



## AERIAL REVEAL

**D**rone photographs of the Mt Victoria suburb demonstrate the prominence of the Westbourne estate, off Austin Street, destined to be turned into multistorey apartments.

The house (the white house with the green roof, surrounded by trees) is elevated above much of the surrounding houses, which are only one or two storeys high.

The controversial proposal has many neighbours worried about the effects of shading and increased traffic, and seeking legal advice on their options.

A local resident and film student, Phil Kelliher, is following the story and sent a drone up to get a better look at the site, which is hard to see from the street.

More information and pictures on page 2. [➤](#)

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# Aerial reveal



**Aerial footage reveals how significant the Westbourne site is, according to film student and Mt Victoria resident Phil Kelliher.**

“It’s a really large site, but you don’t realise that from the street, because of the trees surrounding the house and the townbelt behind it,” says Kelliher, who sought permission from neighbours to send a drone up to take aerial photos.


“Once the trees are gone and the development starts, it will become obvious. A six-storey apartment block is really going to dominate the neighbourhood, shade surrounding houses and wall off the town belt from many,” he said.

Developers Forma Group are in the process of designing a ‘high end residential’ development dubbed the ‘Mayfair’ on the 1,473 square metre estate.

Plans for the new development are not yet available but it is expected to be around six storeys high.

Neighbours and the council need to understand the impact of the development says Kelliher.

“I’ve decided to document this local story in order to get more people interested in what’s happening in our neighbourhood and what we may lose.

“With new high density rules now in place, we will be seeing more of this kind of development. It would be possible to build high rises in some areas of Mt Victoria in a way that doesn’t affect existing residents too much, but due to the topography this development is likely to be out of scale and out of place.” 





# Bus stop stoush

**A stoush is brewing over bus stops, as the Wellington City Council moves forward on changes to Courtenay Place to speed up buses.**

**T**he controversial Golden Miles changes, which include the removal of cars from Courtenay Place, will see a cycleway winding its way snakelike along the enlarged pavement, all car parking removed between Kent Terrace and Taranaki Street, and bus lanes narrowed.

But it's the removal of two popular bus stops that has caught the attention of local politicians.

The bus stop outside the St James, and the one opposite outside the former Reading Cinema complex are both to be scrapped, according to the proposals.

That would result in a 550 metre – or just over half a kilometre – gap between the bus stops at the Embassy end of Courtenay Place, and the next set on Manners Street.

According to Google Maps, that's a 7-minute walk.

Lambton councillor Nicola Young said it was madness to remove the two Courtenay St bus stops, when the council had invested three-quarters of a billion dollars' worth of ratepayers' money in facilities in the area, such as the St James Theatre, Tākina events centre, the Town Hall, Central Library – and in the future the Opera House and Michael Fowler Centre.

She also pointed to future Golden Mile plans to remove the Lambton Quay bus stops outside Farmers and the former David Jones.

"These are all possibly Wellington's busiest stops. It's madness! The justification is that it will make the buses more efficient; if that's the aim: why not remove all bus stops?"

Another Lambton councillor resident in Mt Victoria is Iona Pannett, who says she uses the buses on Courtenay Place on a daily basis.

"I'm completely opposed to the removal of the bus stops at St James and Reading and have been advocating for their retention for some time. This is part of a programme from the Council and Greater Wellington to remove many bus stops around the city."

However the third Lambton councillor, Georgie Rogers, supported the changes and pointed out that the work on the Golden Mile wasn't being done in isolation.

"It's part of the continuous effort to improve the network for everyone that uses it. When the work on the second spine and the Golden Mile are completed there will be more stops in the central city than we have now.

"Overall, this change should make the network better for most people and therefore has my support."

Courtenay Place business owner Karl Tiefenbacher, who stood for council in the last local body elections, is highly critical of the new design.

"This does not deliver any positives to the city, let alone the business community who oppose it and will struggle to survive the 3 years of construction, and is unlikely to meet any of the projects supposed objectives."

The Wellington City Council said timing for the construction work on Courtenay Place was still being worked out, as well as the total cost.

The Courtenay Place project had initially been estimated at \$54 million, when the project was part of Let's Get Wellington Moving. NZTA will pay approximately 51% of the costs.

Tiefenbacher claimed that the design was being driven by the need to secure NZTA funding, and that meant changes were not able to be made.

"So we're going to have bad design, based around the fact that we might lose our funding to do the bad design."

Councillor Pannett said the only way to stop the changes was for NZTA to refuse funding to Greater Wellington to remove the stops.

"I encourage members of the public concerned about this issue to write to their local representatives at the City and Regional Councils expressing their concerns," she said. **tl**



Courtenay Place business owner Karl Tiefenbacher.

# Channelling our inner Victorian

The suburb of Mt Victoria was developed in Victorian times, when it was accepted practice to build your house so that it added visual value to the neighbourhood.

This is why we have the pleasing array of Victorian and Edwardian houses dotting the hillsides of Wellington, with similar outlines and materials, each distinctive but creating a cohesive overall effect.

I used to live in a house in Aro Valley that looked very unimpressive as you approached it down off the street, but looked splendid if you stood on a hill about 200 metres away.

I suppose there was a collective understanding at the time that the piece of the puzzle you contributed with your house was important to the overall city scape.

These days that has changed. Home owners, developers and architects tend to be more inward focused, creating houses and buildings that please their owners but don't really give a damn for the neighbours (unless forced to).

In this environment we consider the development of the Westbourne site off Austin Street. As the aerial photos in this month's edition demonstrate, this is

a very prominent site in Mt Victoria –much more prominent than most of us probably realised.

We are still waiting to see plans for the 30-unit apartment block that is in the process of being designed.


The new district plan rules may mean that no public notification of the resource consent may be needed, meaning no chance for neighbours to influence the outcome.

But we all have a stake in what is built on that site; many of us will see it every day from our window, on our way to work, as we head off for a walk in the townbelt.

It could be the chance for an award-winning piece of architecture to enhance our neighbourhood. But it could also be a dismal block of mediocre apartments that does nothing to lift the spirit.

Right now we are trusting that the developers will also have the mindset of the Victorians – that what they build is part of the community and they have a duty to contribute to what we all see, not detract.

On another note, this month sees the country celebrate te wiki o te reo Māori.

There are a lot of resources available online to help you try out some phrases and show your support for Māori to be a 'forever language'. Ake ake ake! 



**Jane O'Loughlin**  
Editor

## THE LOCAL Mt Victoria

The Local is published monthly by The Local News Limited. Find out more at [the-local.co.nz](https://the-local.co.nz)

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### Deliveries and Distribution

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Subscribe to the electronic edition via our website [the-local.co.nz](https://the-local.co.nz)

## WEGC turns 100

Wellington East Girls' College celebrates its centenary on 12–14 September 2024. The school is planning to publish a book showing the history of the school through objects and photographs, and would love to collect memories and photos from former students. The school wants to show that 'the school is not just a collection of buildings and changes in staff, it's a whole world of people and events'. For more information and a chance to contribute your memories and images, see [wegc.school.nz/events/wegc-centenary-2025](http://wegc.school.nz/events/wegc-centenary-2025) **TL**



Wellington East Girls College west wing under construction in 1930, photo from National Library collection.

## Big Barrell site for sale

A large corner site on Kent Terrace, currently home to Big Barrell, is for sale for the first time in over 30 years, according to its real estate agent.

The 973 square metre site borders both Elizabeth Street and Edge Hill.

The agent describes it as a 'sought after' location which offers a 'dynamic multi access site with excellent onsite parking right in the heart of Wellington's vehicle retailing district.'

Although the current tenant is in place until October 2026, there is potential to develop the site, which has a height allowance of 28.5 metres (around 9–10 storeys).

Tenders close 11 September. **TL**

## Bowling season starts

The 2024–25 season of lawn bowls starts at the Victoria Bowling Club in September.

Anyone looking to take up the game of Lawn Bowls either competitively or socially is welcome to come to Opening Night on Friday 13 September 2024, 5:00pm – 9.00pm.

Those looking for inspiration should check out the Victoria Invitation 242 Pairs, being played on the weekend of the 21–22 September 2024.

"Invited players travel from all over New Zealand for this prestigious tournament and it always produces a high calibre field including World Champions, National Championships and Blackjack (International) representatives," according to Club President Gary Ruane.

"A great opportunity for the locals and others to watch and enjoy lawn bowls at its best." **TL**



## Crime stats fall

Latest Police crime statistics show 17 victimisations recorded in Mt Victoria for the month of June, down from the 20 recorded in May.

Of the 8 incidents categorised by police in June, five were related to theft, one was an act to cause injury, one was sexual assault, and one was breaking and entering. **TL**



# No-one is coming to save us

**In the event of a major emergency, like an earthquake, who will help our community? Who is in charge? The answer is: you, or someone like you.**

**A**nd the place you'll probably end up going to is a Community Emergency Hub, like the one located at Clyde Quay School.

"Community Emergency Hubs contain the basic supplies to enable a community to organise a response," says Katie Sharp, Community Resilience and Recovery Advisor for the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO).

This includes stationery, maps, a VHF Radio and a guide to setting up the Hub.

How all this works is the subject of a workshop taking place in September, for the community to practise emergency response.

During a disaster, everyone needs to pitch in to help one another.

"The Community Emergency Hub model is based on international best practice and evidence of what communities do during disasters," says Sharp.

"We saw this after the 2011 Christchurch Earthquake and again during Cyclone Gabrielle where communities naturally came together to support one another.

"In a major emergency such as a large earthquake, emergency services will be stretched and will have to prioritise the most urgent callouts.

"The topography of the Wellington region also means roads and access routes are likely to be blocked or inaccessible.

"It will be a challenge for people, including emergency services and responding agencies to move around the region. In this situation your neighbours and the people that live closest to you will be your most immediate and ongoing support."

You may be surprised to learn that the Community Emergency Hub at Clyde Quay School is not stocked with emergency supplies.


"There are no supplies such as bedding, food and water stored at Community Emergency Hubs. Our communities are already full of resources - beds with blankets on them and pantries with food in them, and sheds with tools. In an emergency, communities

can work together to gather and share the supplies that they need," says Sharp.

Everyone is welcome to attend the free WREMO workshop on 8 September.

"We encourage everyone to come along to our Emergency Response Practices," says Sharp.

"At the practices, we use an interactive earthquake scenario and practise opening the Community Emergency Hub. It is a chance to get to know your neighbours and talk more about how Mt Victoria will respond as a community.

"Anyone can be part of the Community Emergency Hub on the day. Everyone has a unique set of skills that can and will benefit the community in an emergency, so it is important to share that knowledge and experience within the community." 

## "The Community Emergency Hub model is based on international best practice and evidence of what communities do during disasters."



**EMERGENCY RESPONSE PRACTICE**

**In a disaster your neighbours are your first and best source of support**

Come along and practice working together as a community during a disaster

**Sunday 8 September | 3pm – 5pm**

**Quaker Centre  
7 Moncrieff Street, Mt Victoria**

Using an earthquake scenario, this session will cover how to:

- Set up your local Community Emergency Hub
- Ensure those in need are supported
- Overcome potential challenges together
- Make the most of the resources you have locally

Everyone is welcome. Join in and be more prepared as a community.

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY THE  
**Mt Victoria Residents' Association**

Find out more at [wremo.nz/calendar](http://wremo.nz/calendar)



# Scooter concerns

Pirie Street residents are concerned about someone shifting e-scooters off the pavement and onto the road, getting in the way of cars and buses.

**A** resident, who wishes to remain anonymous, has let *The Local* know that they've seen numerous instances of e-scooters and e-bikes left on the road - on yellow lines, on bus stops along Pirie Street, in front or behind parked cars, and close to driveway entrances.

"We initially thought this was inconsiderate rider parking. To our surprise we were informed by a scooter operator that an individual in Mount Victoria has been physically moving these from the footpath to the road."

The local resident issued a plea for this to stop.

"It is a hazard for buses pulling into/out of bus stops and for residents parking their cars, especially around yellow lines on street corners."

The resident said scooter and bike riders also needed to use their common sense, and park mobility vehicles out of the way so they don't block the



footpath, building entrances or driveway.

Micro mobility operator Flamingo confirmed they were aware of 'a member of the public shifting scooters and bikes onto the roadway in Mount Victoria'.

"We hold all our riders to a high standard and expect them to use our scooters and bikes safely and responsibly," said Flamingo spokesperson Nick Hyland.

"If anyone encounters an unsafely parked Flamingo scooter or bike, they can report it through our website ([flamingo.co.nz/contact](http://flamingo.co.nz/contact)), app, or phone (0800 352 646).

"Riders who continue to violate these rules risk having their accounts suspended." Hyland said.

Issues with Beam vehicles can be reported Beams can be reported at [ridebeam.com/report-a-beam](http://ridebeam.com/report-a-beam).

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WHAT'S ON

# Time for the property market to spring back?

Will a change of season also affect the property market? *Anji Foster from Lowe&Co reports.*

**A**lmost like clockwork, from the first of September the tuis return to the eucalyptus tree in our garden in their numbers! We've seen up to ten of them at a time making a racket and entertaining us with their flamboyant flybys and swooping chases. It's a sign that spring is upon us.

What is less reliable is the spring effect on the property market and it is still unclear whether buyers will be flocking back to the market in September, or whether they will hover back in the wintery shadows a little longer.

The recent official cash rate decrease (the first downward move since March 2020) is certainly a promising sign. Without doubt, a stronger factor for the market than spring is interest rate decreases when it comes to buyers getting active, and so the figurative eucalyptus tree might start to liven up a little after this announcement.

In the meantime, the Mount Victoria market remained stable last month, with 0% monthly increase on the median sale price in our neighbourhood. We wouldn't normally celebrate 0% but when comparing to the 9.8% decrease Mt Vic has seen over the past three years, remaining stable seems like something to feel good about.

This 0% change is also reflected in many of the other data points we look at. Days on the market and median weekly rent are static from last month at 32 days at \$580 respectively. Through a tumultuous time globally, things remaining the same seems somewhat comforting, and when it comes to the property market is certainly better than the alternative!

A stable market is good for both buyers and sellers. It might be hard to believe, but I don't get the sense that sellers enjoy feeling that they are prof-

iting from people over stretching themselves, and equally don't get the sense that buyers want to feel like sellers are haemorrhaging cash when they sell. A win-win negotiation always ends best, and I believe that we are seeing more of those commonsense negotiations currently.

Homeowners lost a lot of paper money in 2022 and '23, but many sellers have now recalibrated and come to terms with current market conditions and values. It is toughest for those who bought in 2020 and '21 when premium prices were being paid, but most of the clients I am working with are selling for more than what they originally paid.

For buyers, the conditions have been against them in recent times, but now that we are seeing the market we have as the 'new normal', they are recognizing that paying fair market price for a good home is what is required to secure it. Properties with issues, whether that's difficult access, deferred maintenance or unpopular construction methods can still be sticky, but good homes in good areas are selling for good prices.

Of course, a balanced market is usually the precursor to something swinging in the other direction and interest rates might be the start of that swing; watch this space. In the meantime, I'm looking forward to the predictable return of the tuis. **TL**

**We wouldn't normally celebrate 0% but when comparing to the 9.8% decrease Mt Vic has seen over the past three years, remaining stable seems like something to feel good about.**



**Lowe & Co**  
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# Wellington city's spend up

This viewpoint is from **Nicola Young**, a Wellington City Councillor residing in Mt Victoria who represents the Lambton-Pukehinau ward.

## Unaffordable rates increases

Wellingtonians are reeling from the latest rates demands. The Council states the overall residential rates increase is 16.9% (plus the 1.6% sludge levy); Mount Victoria's average is 18.31% – and many are over 22%. It's even worse for commercial properties, as their rates are 3.7 times the residential rate – and we wonder why our restaurants and retailers are struggling.

That's why I voted against Council's Long-Term Plan (LTP) – Wellington is becoming unaffordable, and I believe Council spending needs to be drastically reduced especially as so much of it is funded by debt that will hang around the necks of our children and grandchildren for decades. Our current debt of \$1.5 billion is projected to increase to \$1.9 billion next year.

## Airport sale

The most contentious part of the LTP is the decision to sell Council's minority shareholding in the airport. Philosophically, I think the shares should be sold, with the proceeds reinvested away from Wellington to diversify the risk. I voted against the sale in a previous term, however, as I was concerned the proceeds would be blown by the profligate councils we've had in recent years.

This year it was proposed the proceeds would be locked away in a perpetual investment fund, safe from

the ever-increasing spending demands of councillors. This was a sound plan.

The fiscally conservative councillors (Tony Randle, Diane Calvert, Ray Chung and me – the so-called Reading Four) got an amendment through to ensure the proceeds could not be used to support an increase in debt; this assurance gave us the confidence to vote for the share sale.

A week later, we learned the debt restriction wouldn't kick in for another nine years. So, we have now joined forces with some of the left-wing councillors to oppose the sale when it comes back for a final decision later this year once the sale process has been determined. This process itself will cost millions. If we stop the sale, the Council will have to rewrite its Long-Term Plan, making cuts to some projects and it could trigger Government intervention.

## Bus stops

Council's proposal to remove the bus stops adjacent to the Mount Victoria Foodmarket, and the traffic island on the sharp Pirie/Brougham intersection has alarmed many Mt Vic residents. It's a crazy proposal, which I strongly oppose. These changes were originally part of the Let's Get Wellington Moving programme of 'improvements', which the Council has now taken over. The preliminary investigations won't start until 2027/28, so we have some breathing room.

Council's annual residents' survey showed only 20% are satisfied with the Council's decision-making. I hope that the current public sentiment might encourage councillors to seek some compromise, and settle on a more affordable and effective budget. **TL**

RETURN SEASON



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TIME OUT

# PRIMA FACIE

*Something has to change*

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# Legal drama returns to Circa

Come to the theatre with *The Local*, to enjoy some top-notch drama.

**T**he court becomes the stage in award-winning play *Prima Facie* that wowed audiences on its first visit to Wellington.

*Prima Facie* is returning to Circa in September, after a very popular run at the theatre last year.

*Prima Facie* is a dramatic one-woman play written by Australian-British playwright Suzie Miller.

The plot follows Tessa, a criminal defence barrister who is at the top of her game and loving it: defending, cross-examining, and playing the rules of the law to win.

But the tables turn when she finds herself at the mercy of the very system that she has dedicated her life to.

The show won a Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play and has sold out shows throughout Australia, the West End, and Broadway.

This production, described as 'sharp, witty and gripping' stars Mel Dodge (*Miss Brontë*) and is directed by Lyndee-Jane Rutherford (*Rants in the Dark*).

*Prima Facie* is on at Circa from 11th to 28th September 2024.

Local readers are invited to attend a special preview session on **Tuesday 10 September at 6.30pm**.

With a special low price for Local readers of \$35 per ticket, this is a chance to not only enjoy some excellent theatre but also get together with your Mt Victoria neighbours. To take part, simply email [editor@the-local.co.nz](mailto:editor@the-local.co.nz) by **6 September** to let us know how many tickets you want. **TL**

**Prima Facie is a dramatic one-woman play written by Australian-British playwright Suzie Miller.**



Te Wiki o te Reo Māori  
14–21 o Hepetema 2024

Māori Language Week  
14–21 September 2024

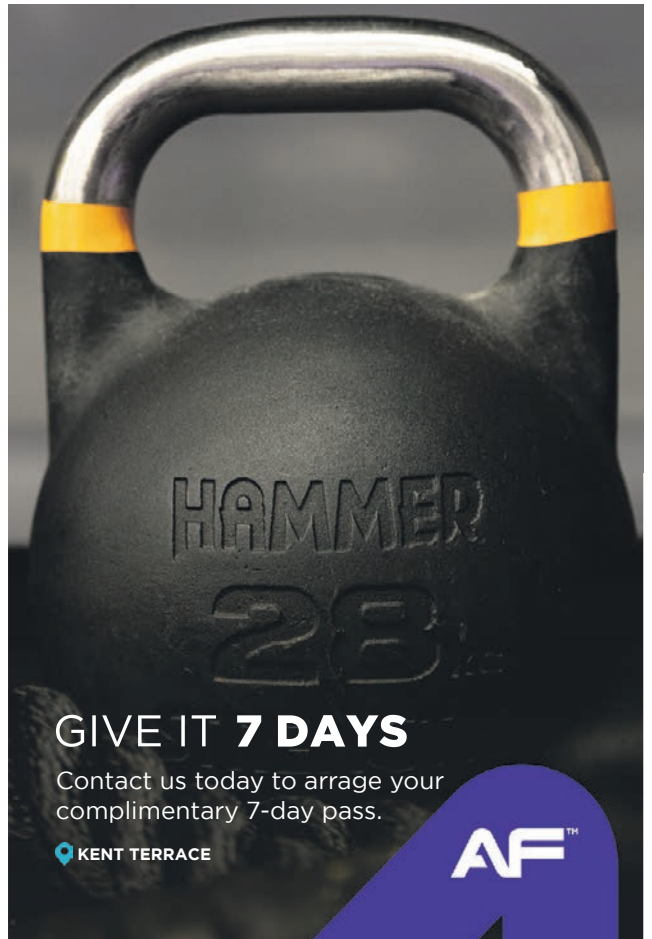


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# ULO ? Unidentified Local Object

Identify the mystery object – something in the Mount Victoria area – to win a \$20 voucher for your favourite local cafe.

Email your answers to [editor@the-local.co.nz](mailto:editor@the-local.co.nz). If there's more than one correct answer the winner will be selected at random. Congratulations to Kirsty Anderson, who correctly identified August's ULO as the gates at the entrance to Wellington East Girls' College. 



**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.**

**Exciting Gymnastics Opportunities at Capital Gymnastics Club!**

Capital Gymnastics Club offers diverse opportunities for children in gymnastics! Programmes range from beginners to elite athletes, including gymnastics, trampolining, and tumbling. Led by experienced coaches, safety is paramount. Our structured approach fosters skill development and confidence in a fun environment. Book online for classes, parties, or school groups at [capitalgymnsport.org.nz](http://capitalgymnsport.org.nz) or contact us at 027 239 9139 or [office@capitalgymnastics.nz](mailto:office@capitalgymnastics.nz).



**Good Vibrations sound therapy**



Sounds like you need some Good Vibes to bring you back into harmony. Sound healing is an ancient practice that harnesses the power of sound vibrations that affect us on a neurological, physiological, and biochemical level to promote healing and relaxation. Harness the healing power of sound to benefit your life. Contact Sharon Grealley at Good Vibrations Sound Therapy, The Paddington, 140b 11 Jessie Street, Te Aro, Wellington 6011, phone 0212 648 544 or email [info@goodvibrationsoundtherapy.co.nz](mailto:info@goodvibrationsoundtherapy.co.nz)

**U3A activities**

Term 3 topics. Something for everyone! Book publishing, bone health and balance, lizards and gardens, Te Reo and geothermal energy. Our lectures are Tuesdays and Fridays from 10.30 am at the Embassy Theatre. \$5 for visitors; \$40 membership for 59 lectures, interest groups and special events. Visit [u3awellingtoncity.org.nz](http://u3awellingtoncity.org.nz) to find out more.



**Feet with Heat**



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See the website for details [feetwithheat.com](http://feetwithheat.com). Register now at [info@feetwithheat.co.nz](mailto:info@feetwithheat.co.nz).

**Electronic boogie at Moon: Zuke, Grains, Weka, Tyson**

For one night only, come down to Moon in Newtown for a celebration of instrumental electronic music. Friday 27 September, 8pm. Boogie along to: Prog-electronica act Grains, Synth wizard Zuke, Sonic adventurers Weka, And groove master Tyson. These Te Whanganui-a-Tara-based acts meld electronic and instrumental sounds with their own unique twist. They'll take you on a journey from chill to foot-stomping, all washed down late into the night with refreshing drinks and delicious pizza. Get tickets at Under the Radar or on the door: \$20.



**Part time advertising sales job in Mt Victoria**

*The Local* needs someone to help with advertising. If you have a background in sales, particularly for publications, and you're looking for some flexible, part time contract work, get in touch! Contact [editor@the-local.co.nz](mailto:editor@the-local.co.nz)



Community notices are free for local groups and not-for-profits. Get in touch if you would like to include your listing in *The Local*.

### **Mt Victoria Residents' Association – Annual General Meeting**

Please join us for our AGM on **Thursday 5 September at 7pm at St Joseph's Church hall** on Ellice/ Brougham St. Our short AGM will be followed by recognition of a number of people who have contributed to the Mt Victoria community, and a review of what you need to be prepared for in an emergency! If you are not already a member, please join to be on the committee, support the association and vote in the AGM. Go to [mvra.org.nz/join-us](http://mvra.org.nz/join-us) We will wrap up with a cuppa and cake. All welcome. For more information email [mtvicra@gmail.com](mailto:mtvicra@gmail.com)

### **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)

### **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.

### **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)



### **Mt Victoria Historical Society – Annual General Meeting**

Join us for our AGM 15 September, 2.00 pm, The Cambridge Hotel, Atrium Room. Important business at this AGM is to approve our new Rules, required by legislation to be done by 2026. The AGM will be followed by a talk by Cambridge Hotel owner Jeremy Smith. He will talk about about the restoring the historic hotel and pub, which has been serving patrons since at least 1881, and show us behind the scenes of the renovation. Members and the public welcome.

### **Table tennis for over 60s**

Table tennis is a fantastic sport for older people as it helps with movement, brain stimulation, and muscle/bone strength. We have 8 tables and play 3 times a week at the stadium on Alexandra Road. We want to encourage new people to join our fun social event. Only \$4 each time – no subscription. For more information contact Diana Winn, email [winnich@xtra.co.nz](mailto:winnich@xtra.co.nz) or phone **04 801 9556**.

### **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.

### **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)

### **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)

# Load of cobblers

I live in a small cottage in Mt Victoria and delightful as that is, there is a distinct lack of storage space. Unfortunately I do have quite a lot of stuff, but rather than channel my inner Marie Kondo to declutter and live within the space available I have instead opted for an outsourcing model.

It's amazing where you can store bits and pieces if you are desperate: you can keep them in the boot of the car, plonk them in the garden, lend them to the neighbours, and most successfully of all, stash them at work.

Yes indeed, if you are lucky enough to have a dedicated desk in your work place, you can house all manner of things on it, under it and around it.

Extra gym gear, coats, bags, scarves, crockery, books, drawings by your child, the detritus from a course you once did, winter boots, all of this can be cunningly hidden away either in and around your desk, on your chair, or on neighbouring shelves and cupboards.

At one workplace I managed to commandeer a whole wardrobe that I used to house my off season work clothes collection.

All this works well as long as you remain in your job and office. But for me the day of reckoning has come in the form of a move to a new office space. Fortunately I still have a job but horror of horrors, our new premises requires hotdesking.

Hot desking is of course this horrible modern office invention that means people don't have their own desk to personalise with novelty coffee mugs and pictures of their family but must fight over desks on a daily basis, and cram their limited belongings into a tiny locker.

The facilities people asked us to state our requirements for our new office. In former times, this might have included such niceties as a whiteboard or a breakout space. Now with the public sector the way it is, the list is limited to essentials like external walls, and potable water.



Thus much mirth ensued when I piped up to ask if there would be a place to put my shoe collection.

My shoe collection is somewhat legendary, being an enormous basket sitting under my desk, with shoes spilling out of it. and is the butt of many jokes.

Ho ho, said the facilities people, and then issued strict instructions about the need to 'take personal items home'.

I realised then I would need to proceed with stealth, because there is no way my small house is going to cope with the full extent of my 'personal items'.

Someone once told me that if you wanted to hide something in a shared computer drive, put it in a folder marked 'invoices' – a name so dull that no one would ever bother opening it.

I've successfully hidden a lot of company secrets and bad photos with this technique over the years, and I will be employing that tactic in my new space. I've already worked out there's a few empty shelves and cupboards in the new office that are perfect for my set of belongings, as long as they are suitably disguised.

All I need to do is put them in a box with a sign that says something like 'Organisational Strategy 2024' and I'm pretty confident no-one is going to go near it.

It's just a matter now of smuggling my possessions into the building. So if you see a woman struggling along Lambton Quay in coming weeks with a massive basket of shoes, just give me a wink and pretend it's completely normal. TL



# The Legacy of Sarah & Joseph Ames

Alan Olliver traces the history of the gates to Wellington East Girls' College, which featured as the 'Unidentified Local Object' in last month's edition of *The Local*. The donor of the gates was Sarah Ames.

Sarah was born in 1847 in Devon, England and married Joseph Ames at the age of 35 in 1882, in New Zealand. In 1896, Joseph built their family home called Rockcliffe at 84 Ellice Street, but it sadly no longer exists. He also subdivided and had two houses built at 80 and 82 Ellice Street in 1906, which are still there today.

Joseph died at home in Ellice St after a long illness in 1917. The couple had no children of their own and were generous benefactors to many churches and charities in town.

In her later years, Sarah watched the construction of the new 'Mount Victoria Girls' High School' across the road from her property, eventually opening as Wellington East Girl's College in 1925. At the front entrance to the school was an old farm gate. Sarah was unimpressed with "the tired apology of a gate hung on a post with a piece of wire" so she decided to donate £200 to fund a set of iron gates. Sarah



Opening of the WEGC Gates: Standing (left to right) – Mrs Joseph Ames (Donor of the Gates), Miss Batham (Principal), Mr F. Holdsworth (Chairman of the Parents' Association).

was guest of honour at the opening of the gates on 13 April 1927 (Photo source: WEGC Memnonian 1927).

Sarah died two years later and left money from her estate for an annual scholarship to Wellington East Girls' College, which was still given out today.

Sarah's husband was an interesting character. Joseph was born in 1844 at a Kaikoura whaling station set up by his father, Captain James Ames. In his adult life, Joseph was a gold miner in the Otago and Thames gold fields and volunteered as Mounted Rifle Ranger in the 1860s land wars. Joseph had a desk job in a range of Government departments and while residing in Ellice Street; he is listed as clerk in the Valuation Department. After he retired, Joseph built and or managed a number of hotels, in particular the Ames's Provincial Hotel (Upper Hutt), the Star (Lambton Quay), the Thistle Inn (Mulgrave Street) and the Hataitai Hotel (Wellington Rd). At the opening of the Ames's Provincial Hotel in 1876, Mr Ames received "praise for having established one of the best hotels in the province, and we hope that it will bring him in not only credit but cash". Joseph was active in rowing, and a member of celebrated 'Dolly Varden' rowing team. In his obituary, he was considered "one of the best boat men in Wellington". Horse racing was also a passion. Joseph ran totalisators and successfully raced several horses. **TL**

## Postscript:

Hawker Street resident Brigitte Diessl, a relative of the Sarah & James Ames, noticed the ULO and got in touch with *The Local*. She described a story, handed down in the family history about Joseph's parents James and Mary Ann Ames. They were whaling from a small island, Tokamapuna, off Kapiti Island in 1840-41. "Whilst Mrs Ames was alone with her children at Tokomapuna, Te Rauparaha made a descent on the island but was met by Mrs Ames, who inwardly quaking, put on a bold front and went forward to meet him and invited him to dine. At the end of the meal, Te Rauparaha said 'Woman! We came to kill, but you are too brave'. The Maoris never went to the island again while Mrs Ames lived there."

**Source:** Scholefield papers. – Letter from Arthur Wakefield Ward (husband of Ida Emma Ames, the granddaughter of James and Mary Ann Ames).

# WIN **\$200 VOUCHER** TO CAPITOL RESTAURANT

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**Anji Foster**  
027 274 5047

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