



## HIGH RISE RULES

The potential impact of a six-storey building on Austin Street. Illustration courtesy of Richard Norman, with help from the Wellington School of Architecture.

**M**t Vic residents will find out this month if their suburb is to be turned into a largely high rise zone, with 22 metre heights permitted on most streets, and far less protection for character areas.

Some key elements of Wellington's new District Plan, including character protection, have been referred

to RMA Reform Minister Chris Bishop for a decision. This is required because Wellington City councillors voted to reject recommendations from an independent hearings panel, and instead draft alternative amendments. The Minister's decision on whether to accept the amendments is expected to be made by the end of April. More details on page 2. ➔

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# High rise rules

## Most of Mt Victoria to be zoned for high density development

Mt Victoria is on track for massive changes to its streetscape, if amendments to the District Plan put forward by councillors are accepted by RMA Reform Minister Chris Bishop.

**T**he new planning rules will permit high rise developments of 22 metres (6-7 stories) to be built along most of Austin Street, the majority of Brougham, Hawker and Majoribanks Streets, and all of Ellice and Paterson Streets.

Only much reduced character and heritage areas are exempt, with those heights set at 11 metres, along with other conditions.

Although independent commissioners reviewing the proposed District Plan recommended that the new plan should retain 73% of the Mt Victoria character area, Wellington councillors took the unusual step of rejecting the recommendations made after nearly a year of consultation and hearings.

Instead, councillor amendments would see character areas in the suburb reduced to 37%.

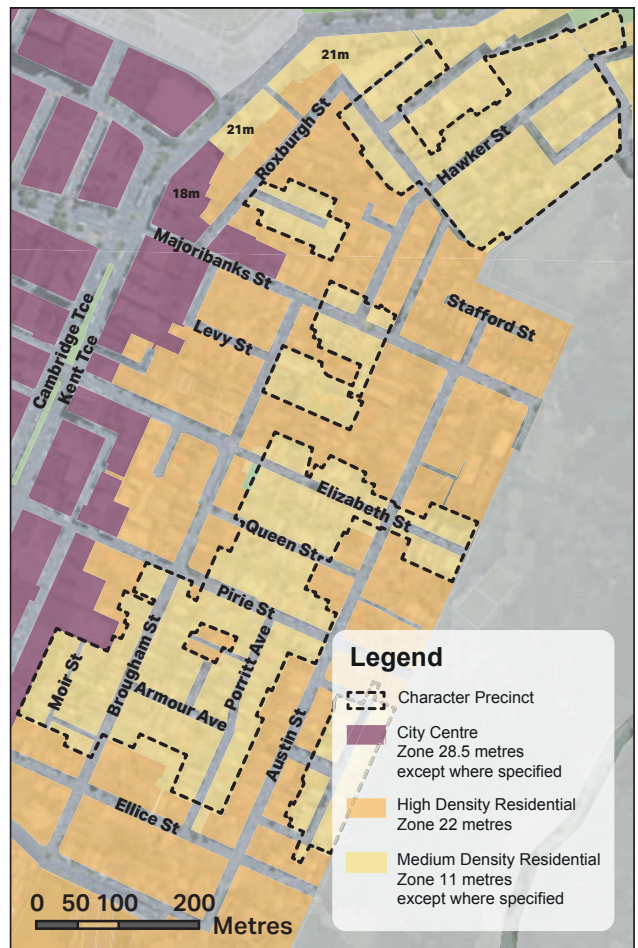
Mt Victoria has a character area of 49.8 hectares in the operative (current) District Plan. Just 18.2 hectares will retain this protection following councillor amendments, compared to 36.6 hectares if the recommendations made by the independent commissioners had been accepted.

**The character area designation means any house built before 1930 requires a resource consent to be demolished, and a design guide provides direction about how the replacement should fit with the surrounding area.**

Although the final call on the amendments put up by councillors is supposed to be made by Environment Minister Penny Simmonds, the RMA Reform Minister Chris Bishop has said publicly he will make the decision.

Bishop says he will be following 'a very careful process' where he considers Council's recommendations, and takes advice from officials. That advice is expected to be received in the middle of April, with a decision by the end of the month. **TL**

### Councillor proposed amendments







The potential impact of a nine-storey building on Moir Street.

### Moir Street

Among the shocks to local residents has been the council's decision to reject measures that would have kept historic Moir Street from being overshadowed by high developments along its Hania Street boundary.

While commissioners recommended a 15-metre building height where Hania street borders Moir Street, councillors voted to make this 28.5 metres instead. Moir Street residents said they were very disappointed with the decision.

**“The Moir Street collective have felt unheard over the last three years, with the councillors voting against the IHP recommendations. This will allow 28.5m right next to our heritage street creating a mass dominance effect that cannot be mitigated through design.”**

### What do the real estate agents think?

Real estate agents Just Paterson, who have a long history of buying and selling in Mt Victoria, say it's difficult to predict what the changes will do to the market locally:

**“The reality is that most properties in Mt Victoria are too expensive to demolish and then build on again. Combine that with the ever-increasing building costs, and we think there will be minimal effect on the Mt Victoria property market. But, we would anticipate seeing an increase in land values for some properties that might be suitable for development where there is a**

**flat piece of land with a low value residence on it. We will gain a better understanding of the market in the coming months as more sales occur in various zoned areas. This data will provide valuable insights into how the changes in zoning are influencing property values and development potential. Factors like the loss of sun, views and privacy, could also affect the value of your home.”**

# Your views are not wanted

Anyone who took part in the District Plan hearings will now be wondering what was the point, after the Wellington City Council decided to dismiss the key recommendations of an independent hearings panel.

**C**ouncillors who spearheaded alternative amendments will argue they have a 'democratic right' to make the changes, as they were voted onto council.

But if that is the case, why hold hearings at all?

One answer is that it is required by law; changes to the District Plan must go through an independent hearings process.

These are costly affairs. Half a dozen commissioners are paid to sit in rooms for months on end, listening to residents, experts, lawyers and anyone else who wants to take part.

The council's lawyer warned councillors that they should 'not lightly' reject any of the IHP's recommendations, and noted that it was 'rare' for a Council to do so.

But they went ahead regardless, and now it is for RMA Reform Minister Chris Bishop to decide which recommendations should go ahead.

This is a slap in the face for submitters. It will be interesting to see the reaction next time the community is asked to contribute to a consultation process. Why waste your time?

Meanwhile, the government is about to implement another mechanism to circumnavigate the views of local residents.

This is the Fast-Track Approvals Bill, which allows projects with 'significant national or regional benefit' to avoid the need to consult with pesky locals, and instead be considered by an expert panel, with the final call on a project to be made by Ministers.

It's very likely that the Mount Victoria tunnel will be among those projects to be fast-tracked, meaning that the ability of local residents to input into the project or voice any concerns appears to be, at this stage, zero.

Chris Bishop is again the key minister involved in this process, as the person leading the legislation through Parliament.



It appears that decisions made by the MP for the Hutt will have a huge impact on the people living in Mt Victoria – meanwhile local residents are sidelined. **TL**

**Jane O'Loughlin**  
Editor

## THE LOCAL Mt Victoria

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on a story in *The Local*?  
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Send to [editor@the-local.co.nz](mailto:editor@the-local.co.nz).  
Word limit is 150 words.

**Daylight no longer threatened**

I was interested to read the story in the March edition of *The Local* about the Brendan Foot land. I live in the neighbouring apartment block. Brendan Foot are good neighbours and while they are next door, we won't have an apartment building going up right next door. We were threatened with this a few years ago and luckily for us, the 6-storey development didn't proceed and we were able to preserve daylight for 6 of the 12 apartments in our building.

Colin Carr



**Gazley G** | 

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## Track signage improvements

Track signage is being improved in the town belt on Matairangi but some locals have raised questions about why there are no ‘pedestrian priority’ tracks.

A council spokesperson said there has been no change to any track designations, just more obvious signs.

“These signs have been designed by Council to more clearly identify the track use designations,” the spokesperson said.

“Our management plans set out all tracks are shared by default unless for a specific reason they are designated for walking only or bike priority, which are the other two classifications we have available to us.

“Currently the only walking-only track on Mt Victoria identified in our plans is the Southern Walkway north of Palliser Road.” **TL**



## Change in lead for Residents' Association

Mt Victoria Residents' Association president Angela Rothwell has stepped down due to family commitments, but will stay on as treasurer.

The committee elected Ellen Blake to take her place until the next Annual General Meeting. Blake paid tribute to Angela's work during her tenure.

“Thank you for holding the torch for a better Mt Victoria over the last few years. She got us through the tough times of Covid and the heated debates around the Wellington Proposed District Plan.” **TL**

## Heritage advocate wins Wellys award

Joanna Newman from the Mt Victoria Historical Society was a finalist in the 2023 Wellys Awards, held in March. Newman is a volunteer heritage researcher and advocate, and Convenor of the Mt Victoria Historical Society.

The category was won by Māori heritage advocate Liz Mellish.

Mt Victoria resident, Ralph Highnam, was Wellingtonian of the year for 2022, for his work founding an internationally successful business screening millions of women for breast cancer across the world. **TL**

## Residents to face the cost of accessways

Four ‘half paths’ in Mt Victoria may be affected by a review of the policy that sees the Wellington City Council fund 50 percent of the maintenance costs.

Records show there are half paths on part of Bosworth Terrace, part of Vogel Street, Doctors Common, and at the end of Shannon street.

The council is proposing to hand over maintenance costs to home owners who use the paths to access their homes.

A final decision will be made at a council meeting on 24 April. **TL**



# Locals look for tunnel input

**Mt Vic activists are gearing up to fight to have a say in – or to block – a new tunnel through the maunga.**

The Mt Victoria Residents' Association is organising a public meeting to gather the views of residents on the project to build a third tunnel, which looks set to be one of those 'fast tracked' by the Government.

"This will be hugely disruptive to Mt Victoria if built, and the details remain unclear. We will hold a public meeting to discuss the impacts if this tunnel goes ahead," said MVRA president Ellen Blake.

Save the Basin Campaign, the group that helped prevent NZTA and a previous National Government from building a flyover near the historic Basin Reserve 10 years ago, is stepping up its activity.

The group is concerned by the process, and indications that no public transport, walking or cycling capacity will be included in the project.

"The new fast-track process could see such a project being steamrolled through by a Government ignorant of due process, accountability, the natural environment, or the vital need to reduce our transport emissions," a spokesperson said.

"Save the Basin Campaign supports the development of a sustainable, low-carbon transport system for Wellington – which a duplicate car tunnel would directly contradict."

The National-led government has introduced a Fast-Track Approvals Bill to Parliament which would allow projects of national and regional significance to avoid the usual RMA consultation processes.

Projects will have their conditions set by an expert panel, but Ministers will have the final sign off.

The list of projects to qualify for the process has not

been revealed, however it's almost certain that the new Mount Victoria tunnel will be one of them.

The fast track announcement was made at the Basin Reserve, and according to news reports, lead Minister Chris Bishop acknowledged one of the projects likely to be fast-tracked was the second Mt Victoria tunnel in Wellington, which the National Party has previously promised to be initiated within the Government's first term.

Also in question is whether the new tunnel will include walking and cycling elements, after Transport Minister Simeon Brown has refused to commit to them.

Brown said any walking and cycling provision would need to be funded by the allocated budget for walking and cycling activity, or local councils, not the roading fund.

It's not clear if there is any opportunity whatsoever for public input to the design process, so Mt Victoria residents may end up being by-standers to a major project that will cause major disruption for years, not to mention a permanent impact on the suburb. **TL**

## The closing date for submissions on the legislation is Friday 19 April.

The Mt Victoria Residents' Association is hosting a public meeting to discuss the proposed new Mount Victoria tunnel on **Thursday 11 April at 7pm at St Joseph's church hall** on Brougham St. See their Facebook page for updates.





# Making Pirie Street playground a great place to 'go'

The Pirie Street Playground is a great place to visit, but there's nowhere to go if nature calls.

**T**o fix this issue, the Mt Victoria Residents' Association is calling for the Wellington City Council to put aside funds for public toilets for the park.

"As residents, we love to go to the park with kids but it's no fun if we have to make a mad dash back home to make a toilet stop," says MVRA President Ellen Blake.

"The nearest public toilets are on Courtenay Place, a fifteen minute walk, or on top of Mt Vic."

All users of the town belt would benefit, including volunteers doing gardening.

Those workers sometimes encounter evidence that humans have been using the bush to do their business.

"It's not a very nice thing to come across."

Blake says there are various options for where the toilets could be located, including at the Bowling Club, at the Innermost Gardens or near the bus stop.

The area has existing infrastructure that can be used. In fact public toilets used to be available by the park until they were removed.

Blake didn't think there would be negative consequences to having public toilets such as encouraging more people to hang around drinking.

"People already do that. Having a toilet just makes it nice."

Now is the time to make local voices known, as the council puts together its Long Term Plan.

The MVRA has started a petition to call for the toilets to be installed, which residents can find at the Hub.

Or people can make a submission on the Long Term Plan, asking for funding for the toilets. **TL**



# Looking forward to a rat-free Matairangi

It's time to bid haere ra to rats in Mt Victoria.

**T**he suburb is next on the list for Predator Free Wellington, the team on a mission to make Wellington the first predator free capital city.

With the Miramar peninsula declared predator free in November last year, efforts are now turning to Hataitai, Roseneath, Oriental Bay and Mt Victoria as phase 2 of the overall project.

The team from Predator Free Wellington will soon be on the streets of Matairangi, installing bait stations and traps on the properties of participating residents, then checking and removing rodents.

This serviced work is supplemented by other hands-on volunteer trapping groups.

Predator Free Mt Vic are volunteer backyard trappers covering the Mt Victoria, Hataitai, Roseneath and Oriental Bay areas, and Mt Vic Vermin Trappers is the group that operates in the town belt.

“There are some awesome community trappers around Hataitai and Mt Vic – it’s a really active group; we’re really fortunate,” says Eleanor Dewar, the programme manager for Predator Free Wellington.

Dewar says Predator Free Wellington has learned a lot from their experience on the Miramar Peninsula.

For example, rats will flourish in steep bush areas with lots of food sources.

“Habitat is a massive indicator. So rather than putting a trap or bait station every 50 metres and hoping for the best, we say ok, in this area we’re going to need more devices and a higher intensity because there’s more rats.”

They also found out more about the behaviour of the two rat species they are targeting.

“Ship rats like to climb trees, so we have to adapt to target them where they live. Norway rats are much

Meet the team!



PFW uniform

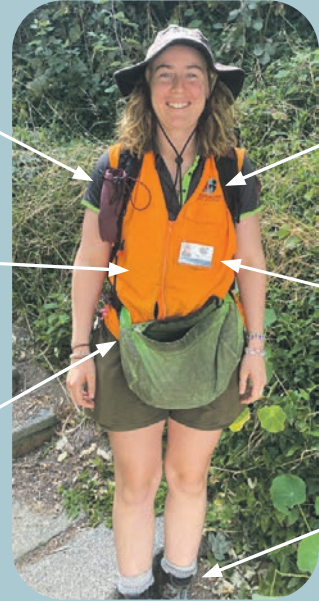
PFW logo

High vis vest

ID

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Work boots



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more likely to burrow.”

Once eliminated, the programme then turns to monitoring, through a variety of tracking devices to spot any incursions. Data collection and analysis is a huge part of the programme, allowing the team to constantly improve their techniques.

“Our goal now that we’ve got this proof of concept is how we can increase our efficiencies, and make it more viable and how it can be replicated in other cities around the country.”

One of the big benefits of a successful programme is of course increasing bird life, along with other kinds of biodiversity such as lizards.

“In Miramar we’ve had a 71% increase in native bird detections since the project began.”

And rats are no longer around to gnaw wires and other infrastructure.

“It’s amazing to think that on Miramar Peninsula now, if you’re living there, you don’t have any rats; it’s not something you have to deal with any more.” **TL**

More information about phase 2 is available on the Predator Free Wellington website – [pfw.org.nz/phase-2](https://pfw.org.nz/phase-2)



# No holds barred for the calisthenics crew

If you reluctantly left the monkey bars behind when you left primary school, think again.

**A**dults are embracing the strength and mobility benefits of calisthenics, and Mt Victoria residents have the city's only purpose-built outdoor training location on their doorstep.

When the Pirie Street Playground was refreshed in 2022, the council installed a calisthenics-friendly set of bars, to support 'unstructured' workouts like calisthenics.

Now you will regularly see adherents working out there, using the set of bars for chin ups, handstands and 'flags' (where you hold yourself horizontally to the bars).

Wellington Calisthenics often meets there on a Sunday morning.

Member and long time enthusiast Nicholas Boisset says a session usually consists of a warm up, work on a particular skill, a calisthenics workout that includes legs, a push, a pull and some core, and then free time to work on personal goals, assisted by others.

Boisset says anyone can have a go, because moves can be adjusted to make them accessible.

"Even if you can't do the full expression of the movement, there is always a regression; we're going to come up with something for you."

One of the benefits of calisthenics is it's free and can be done with no equipment and just a small amount of space.

"Obviously if you have equipment you can expand your training but basically with a tiny amount of space and no equipment, you can still work on your balance, there's lots you can do."

Wellington Callisthenics is an informal group, run out of a Facebook page. Experienced members take it in turn to lead a session.

"This community is based on sharing knowledge, sharing a workout, getting together."

Boisset says newcomers are made welcome.

"I know it can be intimidating, especially if you're coming by yourself, but everyone is super welcoming.

"We're more than happy to have people – the more we are, the happier we are." **TL**



# Crime stays the same in Mt Victoria

Crime statistics available for Mt Victoria for the year so far indicate the level of crime is largely stable.

In January 2024 police recorded 20 victimisations. Of the nine incidents categorised by police, there were two assaults: one resulting in injury and one without serious injury.

Four incidents of theft were recorded, including two from a retail premises.

Three incidents of unlawful entry occurred.

Tuesday was the day of the week when victimisations were most likely to occur, and the recorded times of the event were scattered across the day.

The 20 victimisations in January compares to 24 in the previous month (December) and 22 in January the previous year (2023). 


## Recycling do's and don'ts

Don't just chuck it all in the bin and hope for the best. Here's the Wellington's City Council's guidelines for recycling:

- Check the bottom of plastic containers, bottles and trays for the numbers 1, 2 or 5 inside the recycling symbol.
- Remove all container and bottle lids, triggers and pumps – these can go in your rubbish. The Tip Shop and Recycle Centre and Sustainability Trust have free collection points for metal bottle caps, jar lids, and plastic lids (types 2 and 5 only).
- Rinse all plastics, tins, cans and glass.
- Don't squash plastic, tins and cans – squashing makes them harder for the machine to sort.
- Do flatten cardboard and break up large boxes.
- Place all recycling items loosely in your bin or bag so they can easily be collected or emptied. 

## ULO Unidentified Local Object

Identify the mystery object – something in the Mount Victoria area – to win a \$20 voucher to the local café of your choice.

Email your answers to us at [editor@the-local.co.nz](mailto:editor@the-local.co.nz). If there's more than one correct answer the will be selected at random. Congratulations to Harriet Margolis, who correctly identified March's ULO as a bit of tram history located near the Queen Victoria Statue. 



## LISTINGS

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

### In the Wings



Drama Classes, Wednesday Afternoons (term time), The Hataitai Centre. Have a budding young performer or a child in need of a boost in confidence? Bring them along to afterschool Drama! Our current intake is between 9-14years old, but we are open to enquiries outside of this age range. Free trial classes.

[inthewings.co.nz](http://inthewings.co.nz) / [katie@inthewings.co.nz](mailto:katie@inthewings.co.nz)

### Freyberg Beach clean-up – 20 April

Wellington Timebank, Sustainability Trust and Wellington City Council are hosting a beach clean-up at Freyberg Beach (next to Freyberg Pool) on Oriental Parade on Saturday 20 April, 1-3pm. Bring gloves (washing up gloves are perfect!), a bottle of water, hat and sunscreen, snacks to share, a kitchen sieve would be great for getting those pesky microplastics! See the Wellington Timebank Facebook page for more details. [facebook.com/events/415433811138969](https://facebook.com/events/415433811138969)



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### Public meeting on the proposed new Mt Victoria tunnel

The Mt Victoria Residents' Association is holding a public meeting to discuss proposals for a third Mt Victoria tunnel. Thursday 11 April at 7pm at St Joseph's church hall on Brougham St. See our facebook page for updates.

### Public meeting on The Long Term Plan

The Long Term Plan, (the council's 10 year budget) is out for consultation. Mt Victoria Residents' Association will hold a public meeting to understand what is in the budget and how we can have a say on the priorities for the next 10 years. The meeting will be at Clyde Quay School on Thursday 18 April at 7pm. Watch our Facebook page for updates. Come along and ask your questions.

### Mt Victoria Residents' Association

MVRA holds regular monthly meetings at the Mt Vic Hub on the first Thursday of the month at 5.30pm. All members welcome.

### Innermost Gardens

Gardening Sundays: 10am-12pm on the first and third Sunday of the month. Also Tuesday morning gardening every week during school term 10am - 12 pm. Everyone is welcome. Contact [innermostgardens@gmail.com](mailto:innermostgardens@gmail.com) or check out our website [innermostgardens.org.nz](http://innermostgardens.org.nz) to find out more about how the gardens are run and allotment and composting opportunities.

### Hall for hire: Tararua Tramping Club

The Tararua Tramping Club offers a hall and a room for hire for meeting, theatre productions and more. Located at 4 Moncrieff Street, Mt Victoria. For details please contact: [ttc.clubrooms@ttc.org.nz](mailto:ttc.clubrooms@ttc.org.nz)

### The Quakers

Each Sunday at 10:30am Wellington Quakers gather for Worship as part of unprogrammed Friends Meetings. Our address is 7 Moncrieff St. We welcome all. For more information email [wgtnquakers@gmail.com](mailto:wgtnquakers@gmail.com)

### Quaker meeting rooms

7 Moncrieff Street has meeting rooms for regular or one-off meetings for non-profit and government agencies. Wifi and projector available. Call: 04 385 4897 or email [wgtnquakers@gmail.com](mailto:wgtnquakers@gmail.com)



### Crossways Community Creche

61 Majoribanks Street, is a parent-run early learning centre for children aged 1 to 5. It is open Monday to Friday and offers 20 hours of state-funded ECE for over 3s. Contact us at 04 384 8201 or email [info@crosswayscreche.org.nz](mailto:info@crosswayscreche.org.nz)

### Pikopiko Clyde Quay Kindergarten

Spaces available: Pikopiko sessions are open for 2-5 year olds, Monday to Friday, 9am-3pm during school terms. 20 Hours Free. Phone 04 385 0441 or email: [pikopikoclydequay@wmkindergartens.org.nz](mailto:pikopikoclydequay@wmkindergartens.org.nz) Please see [wmkindergartens.org.nz](http://wmkindergartens.org.nz) for more information.



# All hope is scone

We were walking down the street and there were two women in front of us. 'Hurry, we have to pass them,' urged my partner. 'Why? In case they beat us to the last cheese scones?' I said jokingly. But this was no time for light-hearted jesting. 'It's happened before,' he muttered darkly, increasing his pace.

**W**e take baked goods seriously in our household. A bakery that was sold out of our favourite item would make for a grim mood indeed. Quite serious discussions are held about the quality of cheese scones sourced from different venues and I think at least one local bakery would notice the drop in trade if we went on holiday.

Fortunately for us living in Mt Vic we are blessed with multiple amazing purveyors of baked goods, not to mention its essential companion, coffee.

**Both Myrtle and Tomboy have extensive mouth-watering arrays of donuts, tarts, muffins, scone, cakes and slices. No wonder there are often queues out the door.**

Indeed it feels like bakeries are having a renaissance. Or is it actually a new birth?

When I was younger I went to Germany for a school trip and stayed in Bavaria.

Every day the mother, in traditional hausfrau fashion, set out on her bike to bring fresh bread. She arrived back with a wicker basket containing varieties of bread, from the dark and dense, to croissants and light pastries.

For someone like myself, used only to getting dull pre-sliced loaves from the supermarket on a weekly basis, tucking into fresh bread for breakfast was an extraordinary thing, and the experience stuck with me more than visits to the castles and churches that were supposed to be the highlights of the visit.

I thought it would be unlikely that this wonderful tradition of daily visits to bakeries would ever make its way to New Zealand but just the other day I saw a local mum heading home with a box of baked somethings in the early morning and I wondered if we aren't such philistines after all.

Indeed, where I work donuts have become the default when any bad news needs to be announced. As I work in the public sector, the donut intake has been increasing a bit of late – paid for, I hasten to add, by individuals and not the taxpayer.

No wonder only very miserable people follow keto diets. Why do that to yourself when you can enjoy the mental health benefits of carbohydrates, sugar and fats combined in such wonderful ways?

It's all good for you, unless of course someone tries to take the last cheese scone I am eyeing up – in that case, get ready for a fight! **TL**





Visitors on the HMS 'Hood' in 1924, Mount Victoria in the background. [Wairarapa Archive,14-117/21.digital]



Aeroplane 'Aotearoa' and Lieutenant John Robert Moncrieff, New Zealand Freeland, 4 January, 1928. [Alexander Turnbull Library]

# Know your 'hood

Mt Victoria's street names vary in origin but all reflect some aspect of the city or suburb's history. Even the smallest streets – such as the three featured here – have interesting stories behind them, as **Joanna Newman explains**.

**Hood Street** (off Roxburgh) had its name changed in 1925 to commemorate the visit of HMS 'Hood' in 1924. Thousands of people took the opportunity to inspect the 'Hood', which was the largest battle cruiser in the world (and later sunk by enemy action in World War II). One can imagine that many might have viewed it from the cliff edge of Mount Victoria around what became Hood Street.

**Moncrieff Street** was named by the developer who constructed it on the large property on the corner of Elizabeth and Brougham Streets. He named it after Lieutenant John Moncrieff, one of the two early New Zealand aviators who attempted the first trans-Tasman flight from Sydney to Wellington. All of New Zealand awaited their arrival and, on January 10th, 1928 there was great excitement in Wellington. They were due to arrive at Trentham around 6pm or 7pm – but the aircraft, with its two pilots, never arrived and no trace of them was ever found.

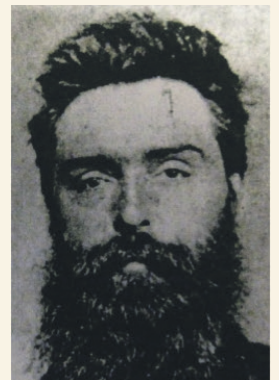
**Lipman and Levy Streets** recognise an early Wellington entrepreneur and philanthropist who died in 1880. But it's not only the street names which keep his memory alive. The money he made – that is, had manufactured – is an international collectible these days.

Levy was an importer and manufacturer of boots and shoes, and supplier of leather and grindery. When copper coins were in short supply, the Government allowed businesses to issue their own penny and half-penny coins, and Lipman Levy was one who manufactured token coins.

Lipman Levy owned two town acres between Kent Terrace and Brougham Streets, including what is now the site of the Embassy Theatre. In the 1860s and 1870s much of his estate comprised an ornamental garden, complete with a pair of storks. The story goes that, on one occasion, a stork mistook a small nose poked through the palings for an edible morsel – with painful consequences. **TL**



Coins issued by Lipman Levy. In 2007, a rare type of Lipman Levy penny sold for \$A3,200 (\$NZ4,500) in Sydney (Noble's Sale 85, Lot 526).



One of Wellington's earliest entrepreneurs and philanthropists – Mr Lipman Levy



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