tailored waterproofing solutions for residential and commercial properties. Services include new roofs, re-roofing, restorations, repairs, long-run roofing and ongoing maintenance, helping customers keep their buildings protected and performing well.

The business has also expanded its services, welcoming two experienced painters to the team. Offering interior and exterior painting, they provide customers with even more ways to refresh, protect and enhance their properties.

Fully insured and committed to health and safety, Tuanui prides itself on honest advice, clear communication and quality workmanship. For Chris and Angela, it all comes back to protecting properties and the people who use them, with integrity, responsibility and strong whānau values.

Contact the friendly team to discuss your project or ask about the summer special.

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A greener approach to weed control

Experience, the right equipment and a responsible approach to weed control.

Effective weed control is about more than simply spraying unwanted growth. It's about knowing how to do the job safely and responsibly. That's the approach taken by Churmow, where Blake Robinson brings more than 10 years of experience to outdoor maintenance and spraying services.

Churmow uses GrowSafe, New Zealand's agrichemical training and certification programme, run by the New Zealand Agrichemical Education Trust. GrowSafe promotes safe, accurate and responsible spraying practices, helping ensure operators understand the importance of correct application and minimising environmental risks.

Attention to detail is essential. Wind strength and direction are checked before spraying, while specialised nozzles produce larger droplets rather than a fine mist, helping reduce spray drift. Churmow also uses spray guards for additional control and protection.

Beyond spraying, Churmow offers a comprehensive range of outdoor services to homeowners across the Hutt Valley, Wellington, Porirua and the Kāpiti Coast.

From lawn mowing, landscaping and hedge trimming to tree removal, stump grinding and clearing overgrown sections, Blake can help transform tired outdoor spaces. Minor weeding, small fence repairs and green waste removal are also available.

Ready to refresh your property? Contact Churmow through Facebook or email getyourchurmow@gmail.com for a quote.





ADVERTISEMENT

Don't Despair, Think Repair:

The remarkable world of book doctor Bill Tito

Tucked away in the tranquil Akatarawa Valley, an 80-year-old craftsman is giving damaged books a new lease on life — one treasured page at a time.

In the beautiful Akatarawa Valley, just outside Upper Hutt, where misty mornings give way to warm sunshine and native bush



stretches towards vast blocks of forestry, Bill Tito has found the perfect place to indulge his passion for an increasingly rare craft.

Surrounded by nature and with the peaceful landscape providing a daily dose of inspiration, Bill is a man who seems equally comfortable contemplating life's mysteries as he is coaxing a battered, broken book back to health.

A renowned book repair specialist, Bill has spent decades rescuing literary treasures that others might consider beyond saving. His philosophy is simple, his humour earthy, and his marketing motto sums up his approach perfectly: "Don't Despair, Think Repair."

And if you think your damaged old book is destined for the recycling bin, think again. It might just be the sort of challenge Bill relishes.

"I specialise in books nobody else wants to repair," he says, explaining one of the defining characteristics of his work.

For Bill, the more challenging the repair, the greater the satisfaction of breathing new life into something that might otherwise be lost forever.

His journey into bookbinding began with a helping hand from his father, Rangi, who secured him an apprenticeship at the Parliamentary Library. Bill, who is of Te Ati Awa descent from Opunake in Taranaki, was introduced to the world of book repair at an extraordinary moment in New Zealand's history.

His first day coincided with the official opening of Parliament by Queen Elizabeth II in 1963.

After a year at the Parliamentary Library, he spent four years at Government Printing, developing the skills and experience that would eventually establish his reputation as a master of his trade.

Today, his work attracts customers from throughout New Zealand and even overseas. His projects can take considerable time, with the longest stretching over three to four months. While international recognition is gratifying, Bill admits he is less enthusiastic about the return postage costs!

At the heart of his work, however, lies something far more important than craftsmanship alone.

Bill describes himself as a "sentimentologist" — an apt title for someone who understands that a book's true value is not always measured by its age, rarity or price.

A family history, a treasured novel or a well-thumbed volume passed down through generations may hold memories that cannot be replaced. Restoring its functionality and making it presentable for sale are important considerations, but it is the emotional attachment people have to their books that provides his greatest motivation.

Every repair, in that sense, is also an act of preservation: keeping a little piece of someone's personal history alive.

It is a philosophy that has helped make Bill something of a local institution and an unexpected international attraction.

His studio walls are adorned with photographs of himself alongside national and international celebrities, reminders of the projects he has completed, the people he has met and the friendships formed along the way.

Favourite guitarists provide the soundtrack as he works, keeping him company while he concentrates on the intricate demands of his craft.

Visitors arrive in groups, including busloads of people keen to see the master at work. A recent party travelled all the way from America, testament to how far his reputation has spread. Professional organisations, including Probus groups, have also invited him to share his experiences.

His work has even inspired a documentary. Indonesian students who



Before and After images of one of Bill Tito's projects.

visited Bill were so intrigued by his world that they made a documentary about him entitled The Unread Story.

Bill's personality is as memorable as his workmanship. Dyslexic, quick-witted and blessed with a wonderfully self-deprecating sense of humour, he takes life in his stride.

One of his favourite observations



concerns the public's opinion of him, which he reckons is divided equally between those who think he is a genius, those who consider him a fraud, and those who believe he simply sniffs the glue!

An incident two years ago demonstrated that he is also unafraid to express an unconventional opinion.

During a media interview, Bill suggested that the Maori language shared similarities with the work of William Shakespeare. The remark prompted strong criticism from two listeners and outrage among some others.

Bill, characteristically, was unfazed. He welcomed the differing views and even appreciated the publicity that followed.

His down-to-earth attitude, combined with an obvious respect for the stories books carry, has earned him admiration well beyond the valley he calls home.

Yet Bill is acutely aware that book repair is a dying trade. In an age of digital reading and disposable consumer goods, the patience, skill and specialised knowledge required to restore old volumes are becoming increasingly uncommon.

So, if you have a battered family Bible, a damaged first edition or a beloved old book you cannot bear to part with, perhaps it is time to seek out the man who believes almost nothing is beyond repair.

Better still, combine a visit with a day exploring the many attractions of the Upper Hutt Valley or travelling towards the Wairarapa.

You might discover that your old book has a future after all — and that its repairer has a few stories of his own to tell.

Bill Tito can be found at 1438 Akatarawa Road, Upper Hutt.
Telephone 04 526 6977 before visiting to make an appointment.



Rotary Khandallah Fair brings community together

By Dawn Ferguson

The annual Rotary Khandallah Fair will be held this year from 10am till 3pm on Sunday 13 December, rain or shine on Ganges Road between Agra Crescent and Dekka Street.

Organised by the Wellington North Rotary Club, it promises fun for all the family.

Proceeds go to local and international charities supported by Rotary.

There will be a wide variety of stalls from local vendors selling quality gifts, clothing, jewelry, artwork, pottery, craft items and edible delicacies.

There will also be food trucks, a sausage sizzle, famous Inner Wheel freshly made Devonshire teas, and special offerings from the local cafés and restaurants.

As well as delicious Christmas puddings on sale there will be raffle tickets for several different raffles providing a great chance of winning a prize.

In the case of rain, the stalls will be run in Khandallah Town Hall and the village church hall.

Starting with the ribbon cutting at 10am in front of the Khandallah Town Hall, all stalls will be open and a short modern version of children's Christmas pageant will be performed at the village church at 10.15am. All children are most welcome to join in the play as an angel or a shepherd.

Following the pageant, community groups will provide free entertainment in the Presbyterian Church.

This includes school groups and local residents performing in bands, a kapa haka group, choir, Samba dancers and an organ concert just to name a few.

Little ones will enjoy a free bouncy castle in the church courtyard and a roving talking tree will greet everyone while playing carols on its saxophone.

Wellington North Rotary Club thanks all their local business sponsors and partners including Wellington City Council, Khandallah Business Association, Cornerstone Trust, and Khandallah Presbyterian Church. This annual Fair brings the community together for a good time and a good cause.



A scene from a past Rotary Khandallah Fair. Photo: Supplied.

Trains are safe Council says

Greater Wellington Regional Council is reassuring passengers that Wellington's rail network operates within a robust safety framework, following public discussion of the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC)'s interim report into the June train accident in Khandallah.

Six people were injured in the accident, including two crew members who were hospitalised and four passengers who sustained minor injuries, when a Metlink passenger train travelling at approximately 22 km/h collided with a stop block.

Greater Wellington Chair Daran Ponter says the accident was a serious incident, but the public should be confident that multiple organisations have specific responsibilities for maintaining and operating a safe railway.

"Passenger safety remains our highest priority, and it's important people understand how safety responsibilities are shared across Wellington's rail system," Cr Ponter says.

Metlink plans and funds public transport services, while KiwiRail is responsible for maintaining rail infrastructure and operating the train control system. Transdev is the passenger rail operator contracted by Greater Wellington.

"The signalling systems, train control systems, track infrastructure, fixed train-stop equipment, runaway line and stop block involved in this incident are all elements of railway infrastructure managed by KiwiRail," Cr Ponter says.

"Metlink does not own or operate those systems, but we do have an important role in making sure passengers are informed and advocating for ongoing improvements to the network."

Following the accident, Greater Wellington worked closely with rail partners to keep the public informed while investigations and recovery work were undertaken.

"Throughout the closure, Metlink provided service updates, travel advice and information on replacement bus services through our website, app, social media channels and the news media so passengers could continue making essential journeys," says Ros Connelly, Greater Wellington Public Transport Committee Chair.

At the same time, KiwiRail led the infrastructure recovery effort, including removing the damaged train, assessing the condition of the track, carrying out repairs, restoring infrastructure and testing the network.

"Greater Wellington sought and received assurances from KiwiRail as to the safety of the line, prior to recommencing services," Cr Connelly says.

"Before services resumed, KiwiRail and Transdev advised Greater Wellington that infrastructure repairs, operational checks, testing and readiness activities had been completed and the line was ready to return to service."

Following its report, TAIC identified signals passed at danger (SPADs) as one of New Zealand's most significant rail safety issues in its 2026 Watchlist.

Transdev implemented a SPAD reduction plan and action register in January 2026 and since February, the rate of SPAD incidents involving Metlink trains has fallen.

"Greater Wellington is also advocating for the introduction of the European Train Control System (ETCS) because it provides the type of engineering safeguard TAIC is calling for and would further strengthen rail safety in Wellington," Cr Ponter says.

"The ETCS continuously monitors train movements and provides an additional layer of protection beyond traditional signalling systems."

In August, Cr Ponter wrote to the leaders of political parties seeking support for investment in the ETCS, which has been identified by KiwiRail as the preferred next-generation signalling and train control system for Wellington.

"We firmly believe the ETCS is the most appropriate long-term pathway to minimise the risks associated with SPADs and further strengthen rail safety in Wellington," Cr Ponter says.

"We want passengers to have confidence in the rail network they use every day.

"That confidence comes from clear accountability, continuous improvement, independent safety oversight, and investment in modern rail technology."

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Accessible Karori Project begins

By Frank Neill

The Accessible Karori Project began its action to gather information about accessibility in the suburb on 18 November.

With the assistance of 10 students from Wellington College, the Wellington (Karori) Community Action Group (CAG) gathered practical information about accessibility in Karori's shops, cafés, businesses and community facilities along Karori Road.

This included, but was not limited to, taking measurements.

The aim of the project is to check how easy it is for disabled people and others in the community, such as people with prams and push chairs, to get into shops and other services, such as dental or medical, to move around and to access counters and EFTPOS.

The project was developed by the FERNZ (Foundation for Equity and Research New Zealand) Wellington CAG as a lived experience led initiative.

The information gathered on 18 November will be collated.

It will then contribute to an Accessible Karori resource, helping disabled people, their whānau and others make informed decisions about where they shop, eat and access services.

The Wellington CAG currently plans to publish that as a guide for people, and is looking at publishing the guide online.

The project will also benefit people living in Mākara, who rely on Karori for everyday shopping, healthcare, services and social activities.



One of the Wellington College teams just before they began the accessibility project, with their teacher and Karori CAG member Valerie Smith (back row from left) Arolo Ede, Oscar Boswell, Oliver Williamson and teacher Connor Kortens (front row from left) Valerie Smith, Ariel Kajdi-Troc and Cauis Reid. Photo: Frank Neill.

Importantly, the project provides an opportunity for CAG members to apply the knowledge and skills gained through their earlier accessibility training, strengthening their confidence, leadership and engagement with the wider community.

"The involvement of Wellington College students provides an opportunity for rangatahi to work alongside disabled people, learn about accessibility through lived experience and contribute to a meaningful community initiative," Karori CAG member Valerie Smith says.

FERNZ has a vision for a society where everyone has equitable rights that enable them to live a full and healthy and happy life.

Its mission is to work in partnership with communities to identify and address inequities.

It has set up a series of CAGs in New Zeland, inlcuding a number in the greater Wellington region.

Footpath rules

LETTERS *to the editor*

On the 1st of October, several new Road Rules came into force. One of them allows children up to the age of 12 to ride bicycles and e-bicycles of any size on footpaths. It also allows people older than 12 to ride with the younger person if they are 'supporting that child cyclist's safety'.

Living Streets Aotearoa (LSA), New Zealand's pedestrian organisation, wants everyone to be safe using our streets. Our position is that footpaths are for feet – meaning people walking or using mobility devices.

Footpaths should be safe and feel safe for all pedestrians, be they young or old, blind or sighted, deaf or able to hear.

And roadways should be made safe for riders of all ages and levels of competence and confidence by installing separated cycleways and by lowering speed limits on most streets to a level the human body can generally survive (i.e. 30km/h) if crashed into.

We are very concerned about the way adults have been given permission to ride on footpaths.

The consultation document on the Rule change said that the rule would: "Allow children aged 12 years and under to ride bikes on footpaths", but specifically stated: "The proposal doesn't extend to adults or caregivers riding alongside children. This reflects concerns about the potential impacts of larger riders on other footpath users, particularly people with disabilities, older people, and those with visual impairments."

LSA was pleased to see this reflected some of the concerns we had expressed to Minister of Transport, Chris Bishop, when we met with him last year.

However, when the Minister announced that he was approving the footpath cycling rule, we were alarmed to see that it had been expanded to allow adults accompanying children under 12 to also ride on footpaths.

This directly contradicted what the public had been told in the consultation document.

A core principle of consultation is that the proposal being considered must be described clearly and in enough detail that people can understand what it is and so be able to reach views on how it would affect them.

Since the consultation document said the proposal excluded the possibility of adults doing so, LSA didn't mention adult cyclists in its submission and many other submitters may have done the same.

The misrepresentation of the proposals and use of a loophole that allows the Government to ignore consultations gives the impression that this Government cannot be trusted.

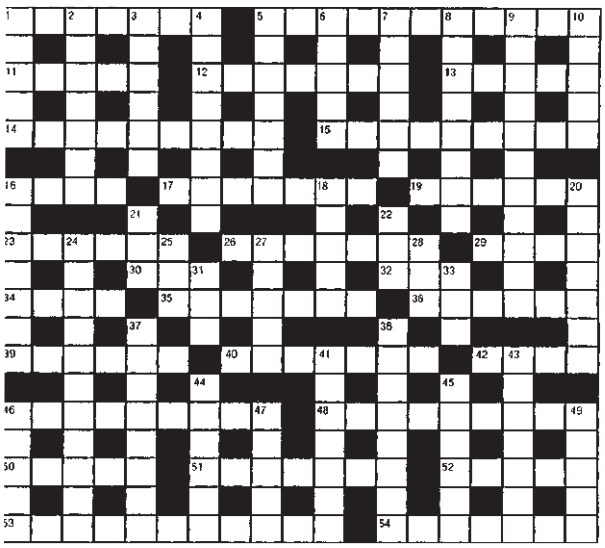
Such tactics could be used on any number of issues, not just this one, so it has implications well beyond this particular case.

To make things worse, there has been no indication that the Government is going to monitor the impact of the new footpath cycling rule on pedestrians.

Living Streets has set up a reporting form to collect evidence of these incidents. If you have been hit by a rider (bicycle or e-scooter or other vehicle) on the footpath, or had a near miss, or been passed too closely or too quickly for comfort, you are invited to fill out a short form at https://forms.gle/H7kQ8i9w2YJciuWJ8 .

Dr Chris Teo-Sherrell, President, Living Streets Aotearoa

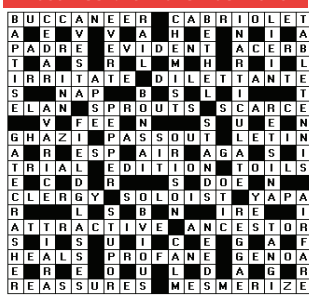
CROSSWORD Puzzle



ACROSS
1. Wild stallion (7)
5. With little interest (4,7)
11. Courteous (5)
12. Idyllic poem (7)
13. Tent (5)
14. Safe to fly (9)
15. Restores confidence to (9)
16. Tree-trunk (4)
17. Fox (7)
19. Harmony (6)
23. Large monkey (6)
26. Tomahawk (7)
29. Decree (4)
30. Small lump (3)
32. Mass of foliage (3)
34. Display (4)
35. Candidate (7)
36. Play supervisor in two-up (Aust) (6)
39. Long overcoat (6)
40. Road-surface substance (7)
42. Courage (4)
46. Clumsy (9)
48. Essential (9)
50. Formal statement of beliefs (5)
51. Moulded from clay (7)
52. Provide food (5)
53. Gothic church, ... Abbey (11)
54. Having left a will (7)

DOWN
1. Mohammeds' birthplace (5)
2. Various (7)
3. In flower (6)
4. Slum areas (8)
5. Peaceful (7)
6. Light ale (5)
7. Of the blood (6)
8. Craftsmen (8)
9. Fertilizing land(by plane) (3,8)
10. Acts (5)
16. Brazilian palm tree (7)
18. Strip of pleated lace (5)
20. Unaffected (7)
21. Put on (3)
22. Gamble (3)
24. Stationers (11)
25. Variety of pigeon (3)
27. Assumed name (5)
28. High hill (3)
31. Fore end of ship (3)
33. Racket (3)
37. Bridge clearance (8)
38. Vividly expressive (8)
41. Cross-country runner (7)
43. Short aria (7)
44. Research scientist (sl) (6)
45. Zodiac sign (6)
46. Tropical parrot (5)
47. Inferred (5)
49. Weird (5)

Solution
Last Week: 19 November 2026



Karori easily beats Onslow

By Frank Neill

Karori's Premier Cricket team scored a convincing victory over Onslow on 21 November.

Onslow batted first on their home ground of Nairnville Park in the Premier division 1 match and were all out for 249 runs.

Karori then overtook their total, scoring 250 for the loss of four wickets.

Interestingly, both teams batted for exactly the same number of deliveries – 45 overs and four balls.

Oscar Wilson led the way for Karori, scoring 81 runs.

Two players both scored half centuries, with the Karori captain Kevin Weerasundara finishing on 55 not out and Max Parun on 50 not out.

Micah Conroy, batting for Onslow, was the match's top scorer with 83 runs.



James Wilkinson, who played his debut match for the Onslow premiers on 21 November, scoring 49 runs. Photo: Supplied.

James Wilkinson, playing his debut match for the Onslow premiers, came within one run of a half century when he was dismissed for 49.

All six Karori bowlers took wickets.

Ghofran Shasawat took three wickets for 65, Puvin Anthony two wickets for 12, Yashraj Kalsi two wickets for 63, Kevin Weerasundara one wicket for 31, Patrick White one wicket for 35 and Louis Ayres one wicket for 37.

Micah Conroy and George Holmes took the four Karori wickets that fell, Micah two for 39 and George two for 46.

Karori's next match is against North City Sprig & Fern Tawa at Karori Park on 28 November, starting at 10.30am.

Onslow's next match is against Hutt District at the Hutt Recreation Ground on 28 November, starting at 10.30am.

The Johnsonville men's first XI was comfortably beaten by Naenae Old Boys in the Premier division 2 match on 21 November.

Batting first on the Ewen Chatfield Oval at Naenae Park, Naenae reached 280 for the loss of seven wickets in their 50 overs.

They then bowled out Johnsonville for 110 runs. Three Johnsonville bowlers took two wickets each – the captain Reece Edgecombe for 31 runs, Dominic McAlister for 52 runs and Damian Aitken for 71 runs.

Xavier Crookston took one wicket for 23 runs. Janakan Karunaharan was the best of the Johnsonville batsmen, scoring 28 not out and Andrew Moir scored 20. Johnsonville's next match is against Petone Riverside at the Petone Recreation Ground on 28 November, starting at 10.30am. The Johnsonville women also lost their match last weekend when City Suburbs beat them on 22 November.

Batting first on their home ground of Alex Moore Park, Johnsonville scored 62 for the loss of nine wickets in their 20 overs. City Suburbs took just 11 overs and one ball to reach 63 for the loss of three wickets. Johnsonville will play North City in their Women's division 2 match on 29 November at Alex Moore Park, starting at 11am.

Sportsperson of Year

Karori student Jayathi Jaiganesh has been named College Sport Wellington Girls' Table Tennis Sportsperson of the Year for the second consecutive year, receiving the award again in November 2026.

Jayathi is a student at Scots College.

This year's recognition follows her success at the College Sport Wellington Individual Table Tennis Championships on 7 August, where she won the Senior Girls Singles competition at Empire Stadium.

Jayathi finished first in the six-player round robin, ahead of fellow Scots College student Ming Ming Sumatechotimatha.

Her 2026 season also included national recognition. Table Tennis New Zealand's Under-19 Girls Merit List dated 3 November placed her 31st.

For Jayathi, the back-to-back regional honour marks another milestone in her table tennis journey, combining individual competition success with continued recognition across two school sporting seasons.



Scots College student Jayathi Jaiganesh, College Sport Wellington Girls' Table Tennis Sportsperson of the Year in 2025 and 2026. Photo: Supplied.

New Players celebrates 50 years

New Players Theatre Company, which is based in Newlands and the northern suburbs, officially celebrated 50 years of bringing outstanding community theatre to the stage on 21 November.

Joining the celebrations was former local MP and newly appointed New Players Patron, Greg O'Connor, who attended the event and helped present a series of well-deserved awards recognising excellence, dedication, and service to the theatre community.

The evening honoured both the rich history and bright future of New Players.

Guests enjoyed a specially curated highlights video showcasing memorable moments from the past five decades, expertly compiled by Braden Lister, alongside a screening of the company's most recent production, 'Murder and Matters More Pressing', written by New Players' own talented playwright Amelia Lucie-Smith.

A key feature of the evening was the presentation of the organisation's annual awards.

The Jean Slobbé Memorial Award for Theatre Excellence was awarded to Elien Lewis in recognition of an outstanding dual performance as Charlotte Fardelbear and Ronnie Donnovan, demonstrating exceptional versatility and stage presence. The Heather Conland Memorial Award for Off-Stage Excellence was presented to Faith Woodcock for her superb work in production and stage management, recognising the vital contribution she made behind the scenes.

The celebration also marked the introduction of a new and significant honour.

Following the passing of New Players founder Ross Conland, the committee established the Ross Conland Memorial Shield to recognise individuals who demonstrate exceptional commitment and dedication to the organisation.

The inaugural recipient of this prestigious award was Anne Megget, whose longstanding service and contribution embody the values and spirit Ross championed throughout his life. As New Players enters its next chapter, the anniversary celebration was a fitting tribute to the countless volunteers, performers, creatives and supporters who have helped shape the organisation over the past 50 years. The New Players run their rehearsals at the Newlands Community Centre.



Wellington Women's Refuge

WELLINGTON WOMEN'S REFUGE

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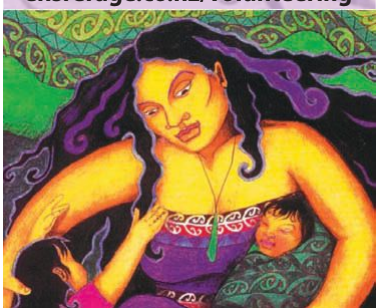

Wellington Women's Refuge

The 24/7 Crisis Line is an integral part of the service Wellington Women's Refuge provides. Its value lies in the ability to provide round the clock support. Accessibility is a must for women experiencing domestic violence who may have limited opportunities to reach out.

The operation of this service relies on the work of compassionate and dedicated volunteers. They work from their homes, with an answering service that connects the crisis line to their personal phones. They are there to offer a non-judgemental listening ear, and to offer support, information and advocacy. They are also there when a crisis arises, to help women and families to a safe place.

'Volunteering on the crisis line is a rewarding, if challenging undertaking. There is so much value in being the person at the other end of the line, even if it is just to say, "I believe you." ' - Ruby, Crisis Line Volunteer



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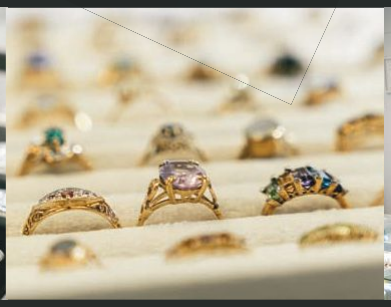



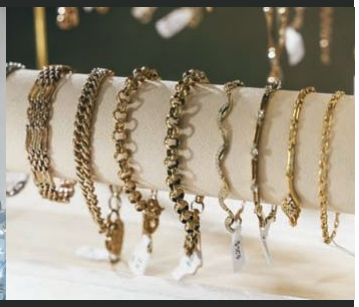

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