Independent Herald

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Mall upgrade signalled

By Frank Neill

The first step in an upgrade for the Johnsonville Shopping Centre has been taken.

Stride Property Group has lodged a fast-track referral application in relation to the shopping centre, a spokesperson for the group told the 'Independent Herald'.

Continued on page 2.

Councillors Andrea Compton, Ben McNulty (centre) and Greg O'Connor enjoying a cuppa at the Johnsonville Shopping Centre. Photo: Supplied.

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REPORTER
Frank Neill
herald@wsn.co.nz
027 490 3916



NATIONAL SALES
Les Whiteside
les@wsn.co.nz
021 360 008



SALES
Steve Maggs
steve@wsn.co.nz
027 765 8303



SALES
Brenda Ingram-Johnson
brenda@wsn.co.nz
021 640 152

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Very exciting news

Continued from page 1.

"Importantly, the application is not resource consent, and approval to build has not been granted," the spokesperson said.

"While the application is being considered, we do not believe it would be appropriate to comment further on the proposal until the outcome of the process is complete.

"Should the project be referred through the relevant statutory process, Stride Property Group is committed to keeping our retailers, stakeholders and the wider community informed as the process progresses.

"Further details will be shared at the appropriate time," the spokesperson said.

The announcement Stride had lodged a fast-track application has been welcomed by all three Takapū/Northern Ward City Councillors.

"It's really exciting," Cr Andrea Compton says.

"To hear that they want to put through a fast track application for a mall redevelopment gives me great hope.

"And I guess it's a vote of confidence in Wellington."

The fact Stride was going through the fast track "is probably a strong signal that they have pretty firm intentions, which is very exciting," Cr Compton says.

"It will be good for the local economy through construction once they get to it, and then good after that too."

Cr Greg O'Connor says he is very pleased people will soon have a complex that local people will be proud of and that will attract people from around Wellington.

Stride's fast track application "means a commitment to spend money, which is always a good sign," Cr O'Connor says, noting that "fast track applications don't come cheap.



One of the entrances to the Johnsonville Shopping Centre. Photo: Frank Neill.

"It does mean clearly that something is happening.

"Anything that gives hope that the ongoing saga that is the Johnsonville Shopping Centre will progress has got to be good news," he says.

Cr O'Connor is the last of the soon to be former Ōhariu electorate MPs.

"I have been working with and speaking with Stride since I became an MP," he says.

Cr O'Connor has served as Ōhariu's MP for three Parliamentary terms, following his initial election in 2017.

The third Takapū/Northern Ward Councillor Ben McNulty, also says he welcomes Stride's announcement.

A little over two years ago Cr McNulty moved a motion that was adopted by the Wellington City Council at its meeting on 5 September 2024.

The motion asked the Council staff to prepare a report within six months on "options to facilitate and realise commercial development more quickly within the Johnsonville Metropolitan Centre Zone".

One of the pathways the motion asked Council officers to report on was "options under the Public Works Act".

That would include the option of compulsory aquisition of the land.

Following the adoption of Cr McNulty's motion, last year the Council signed off on a strategy to try to incentivise Stride to redevelop the Johnsonville Shopping Centre.

When it opened in 1969, the Johnsonville Shopping Centre was Wellington city's first shopping mall.

It provided a big boost for Johnsonville, drawing people to the suburb both to live and as retailers.

It received an upgrade in 1993, but has not had one since.

Security a big Johnsonville business issue

By Frank Neill

The Johnsonville Business Group (JBG) "will use the 2026 and 2027 year to strengthen business connections, improve communication and visibility, support a safer and better presented town centre and advocate clearly for businesses during a period of significant infrastructure change," JBG's Chair Sam Hinder told the group's annual meeting on 23 October.

When presenting the Johnsonville Strategic Plan for the year ahead, Mr Hinder said the JBG had six "key priorities".

One of these was safety and community wellbeing.

"Security has been a big issue that businesses have highlighted to us," Mr Hinder said.

The JBG started a three month trial of security patrols in August.

This trial would be completed and assessed "and we will look to continue it once the trial ends," Mr Hinder said.

He also reported to the meeting that the security cameras in the Johnsonville shopping area were now operational.

In the coming year the JBG will progress CCTV integration, co-ordinate community patrol partners and build evidence for future safety investment.

Another key priority was business visibility and communication.

That will include monthly newsletters, the refreshed website and directory, social media, business profiles and campaigns that encourage people to support local.

A third priority was member connection and capability.



The Johnsonville Business Group Chair Sam Hinder. Photo: Supplied.

This will provide practical netwoking and learning opportunities, beginning with social media and business continuity support.

A fourth priority is to "maintain planter and streetscape activity, promote FixIt reporting, and support realistic town centre, signage and greenspace improvements."

The JBG also plans to "keep businesses informed and represented during Tiaki Wai works, the proposed January 2027 closure affecting the central Johnsonville triangle and the wider suburban centres upgrade.

The priority for governance and delivery is to "maintain sound financial oversight, compliance, records, reporting and an effective working relationship between the [Johnsonville] BID Manager, Executive Committee and Wellington City Council."

Karori author wins silver award

By Frank Neill

Karori's Jayathi Jaiganesh has received a Silver Award in the 2026 Queen's Commonwealth Writing Competition for her short story 'The Song That Crossed the Ocean'.

The story explores identity, belonging and the traditions we carry with us.

Set on a rainy Wellington evening, it follows a young narrator who shares the Carnatic raga Kalyani with a visitor, recalling memories of Tiruchirappalli in India and reflecting on how music connects generations across oceans.

"I wanted to explore the idea of home and belonging, especially what it means to grow up in New Zealand while having strong cultural connections to India," Jayathi says.

"Music felt like a natural way to bring these two worlds together.

"Carnatic music is part of my cultural heritage, and I wanted to explore how a melody could carry memories, traditions and emotions across generations.

"I chose Kalyani, a well-known raga in South Indian Carnatic classical music, celebrated for its rich, expansive character and its ability to convey different emotions. Kalyani is also my mum's favourite raga, which made it a particularly meaningful choice for me.

"By setting the story on a rainy Wellington evening and connecting it with memories of Tiruchirappalli in India, I wanted to explore how people can carry a sense of home with them, even across oceans.



Karori author Jayathi Jaiganesh. Photo: Supplied.

"For me, the story is about how music and traditions can connect people across cultures and generations, and how belonging doesn't necessarily have to be tied to just one place," Jayathi says.

The silver award comes in the wake of Jayathi and her brother Jayath Jaiganesh being named as 2026 International Children's Peace Prize nominees by KidsRights.

They have been selected in recognition of their work with 'Bella and Bio-Bot'.

Their peace prize nomination is in the Child Participation, Education and Climate Justice/Environment category.

'Bella and Bio-Bot' was also named as a finalist in this year's Wellington Airport Regional Community Awards. It was a finalist in the Wellington City section of the awards.

Ngaio student wins short story award

Ngaio student Juliet Grotrian is the winner of the 2026 Mansfield Short Story Award.

The Queen Margaret College student was presented the award at an event held for finalists at the National Library of New Zealand on Thursday 22 October.

Juliet's story 'Mercy' was described by judge Michelle Duff as a " quietly powerful rumination on resistance to change " and a "striking metaphor for failing to act on environmental harm", as well as an entertaining read.

The story focuses on an older man living alone in a small beach community, who initially ignores an injured seagull.

When he finally decides to act, it's too late.

Michelle Duff praised the voice in the story as original and convincing.

"I feel like I know this main character – a lonely, likeable curmudgeon," she said.

The annual competition is open to Year 12 and 13 students in the Wellington region.

A shortlist of 12 finalists was judged by Michelle, an award-winning journalist and short fiction writer.

Speaking at the event, Michelle reflected on the challenging task of picking a winner.

"These stories were all so brilliant, these voices so clear, the things that they wanted to say so honest, at times brutal, at times heartbreaking, that I found them almost impossible to judge."

Kaitoro Walker, a year 13 student at Hutt Valley High School, was runner up.

His story, 'Settling Down', can be read as both the descent of a relationship into domestic violence, and a parable on colonial violence.

Michelle described the story as "astute and heartbreaking," and "a searing indictment on the colonisation of a body and mind."

Two stories were highly commended.

'When Words Disappear' by Marama Hambly, a year 13 student at Samuel Marsden Collegiate School, is a piece of speculative fiction in which the citizens of Wellington begin to forget words and their meanings.



Judge Michelle Duff with the Mansfield Short Story Award winner Juliet Grotrian. Photo: Stephen A'Court.

Michelle found it "artfully written" with "shades of Orwell, shades of Vonnegut" and "a whole lot of fun to read."

'Headlights' by year 13 Tawa College student Amy Cordwell is a thrilling horror story about a boy who goes hunting, only to find himself trapped liked a deer in the headlights.

"This is clever, scary, fast-paced, heart-thumping stuff," Michelle said.

She praised the achievement of writing an unlikeable character, noting "I kind of wanted him to get got, while also desperately wanting him to get the hell out of that ngahere."

The annual competition is run by Katherine Mansfield House & Garden, the birthplace of internationally acclaimed Modernist writer Katherine Mansfield, now a museum open six days a week.

The $500 cash prize is supported by a bequest from longtime Wellington English teacher Gay Saker, which also supports the evening event alongside the Oroya and Melvin Day Trust.

As well as celebrating the life and work of Mansfield, Katherine Mansfield House & Garden promotes reading and writing through initiatives such as a three-week writer's residency in collaboration with Verb Wellington, school holiday creative writing workshops and the annual short story award.

"Recognising young writers in the city Mansfield grew up in is a fitting way to honour her legacy," says Cherie Jacobson, Director of Katherine Mansfield House & Garden.

"The number of entries for this award has doubled in recent years, which is really encouraging and means the quality of the finalists' stories is incredibly high."

The stories of all 12 finalists have been published on the Katherine Mansfield House & Garden website, www.katherinemansfield.com.

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Nana's secret to moving free

Christine is a grandmother who says yes. Yes to the park. Yes to baking. Yes to play. At 64, she had built her identity around being present and up for adventure.

Then her knees started making decisions for her.

For the last few years, Christine watched other grandparents chase their grandchildren around the playground while she sat on the same park bench.

"I'd gotten quite good at making excuses," the 64-year-old admits. "When my granddaughter would tug at my hand saying 'Come on, Nana!' I'd have to tell her Nana needed to rest. But really, I just didn't have the confidence anymore."

The gradual changes in her knees had transformed Christine from an active grandmother into someone who measured life in careful steps.

"The worst part wasn't physical, it was watching life happen without me," she explains. "I'd tried various products for joint support. Nothing gave me the confidence to get moving again."

"I kept thinking about my mother's health. I could see myself heading down the same path of limitations."

Then one day at the pharmacy, Christine noticed a small display for Koru FX, a natural joint and muscle support cream made in New Zealand.

"I was sceptical, I'd tried so many things," she says. "But I'd seen it talked about online and the lady said it's been selling really well, which made me think it was worth trying."

She began applying the cream to both knees each morning and night. It absorbed quickly with a pleasant peppermint scent. No sticky residue on her clothes.

"After a few weeks, I noticed I was moving differently. More confidently. My knees felt supported," she reflects.



Christine had become an expert at saying no to her granddaughter. Then came the day she finally felt ready to play again.

"If I overdid it, the Koru FX was easy to pop on quickly and I would feel it getting to work."

The real test came when her preschool granddaughter arrived for a visit.

"She asked if we could go to the park, and I almost said my usual 'not today'. Then I realised, I felt ready to try. Not reckless, just... ready."

The 400 metres that had seemed like miles suddenly wasn't. Christine found herself not just at the park, but participating. Pushing her granddaughter on the swings. Even managing a gentle game of chase.

"She looked at me with these huge eyes and said, 'Nana, you're playing!' That's when I felt like crying," Christine laughs, eyes misting at the memory. "Three years of watching from that bench, and finally I was part of her world again."

Now, Christine continues to reclaim pieces of her life. Daily walks to the shops. Standing and baking with her granddaughter. Even careful gardening, kneeling with support.

"I'm still cautious, but I'm not afraid anymore," she says. "The cream gives my knees the support I need to be present in my own life again."

Her husband has noticed the difference too. "He says I'm back to being the person he married," Christine smiles. "The one who says yes."

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inbrief news

Xmas gifts

Thousands of children, including local children, will receive Christmas presents they otherwise would not get thanks to the Catalytic Foundation.

The foundation runs a programme called the Christmas Shoebox Project.

"For many families in New Zealand, simply putting food on the table is a struggle and Christmas gifts are an unachievable luxury," the foundation says.

"The children in these families hope for a little Christmas magic, and together we can make their wishes come true.

"Last year, thanks to generous Kiwis like you, we helped make Christmas special for nearly 8,000 children experiencing hardship across New Zealand.

"This year 9,153 children have been nominated to receive a Christmas Shoebox, and we would like to help every one them," the foundation says.

People can help by making a donation at www.christmasshoebox.org.nz.

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Big milestone for CAB petition

By Frank Neill

The Citizens Advice Bureau Wellington's petition seeking funding reinstatement has now surpassed 10,000 signatories.

"We call on Wellington City Council to urgently reinstate funding for Wellington Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), reversing the devastating cut that threatens the future of this essential community service," the petition says.

"The recent decision to cut CAB funding by more than half puts the future of this vital community service at serious risk.

"Without adequate funding Wellingtonians will lose access to trusted, free, independent advice and advocacy at the very time many people are struggling with rising costs, housing stress, employment issues, family hardship and increasing social isolation."

When the petition had reached close to 10,000 signatures, it was delivered to Wellington City Council's Te Mataaho o te Hapori/Grants Subcommittee last month.

The committee, however, voted 5-4 against providing CAB an additional contribution of $12,500, less than 10% of the $142,000 funding cut made in May 2026.

In the wake of this decision the community has continued to get more signatures on the petition, which had reached 10,028 signatures by 27 October.

"We appreciate the community support for our petition," CAB Wellington's General Manager Carin Sundstedt says.

"It shows us how important Wellingtonians think our services are.

"Many local businesses have been supportive but the efforts made by Craig [Fair] and team at Karori Auto Service are really above and beyond," Carin says.

"When 10,000 people sign a petition and another 10,000+ people use our services every year, it's fair to ask whether the value of those services is being fully recognised by the Council.

"We struggle to understand how a partnership spanning more than 50 years can be diminished without meaningful consultation, transparency or clarity of the full impact on our communities."

Councillors did support a call for officials to assist CAB with options, including exploring a presence back in the central city library – Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui.

"Our current central city premises are well located, but are under a commercial lease, so free premises would be a helpful contribution," Carin says.

"However, this will not address the huge hole from Council's funding cut."

CAB Wellington has enough resources to continue this financial year.

"Then we don't know what the future really will hold," Carin says.

CAB Wellington is hoping that Wellington City Council, in the wake of the petition, will restore funding next year.

CAB Wellington has five locations in the city – Johnsonville, Karori, Newtown, Kilbirnie and Central Wellington.



CAB interviewers Pip and John collecting petition signatures at the Thorndon New World. Photo: Supplied.

Wgtn North Community Patrol needs volunteers

By Frank Neill

The Wellington North Community Patrol (WNCP) is actively seeking volunteers so it can provide enhanced coverage of the suburbs it covers.

Community Patrols New Zealand, with some 120 Patrols across the country, aims to help keep neighbourhoods safe in each patrol's area. The Wellington North Patrol is no different.

It does this, WNCP's leader Grant Signal says "by being the eyes and ears of the Police".

The Wellington North patrol covers a big area.

It includes Churton Park, Johnsonville, Broadmeadows, Khandallah, Ngaio, down the Ngaio Gorge Road to Kaiwharawara, along the waterfront to Ngauranga, up the gorge to Newlands, Woodridge, Paparangi and Grenada.

Volunteers are asked to commit to one evening patrol each month for five hours, or more if they wish. They are able to commit to a date and a time that best suits them.

Patrols generally take place from 7pm to midnight on Fridays and Saturdays.

"We try to cover every Friday and Saturday, but we're not there yet," Grant says.

That, however is the WNCP's aim.

"It beats sitting at home watching MAFS," Grant says.

As well as the patrols WNCP has a meeting for about an hour on the last Tuesday of every month and training is provided at the meeting.



The Wellington North Community Patrollers with their patrol car. Photo: Supplied.

The main aim of community patrols is to deter crime – deterring and preventing things before they happen by having an active, visible presence.

"Criminals are less likely to break into somebody's house if there is an active community patrol out and about," Grant says.

The community patrols provide an "invaluable service" to the community, a Police spokesman says.

The service "works really well as the eyes and ears of the Police, to see what is going on in the community and to work towards making the area safe.

"When something happens they are often in the right place at the right time and can pass the information on to us.

"They are a good source of intelligence and can alert us to something we need to look at.

"With their intelligence reports and by occasionally ringing us, they help us build a picture of who's out and about.

"I think they are a great asset to have out there in the community."

To volunteer for the Wellington North Community Patrol, or for more information, email wellingtonnorth@cpnz.org.nz.



One of the gardens and homes people will visit on the Wadestown School House and Garden Walk. Photo: Supplied.

Wadestown House and Garden Walk

The Wadestown School House and Garden Walk will take place from 10am to 4pm on Sunday 15 November.

"The House and Garden Walk gives people a wonderful opportunity to discover the stories behind Wadestown's homes and gardens," the event's organiser Kris Msayo says.

"Every property is different, and this year's mix of contemporary design, heritage architecture and beautiful outdoor spaces really captures the character of our community.

"We're delighted to once again be showcasing Wadestown while supporting Wadestown School."

Every home that features during the walk has a story, from clever contemporary design to heritage architecture and histories spanning generations.

The walk offers a rare opportunity to explore private homes and gardens that are not usually open to the public.

It celebrates Wadestown's distinctive character and the thoughtful architecture, design and gardening that make the most of its steep hillsides and unusual landscape.

The event brings the community together while raising funds for Wadestown School.

The walk, which is held every three years, has been part of the Wadestown community for nearly three decades.

It brings together locals, architecture and garden enthusiasts, and visitors keen to discover homes and gardens they might not otherwise have the opportunity to see.

This year's properties showcase a mix of contemporary sustainable design, heritage architecture, fascinating personal histories and beautiful garden spaces.

"Two of the featured homes will be serving refreshments (included in your ticket), and the much loved deli stall will be back by popular demand," the organisers say.

Tickets to the walk are available at www.wadestown.school.nz/house-and-garden-walk-2026.

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Sir Ashley Bloomfield. Photo: Supplied.

Sir Ashley returning to Tawa

One of Tawa's best known personalities, Sir Ashley Bloomfield, will return to his old stomping ground on 4 November.

Sir Ashley will speak at 'From Tawa to Oxford: an Evening with Sir Ashley Bloomfield' at Tawa Anglican Church on Lyndhurst Road, beginning at 6.30pm.

Sir Ashley will talk about leadership during unique and uncertain times.

The Bloomfields were based on Oriel Avenue in Redwood when Sir Ashley was a child. He was also part of the Tawa Rugby Football Club.

Sir Ashley's parents were part of the Tawa Anglican Church, and when he returned to Tawa he had attended services there, too.

Another Tawa local, Lucire publisher and RNZ National panellist Jack Yan, will MC the evening.

Tickets are available at Humanitix at $50 a head, to support the Tawa Anglican Church's facilities' redevelopment.

Dessert and coffee will be provided.

Onslow College Sportspeople of the Year

Ella Young and Roman Anderson are Onslow College's 2026 Sportspeople of the Year.

Ella and Roman were presented the NZCT Cup for their achievement at the college's sports awards evening on 22 October.

Ella was recognised for her outstanding year in Ultimate Frisbee.

She represented New Zealand at the World Junior Ultimate Championships in Spain, where she earned MVP honours in three games.

She also captained the Onslow College A Grade team and achieved significant success in national competition.

This included being named Tournament MVP at the Chalice City competition and helping Wellington Nexus win the Women's Division 1 National Tournament.

Ella's performances throughout the year demonstrated her skill, leadership and consistency at both school and representative level.

Roman has once again had another exceptional year in swimming.

He became New Zealand Champion in the open men's 50 metre breaststroke at the 2026 New Zealand Short Course Championships, breaking New Zealand 17-year records in both the 50 metre and 100 metre breaststroke events.

He also represented New Zealand at the Oceania Championships in Fiji, winning bronze in the 4x50 metre freestyle relay, and competed at the Tri-Series in Australia, recording the highest men's points for the New Zealand White team.



Onslow College's Sportspeople of the Year, Ella Young and Roman Anderson being presented the NZCT Cup by the college's Tumuaki (Principal) Jono Wyeth. Photo: Frank Neill.

Roman's performances reflect the dedication and commitment required to compete at the highest level of his sport.

Jayd Tuarea-Gibson was presented the Claire Mowday Cup, awarded to the most outstanding para athlete.

Jayd has been a great leader this year

He has encouraged his team members to do their best and lead by example.

VerbCrawl coming next month

Verb's beloved, one-night-only, high-energy literary festival, VerbCrawl, will take over the streets of inner-city Wellington on Saturday 14 November.

Among the participants will be Ngaio author Brannavan Gnanalingham.

He Chairs the Wellington Treasure Trust that helps support the festival and is also participating as part of the publishing collective that will celebrate its 21st birthday at VerbCrawl.

The Lawrence and Gibson Publishing Collective was started in 2005 by Murdoch Stephens and has, unlike many other publishers and small presses, continued for more than two decades.

"So we are putting on a classic 21st," Brannavan says.

"It should be fun.

"We plan on structuring it around the classic 21st with speeches and a couple of drinks.

"It's a chance to celebrate the broad nature of what we have published over the 21 years and tell a few stories from those early days."

Brannavan's latest novel U.X.O. was published just last month by Lawrence and Gibson.

An epistolary novel, it tells a story through unsent letters written by a low-caste Tamil former Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) soldier to his Kiwi grandson, Arjun.

It spans the Sri Lankan Civil War, specifically the IPKF intervention in Jaffna from 1987 to 1990 and contemporary New Zealand.

The novel explores diasporic trauma, the reality of war crimes, memory versus forgettig and generational asccountability.

Verb Crawl will feature untamed events unfolding in the unexpected – across bars, fabric stores, galleries, bookshops and more.

Expect a joyous celebration of writing, conversations, books and performance, in unexpected ways and unexpected places, the organisers say.

Twenty-five events will take place between 6pm and 9.15pm.

It's a fast-paced, vivacious festival with a focus on grassroots literary collectives, indie journals and emerging voices.

Many events blend performance and literature, with inventive new formats, making it a night of experimentation and wild provocations.

Following on from the hugely successful return of Verb Readers & Writers Festival in September 2026, the Verb team says that they are incredibly excited to have another literary celebration to look forward to.

The 2026 VerbCrawl programme and tickets are available at verbwellington.nz.



Ngaio author Brannavan Gnanalingham who is taking part in this year's VerbCrawl. Photo: Supplied.



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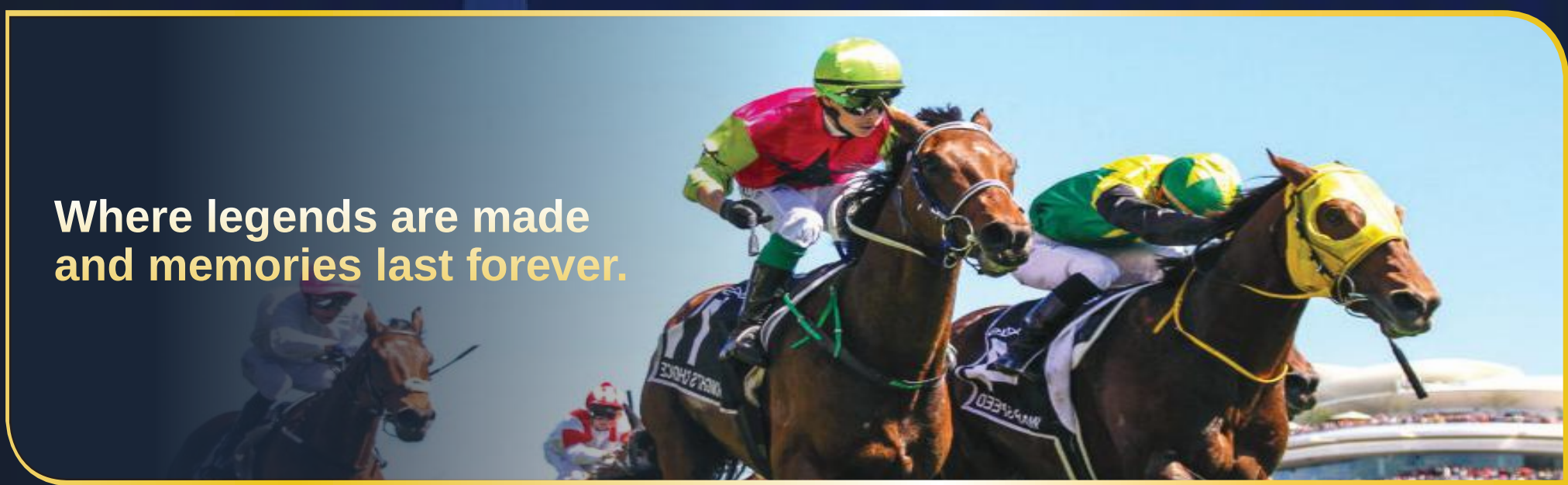
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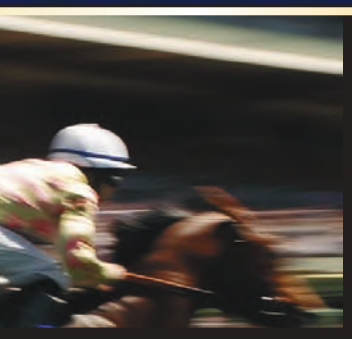
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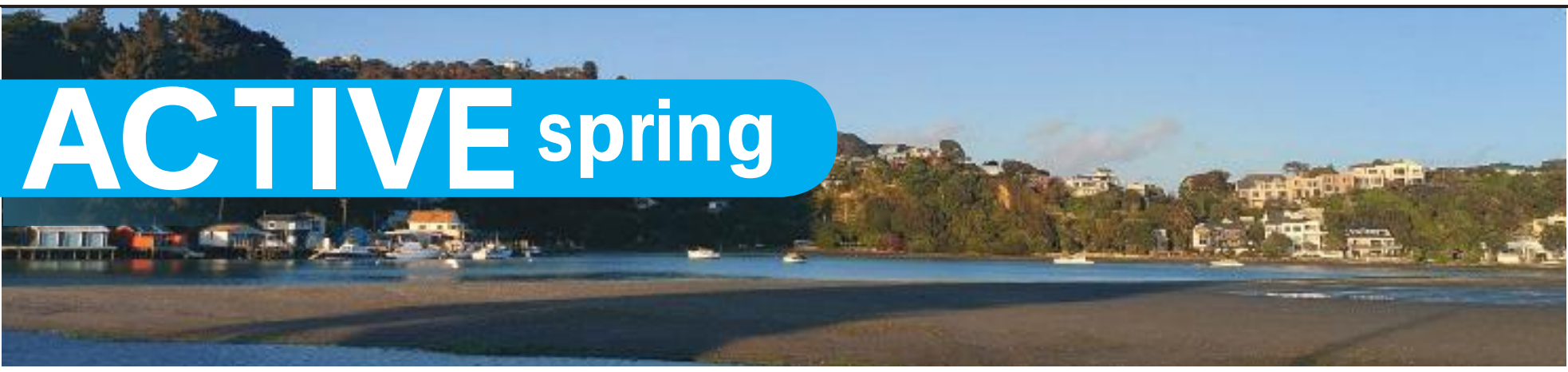
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Just a 20-minute boat ride from the mainland lies Mana Island, a remarkable destination where New Zealand's natural history meets an inspiring story of ecological restoration.

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Upon arrival, guests enjoy an introduction to the island's past and its ongoing conservation journey at the historic woolshed.



Walking tracks lead adventurers through regenerating forests, flax-filled landscapes, dramatic western cliffs and the historic lighthouse site. Every turn offers spectacular views across Cook Strait towards Kāpiti Island and the Wellington coastline with good vierws of the distant wind turbines.



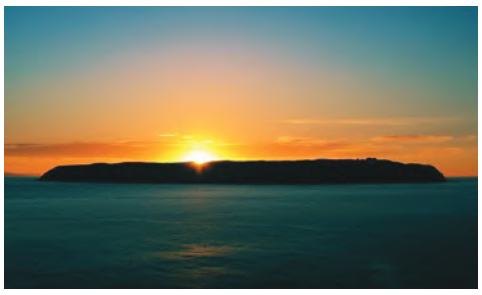
Wildlife enthusiasts can look for the rare takahē, with Mana Island supporting the world's second-largest population, alongside 39 other bird species.

The island is also home to several native lizards and the remarkable Cook Strait giant wētā, believed to be the world's heaviest insect.

Whether visiting with your family, friends, school groups or colleagues, Mana Island offers an unforgettable outdoor experience. Discover the beauty, biodiversity and cultural significance of this treasured place, shared by New Zealand and Ngāti Toa.

Tour Operator Glen Cooper says sea conditions for crossings are very good with a crossing reliability rate of 80% www.gomana.co.nz

Contact Glen at 027 271 9818, email glen@gomana.co.nz



Sea conditions are so good that 80% of visits go ahead *Photo: DoC*

Glenburn Station's farmstay and Honeycomb Rock beckon

Now is the time to book your Glenburn Station visit for a warm and welcoming spring or summer visit - an ideal getaway for groups, couples, or families.

Its well-known Honeycomb Rock coastal walk has been open again since October, after the lambing season is over, and is an iconic Wairarapa day out. The 9km of pristine Pacific coastline along the boundary of the farm is one of of the walk's key features.



On the coastal walk, visitors can spot the seal colony, check out the remains of a 1960's shipwreck, and stop by Honeycomb Rock, a large, distinctive outcrop known for its unusual pitted appearance.

With rolling farmland, pristine coastline and quiet walking tracks, Glenburn Station is the perfect place to relax, recharge and escape the daily grind. Visitors are welcome to stay in the range of accommodation options available in this rural slice of paradise.



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Walk a different side of New Zealand in the Wairarapa

If you want to discover a more personal, authentic and comfortable side of the country, the Wairarapa offers a compelling alternative to the Great Walks.

Private walks take you beyond the crowds and into landscapes where people live, work and know the land intimately. Instead of simply passing through, you meet the people who call these places home, hear their stories and discover the history, farming and character that make each property unique.

There's comfort, too. Private walking experiences can combine spectacular scenery with beautifully appointed, often quirky accommodation, comfortable beds, linen, good food and even indulgent extras such as hot tubs and saunas. With your baggage transported, there's no need to travel light — bring the books, treats, drinks and extra clothes that make an adventure your own.

Four of the 26 private walks featured in Gary Patterson's newly published Wander are in the Wairarapa, highlighting the region's growing reputation as a destination for walkers looking for something beyond the conventional Great Walk experience.

And there's more to come. From Labour Weekend, a new walking and accommodation experience at neighbouring Boar Spur will link with The Last Resort, creating an immersive five-day, four-night adventure.

So why wait for a place on a Great Walk? Come to the Wairarapa and walk a different way. Book your private walking adventure, leave the crowds behind and discover a side of New Zealand that feels genuinely yours.



GKR Karate for all ages

If you want to get into Karate there are classes to get everyone involved, from Yoji classes for 3-4yr olds, kids' classes 5-9yr olds, family and beginner classes and adult only classes.



Aside from the confidence gained when learning self-defence, karate training can have a positive impact on children's fitness, concentration and general behaviour.

For adults, it's also a great way to relieve stress, learn something new, meet new people, and stay healthy.

Apart from the obvious development of self-defence skills, Karate training builds confidence, self-discipline, determination, focus, courtesy, self-control and of course fitness.

GKR Karate's classes are taught by passionate instructors who are committed to teaching and passing on the GKR Karate style and our way of life.

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When you're heading into our great Outdoors this spring make sure you check out the great range of roof boxes at The Roof Rack Centre at 2 Centennial Drive, Ngauranga.

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Ask them about how quiet these roof boxes and roof racks are. Professional installation is available.

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A great family day out at Goldfields Mining Centre

The Goldfields Mining Centre is a special place where visitors can gain an appreciation of the life and working environment of those early miners who struggled against the harsh and sometimes dangerous conditions along Central Otago's famed Kawarau Gorge.

Walk along the paths of the old miners. Find out about gold and where it came from. Discover how the goldrush has impacted places throughout the world. Learn the technique of gold panning, and then try your luck at panning for gold. Allowing at least two hours to enjoy the full experience is recommended.

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The Royal Albatross Centre



The Royal Albatross Centre is nestled at the tip of the Otago Peninsula, Ōtepoti - Dunedin. Here visitors have the unique opportunity to view the only mainland nesting site of one of the greatest seabirds in the world.

The Northern Royal Albatross – with an impressive three metre wingspan is definitely an extraordinary bird to watch. The Albatross colony can be viewed from our observatory, which is located a short walk uphill from the Albatross Centre on a guided tour.

At the Albatross Centre visitors can also learn about the Albatross and the history of the headland.

Our on-site Toroa Café provides freshly baked and cooked meals and our Giftshop has a big range of New Zealand and locally made treasures.



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Wellington City Councillor has a reshuffle

Wellington Mayor Andrew Little has announced a minor reshuffle and assigned portfolios to Wellington City Councillors to help deliver council's Triennium Plan.

The reshuffle reflects Greg O'Connor's election to the Council.

"There has been serious change at Wellington City Council in the year since the election," Mayor Andrew Little says.

"We've delivered the lowest rates increase in six years while protecting the public services and facilities the community rely on, such as restoring the much-loved Begonia House and renewing the heart of our city by reopening Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library, Te Ngākau Civic Square and the City Gallery Te Whare Toi.

"Together, we've tackled serious challenges like major flooding, getting on with fixing the Moa Point wastewater treatment plant, transferred the water services to Tiaki Wai, and met the central government's demand for a regional local government amalgamation proposal.

"Importantly, we've also given the Council organisation a clear focus, with a Triennium Plan agreed by an overwhelming majority of Councillors.

"Now with Greg O'Connor joining Council, and with rates capping imminent, it's time to redouble efforts to deliver on our commitments to residents while ensuring value for money for every dollar.

"I'm pleased Councillors with diverse political views have agreed to take on portfolios that will provide a sharper focus on the issues that matter to Wellington communities, residents and businesses.

"Portfolio holders will liaise with other Councillors, the Executive Leadership Team, and community organisations, to help deliver the Triennium Plan.

"There is a lot of talent and mutual respect around the Council table.

"I'm grateful Councillors continue to step up to keep delivering the serious leadership and real change Wellingtonians voted to see at their council," the Mayor says.

Cr Rebecca Matthews (Green) has been appointed as an additional Member of Tumu Whakatere | Chief Executive Performance Review Committee.

Cr Laurie Foon (Green) has been appointed as an additional Member of the Appointments Group.

Cr Nureddin Abdurahman (Labour) has been appointed Deputy Chair, Te Takere | Regulatory Processes Committee, replacing the late Cr Tony Randle, and an additional Member of Ngā Kaihoe Pūtea | Revenue and Financial Value Review Working Group.

Cr Andrea Compton (Independent) has been appointed an additional Member of Te Kura o te Waka | Audit and Risk Committee.

Cr Greg O'Connor (Independent) has been appointed Deputy Chair, Ngā Toki Whakahaere | CCO Review Subcommittee, a Member of Te Takere | Regulatory Processes Committee, a Member of Ngā Kaihoe Pūtea | Revenue and Financial Value Review Working Group, and a Member of the Committees of the Whole.

Cr O'Connor has also been appointed the City Safety portfolio holder.



Wellington Mayor Andrew Little. Photo: Supplied.

Johnsonville's Rugby legend

Johnsonville resident Michael Sood (known as Soody) has won through to the final 14 of the Farmlands Rural Rugby Legends Award.

Soody is the only nomination from the Wellington region to make the final 14.

People can vote for him by visiting www.farmlands.co.nz.

A member and long-time treasurer of the Marist St Pats Rugby Football Club (MSP), Soody loves MSP and MSP loves him.

The Farmlands Rural Rugby Legends promotion describes its ideal candidate as someone who "gets stuck in, not for the glory, but because the club needs it."

That sentence could have been written for Soody, who has been part of the Marist St Pats Rugby Football Club since 1982.

When the club received the contest information, its Management Committee met to discuss who we should put forward. There was no debate, no shortlist, no need to think about it.

"There was only one question: How do we convince Soody, a genuinely humble man, to let us nominate him?" the club says.

"That process took some work, and he only agreed because he saw an opportunity for the club."

Soody is currently driving a fundraising campaign to upgrade MSP's clubrooms – particularly the kitchen – something he has been promoting for more than a decade.

For more than 40 years he has quietly done whatever the club needs him to do – player, coach, administrator, gear manager, team manager, committee member, raffle seller, referee greeter and liaison, clubrooms host and MC, grounds crew, taxi driver, painter, plasterer, fundraiser, cook, bartender, cleaner, strapper, physio, mentor, counsellor, motivator.

He has also been an emergency ambulance service provider and even "Pope" — leader of the Vatican Army, MSP's finals supporters' group.

Soody doesn't just turn up. He gets involved.

He is constantly scanning for opportunities to help — often before anyone has even realised help is needed.

He is first to volunteer, first to lend a hand, always one of the first to arrive at the ground and one of the last to leave.

He is at the gym four or five evenings a week. He is at the club when others are not. He works behind the scenes without seeking recognition and has spent more than four decades quietly oiling the wheels of the Red Machine.

His efforts have been recognised many times.

He was awarded MSP Life Membership in 2017 and has received numerous other club honours, including Most Meritorious Junior Club Member in 1986 and Outstanding Club Member in 2013.

Overall, Soody has been honoured six times during his 40-plus years at MSP — more than any other club member.

But perhaps the award that means the most to him is a slightly different one: NZ Marist Personality of the Year. It's the award he was most proud of.

It was an award, drawn from across all of the NZ Marist clubs, simply recognising Soody being Soody.

He was genuinely delighted that "a national body would recognise that".

His greatest contribution isn't defined by any particular job he has done. It is the fact that he is willing to do almost anything and the effect he has on everyone around him.

People volunteer because Soody is there. They know the work will get done, but they also know it will be fun.

He makes people feel welcome. He makes people feel useful. He makes people feel part of the MSP.

Marist St Pats is a city club. Proudly based in Wellington's Eastern suburbs, it can't be described as a rural club, but Soody has somehow managed to make a big-city club feel like a village club.

Everyone is included, everyone knows Soody, everyone can have a conversation with Soody. And everyone, regardless of whether they are a current player, former player, coach, parent, supporter, volunteer, committee member or visitor, is made to feel that they belong.



Michael Sood with his dog Nico. Photo: Supplied.

There is a very simple, very rural quality to the way Soody approaches people and relationships.

Honesty, good humour, helping each other out, looking after your own, taking an interest in people, and a shared belief that the club belongs to everyone.

One of the clearest measures of his impact comes from MSP's season-end player reviews. Every year, when the club asks players and coaches to reflect on the season, Soody is consistently highlighted as the club's most engaged "official".

His love of the club, its history and its people — past and present — is obvious to the players, and they genuinely appreciate it.

Soody's hospitality doesn't stop at the gym or the clubrooms.

Over the years he has opened his home to more than 30 MSP players from seven different countries — some for a season, others for shorter stays.

One player came for two nights and stayed for two years. Often Soody and his fiancé have two players staying at the same time.

For young players who have travelled halfway around the world to play rugby in Wellington, Soody becomes far more than a club contact – he becomes family. It is another example of what makes Soody special. He doesn't simply support the club - he looks after its people. And his sense of community extends beyond MSP. His interest isn't limited to the current team or even to the club itself. He has a genuine love of Rugby — its people, its traditions and its role in communities throughout New Zealand.

"Soody embodies the spirit behind the Rural Rugby Legends award, not because MSP is a rural club, but because Soody brings the values we associate with rural Rugby to a big-city club," MSP says.



Some of the big crowd that took part in the Johnsonville Lions Club quiz night. Photo: Supplied.

Lions quiz night a big success

Johnsonville Lions Club recently held a successful quiz night at 1841 Bar and Restaurant to support a youth camp for children with diabetes.

"The diabetes youth camp is an excellent opportunity for youngsters with diabetes to meet others in the same situation," Lions President Stephen Mills says.

Mr Mills says he was pleased that the quiz night raised almost $3,000.

"To ensure that the annual camp is able to take place our club will donate a further $2,000 toward the overall cost of $65,000 for the camp."

More than 100 locals in 18 teams enjoyed an entertaining evening with a range of prizes donated by local businesses and community members.

Club Project co-ordinator Jim Ng said that Lions were grateful for the support of the local community, 1841 Bar and other sponsors to raise these funds. "We wish to thank Quinovic, our major sponsor, for donating the second prize of $300 and for also for entering two quiz teams," Jim says.

Other generous sponsors included New World Newlands, Life Pharmacy Johnsonville Shopping Centre, Mitre 10 Crofton Downs, Ray White Real Estate, UniChem Pharmacy Johnsonville and Whittaker's Chocolate.

Quiz team 'Dixon Clams' won the first prize of $600, the second year in a row that they have won.

"Special thanks go to Jono and Chrissy from 1841 Bar and Restaurant for allowing us to hold the Quiz and to their wonderful bar and kitchen staff," the Johnsonville Lions Club says.

1841 also donated the third prize of $200 of meal vouchers.

Mr Mills advised participants that diabetes was one of several worldwide Lions Clubs projects.

"We are happy that at a local level we can help have a global impact on assisting those young people with diabetes," he says.

During the event information was provided for local residents to join Lions and enjoy the comradery of working together for community benefit.

Johnsonville Lions has 25 members and is seeking younger members to help serve the needs of Wellington's northern suburbs while enjoying each other's company.

People can learn more about the Lions Club of Johnsonville at https://johnsonvillelions.co.nz/ or email info@jvillelions.nz.

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organisation with more than 1.45 million members in approximately 46,000 clubs in more than 206 countries and geographical areas around the world.

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Public Notices

BELLEVUE SCHOOL – Igniting Learning, Empowering Learners

Enrolment at Bellevue School is governed by an enrolment scheme, details of which are available from our website: www.bellevue-newlands.school.nz.

The board has determined that up to five (5) places are likely to be available for out of zone students for the second enrolment period in 2027 **(Saturday 10 April 2027 to Friday 2 July 2027).** The exact number of places will depend on the number of applications received from students who live within the school's home zone. For students seeking enrolment within the second enrolment period of 2027, the deadline for receipt of applications for out of zone places is **9am, Friday 4 December 2026.**

If the number of out of zone applications exceeds the number of places available, students will be selected by ballot. If a ballot for out of zone places is required, this will be held on Friday 4 December 2026. Parents will be informed of the outcome of the ballot within three school days of the ballot being held. Details of how applications from out of zone students are processed are available on the school website.

Parents of students who live within the home zone and intend enrolling their child at any time during the next year should notify the school by as soon as possible to assist the school to plan appropriately for next year. Students who live in the home zone are entitled to enrol at the school.

Enrolment packs are available online at **www.bellevue-newlands.school.nz.**

Your Local **NEWS**



Capital facing real challenges



Wellington's new City Councillor Greg O'Connor. Photo: Supplied.

By Frank Neill

The challenges facing Wellington are real, the new Takapū – Northern Ward Councillor Greg O'Connor said in his maiden speech at the Wellington City Council on 22 October.

"You only have to listen to prominent politicians and businesspeople outside Wellington waxing lyrical in their criticism of us, with the Mayor of one big city spitting the word Wellington out like a swearword," Mr O'Connor said.

"Dislike and distrust of Central Government manifests in visceral contempt for all things Wellington.

"My South Island MP cousin summed it up when I suggested to him I was contemplating standing for Council.

"His response that 'you love that effing god forsaken city so you might as well' pretty much epitomises the attitude of our fellow New Zealanders.

"We need to be our own best advocates and extol our city's considerable attributes if we are to attract and retain the jobs and people.

"We need to see the economy and population grow.

"There is no doubt the cost of living here is at the forefront of Wellingtonians concerns, and four hours spent at the brilliantly organised Spring into Tawa Street Fair on Saturday hearing from a wide range of Wellingtonians left me in no doubt what the major issue is; rising rates and water bills, contributing to serious affordability issues.

"We need more people living here earning good salaries to spread the cost of ensuring the city thrives and remains affordable.

"That means encouraging local home-grown entrepreneurs and also attracting outside investment to the city.

"Having lived here for over 50 years, I saw Wellington become the first city in Australasia to successfully build into and access its waterfront, at a time when most other cities locked their populations out in the same way Wellington previously had.

"Who can forget those rusty fences along our quays locking us out from our water, stretching from the ferry terminal to the Overseas Passenger Terminal?

"We need to metaphorically identify and remove today's equivalent of those fences to open our city.

"Because whether we live in Takapū Northern Ward or Upper Hutt or Porirua, we need the city to be thriving to provide the jobs and opportunities for the next generation to want to stay.

"I am absolutely privileged to have been afforded this opportunity to continue to contribute to my Takapū Northen Ward with fellow Councillors Ben McNulty and Andrea Compton.

"In fact the continuity is so proximate that between now and the election I will actually hold the position of Ōhariu MP and Councillor.

"While I hold both roles, I will be donating my council salary to the Kiwi Community Assistance charity, who provide food to the sadly large number of Wellingtonians who need their help, and for whom a successful Wellington will mean a reduction in demand for their services," Cr O'Connor said.

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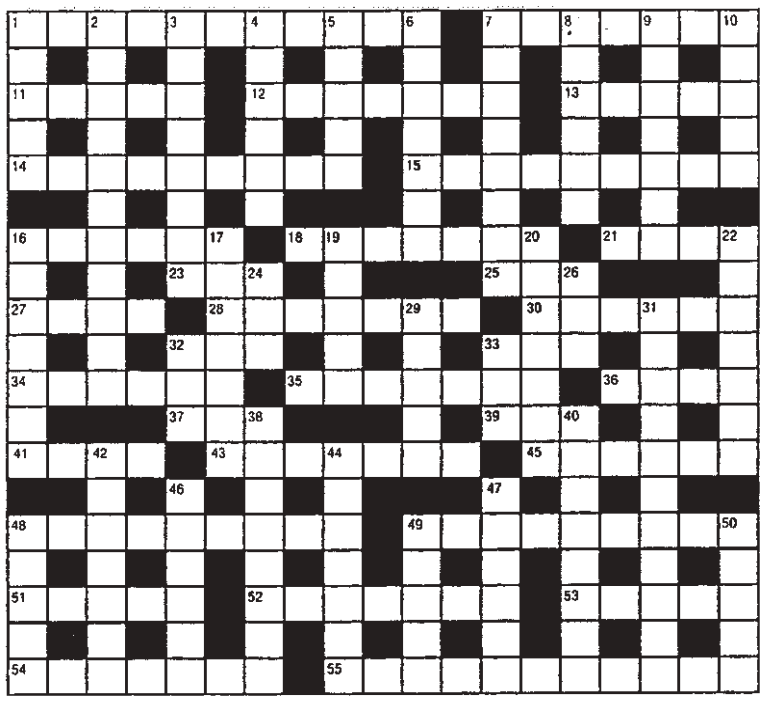
Public Notice

NOTICE OF AGM

Notice is hereby given that the **Karori Community Bus AGM** will be held on **Wednesday 25 November 2026 at 7.15pm** at the Karori Community Centre, Beauchamp Street, Karori.

Love Local. Shop Local.

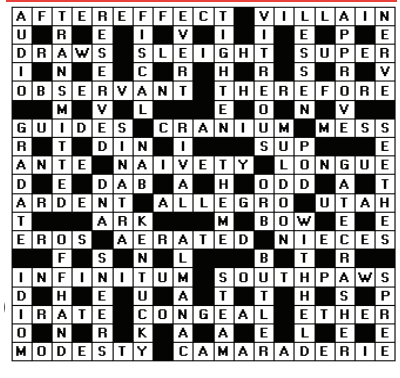
CROSSWORD Puzzle



ACROSS
1. Cheat (6-5)
7. Audacious (7)
11. Ridicules (5)
12. Confound (7)
13. Perfect (5)
14. Awe (9)
15. Indifferent (9)
16. Self-confidence (6)
18. Extend (7)
21. Border (4)
23. Monetary unit of Indonesia (3)
25. Strike(with axe) (3)
27. Stare (4)
28. Vest (7)
30. Irrational fear (6)
32. Favourite (3)
33. Wild punch; ... maker (3)
34. Last (6)
35. Low,wooden stool (7)
36. Japanese wrestling (4)
37. Electrocardiogram(abbr) (3)
39. Beak (3)
41. Exchange (4)
43. 1960's dropouts (7)
45. Large eel (6)
48. Shakespears' 'A ... Night's Dream' (9)
49. Abundant (9)
51. Submerges (5)
52. High fashion dressmaking (7)
53. Supply (5)
54. Contagious disease (7)
55. Stationers (11)

DOWN
1. Object (5)
2. Lacking culture (11)
3. 5 year peroids (8)
4. Doglike (6)
5. Snow leopard (5)
6. Save (7)
7. Send off promptly (8)
8. Long,thin arrow (6)
9. Assisted in wrongdoing (7)
10. Purposeful (5)
16. Attack first (7)
17. Implore (7)
19. Large feline (5)
20. Of the liver (7)
22. Charm (7)
24. Louse egg (3)
26. For what reason (3)
29. Master of ceremonies(inf) (5)
31. Middle classes (11)
32. Appropriate; ...empt (3)
33. Female lobster (3)
38. Gadgets (8)
40. Type of heron (8)
42. Book supplement(pl) (7)
44. Fluster (7)
46. Edible shellfish (6)
47. Postpones (6)
48. Precocious little girl(inf) (5)
49. Second smallest planet (5)
50. Looks for (5)

Solution
Last Week: 22 October 2026



Onslow the T20 Cricket champions

By Frank Neill

Onslow's Premier Cricketers are the 2026 T20 champions.

Onslow won the T20 Cup when they defeated Karori in the final, played at the Hutt Recreation Ground on 25 October.

Batting first Karori scored 150 for the loss of six wickets in their 20 overs.

Onslow surpassed that after 18 overs and three balls, finishing on 151 for two wickets.

Beck Cattermole and Matthew Scoble took two wickets each for Onslow, Beck at a cost of 25 runs and Matthew for 27 runs.

Devan Vishvaka starred with the bat for Onslow, finishing on 73 not out, and Micah Conroy scored 37.

Shivang Choudhary came close to a half century for Karori when he was out for 48 and Dimithri Gallage scored 36.

Louis Ayres and Yashraj Kalsi took the two Onslow wickets to fall.

In the season opener Onslow was completely untroubled in defeating Victoria University of Wellington at Fraser Park on 24 October.

Batting first Onslow scored 193 for the loss of four wickets in their 20 overs,

They then bowled out Victoria University for 112.

Devan once again starred with the bat, scoring a century and finishing on 102 not out.

He scored his runs very rapidly, facing just 58 deliveries.

Oscar Jackson chimed in with 34 runs and Micah Conroy scored 25 runs.

Three Onslow bowlers took three wickets each – Matthew Scoble and Lex Cattermole three for 21 and Beck Cattermole three for 24. Elliot Seddon took the other wicket to fall at a cost of 13 runs.

In the afternoon match Onslow had another easy win over Tawa.

Batting first, Onslow scored 163 for nine wickets and then bowled Tawa out for 132.

Sam French was Onslow's top scorer with 38, and Devan followed up his morning century by scoring 35 runs. Micah scored 29 and Lex scored 28.

Beck took three wickets for 33 runs for Onslow and three bowlers took two wickets each – Lex, Micah and George Holmes.

Karori won its match against Taita at Fraser Park on 24 October.

Batting first, Karori scored 149 for nine wickets and then bowled Taita out for 131.

After reaching his half century Oscar Wilson went on to score 55 runs for Karori and Alex Thompson contributed with 34 runs.

Nibu Jose bowled outstandingly to secure a five wicket bag at a cost of just 21 runs.

Onslow's next match is against Taita at Fraser Park on 31 October, starting at 10.30am.

Karori will meet Easten Suburbs at Kilbirnie Park on 31 October, with the match starting at 10.30am.

Johnsonville's Premier team won one of the three Premier 2 matches it played last weekend.

After losing to Petone Riverside on Saturday morning, they went on to beat Wainuiomata in the afternoon.

Batting first on Sladden Park, Petone Riverside scored 141 for eight wickets in their 20 overs.

They then restricted Johnsonville to 128 for nine wickets.

Connor Lusty was the best of the Johnsonville bowlers, with figures of three wickets for 15 runs and Hary Fayen took two wickets for 17 runs.

Roman Day top scored for Johnsonville with 37 runs.

Wainuiomata batted first in the afternoon match, scoring 137 for seven wickets.

Johnsonville overtook the total with three balls to spare, finishing on 138 runs for six wickets.

Ashan Wanasinghe bowled well for Johnsonville, taking three wickets for 16 runs.

Shubhm Thapar may well have wished the match could have gone on longer, as he just missed out on a half century. He was on 49 not out when Johnsonville clinched the victory.

The Lions Sports Club beat Johnsonville on 25 October with both teams batting for all their 20 overs.

Johnsonville scored 195 for nine wickets to narrowly lose to the Lions, who reached 200 for five wickets.

Shubhm was this time able to claim a half century for Johnsonville, and he finished on 56 runs. Xavier Crookston contributed with 35 runs, Andrew Moir with 32 runs and Jaiveer Tomar with 30 runs.

Johnsonville will again play Wainuiomata at Alex Moore Park on 31 October, starting at 10.30am.



Devan Vishvaka, who starred with the bat in Onslow's T20 final victory over Karori, a day after he scored a century for his team. Photo: Dave Lintott.

North Wellington make the eight

By Hamish Wareham

Labour weekend brought about the 50th annual National under 19s tournament held across the various fields of Park Island run by Napier City Rovers Football Club.

North Wellington progressed out of Pool A, with a record of two wins over Whanganui Athletic and Northland FC both 3-0. The also recorded draws against Miramar, North Shore and Bay Olympic.

Jett Allan was busy in the goals scoring five, helped by a hat trick in the win over Whanganui.

Max Gavin chipped in with a brace in the victory over Northland.

An extra time goal brought the curtain down on North Wellington's tournament at the quarter final stage when they were beaten 1-0 by Western Springs.

Waterside Karori were close but no cigar, finishing third in Pool C on seven points.

After defeating Papamoa 1-0, Watersdie Karori scored two goals in the final three minutes through Sam Law and Sam McLellan, helping them come from a goal down to beat Petone 2-1.

A defeat and a draw against Upper Hutt saw Karori finish third in their pool, with North Wellington being the only side from the capital to progress out of their group in the main draw.

In the National League, a third successive defeat came on Friday evening for the Waterside Karori women playing under the lights of Martin Luckie Park against fierce capital rivals Wellington United.

United scored twice either side of halftime through Madeline O'Farrell.

Jessica Woodside grabbed a goal back for Karori with 10 minutes remaining on the clock but an equaliser wasn't found and Wharfies heading into their bye week sitting fifth on the table while Wellington United occupy second with a trip south this weekend to face Canterbury United Pride.



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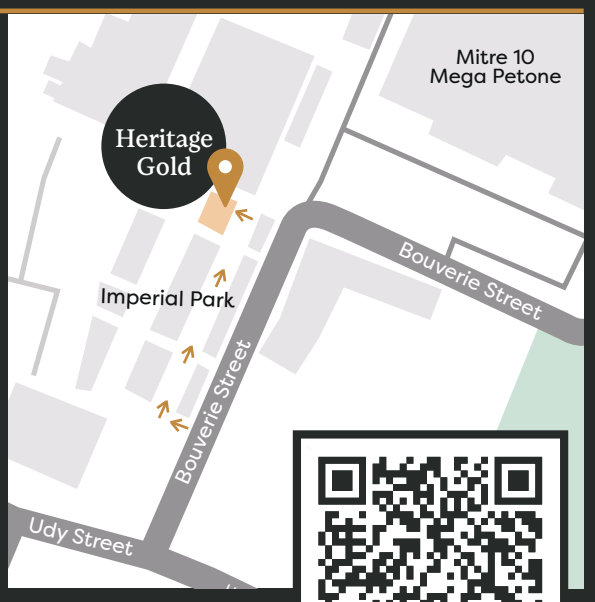
Heritage Gold
Imperial Park, Unit 81,
41 Bouverie Street,
Petone, Lower Hutt.
Next to Gilmours & Mitre 10.

Phone +64 21 074 9410
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