



\$23 MILLION OF REAL ESTATE AT RISK

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The Local!

More than \$23 million worth of Mt Victoria housing is slated for possible demolition, as part of the construction of a parallel Mt Victoria tunnel.

At least 12 properties along Paterson Street, Austin and Brougham Street are already owned by the New Zealand Transport Agency, with hints that more

may be needed when the new Mt Victoria tunnel goes ahead.

The Government's announcement that a parallel tunnel will go ahead means these properties are now likely to have to be demolished – and the transport agency indicates that more may need to be acquired.

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\$23 million of real estate at risk

The prospect of a second tunnel has loomed over the southern end of Mt Victoria for decades but now appears to be closer to reality following the announcement by the Government that a 'parallel' tunnel is the preferred option for the State Highway 1 improvements. **Jane O'Loughlin reports.**

According to information released to *The Local* under the Official Information Act, NZTA owns 12 houses in the area earmarked for the new tunnel, worth a total of \$23 million. The agency said in a statement: "There are a total of twelve houses, eight of which have been converted to multi-tenanted flats, giving a total of 23 separate tenancies. There are currently five vacancies, which gives a 78% occupancy.

| Address | Value as at 30 June 2024 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 145 Brougham Street, Mount Victoria | 1,498,496 |
| 147 Brougham Street, Mount Victoria | 1,750,960 |
| 151 Brougham Street, Mount Victoria | 1,641,016 |
| 3 Paterson Street, Mount Victoria | 1,726,528 |
| 5 Paterson Street, Mount Victoria | 1,692,934 |
| 7 Paterson Street, Mount Victoria | 4,988,200 |
| 9 Paterson Street, Mount Victoria | 1,285,734 |
| 11 Paterson Street, Mount Victoria | 1,303,040 |
| 17 Paterson Street, Mount Victoria | 1,303,040 |
| 138 Austin St, Mount Victoria | 1,861,922 |
| 140 Austin Street, Mount Victoria | 2,436,074 |
| 142 Austin Street, Mount Victoria | 1,532,090 |
| Total | 23,020,034 |

The agency stressed that it could not yet say for sure which properties would be affected. "Please note that we are still at a very early stage with the State Highway 1 Wellington Urban Improvements proposals and no decisions have yet been made on the final design or footprint of the project. It is too soon to say which specific properties may be affected."



It also hinted that it might need to acquire more properties as part of the project. "In terms of potential further property acquisitions, NZTA aims to treat all landowners with respect and empathy. It is always our preference to reach agreement with affected landowners whose property we require for our projects. "There are different considerations to be taken into account in each situation, and we work through these with each property owner on a case-by-case basis." Last month, the Government finally announced which of three tunnel options would proceed as part of State Highway 1 improvements through Wellington, a project that also includes duplicate Terrace tunnels, and upgrades to the Basin Reserve. The parallel option is considered the conventional approach and is the one that has long been on the cards. A pilot tunnel was dug in the 1970s to test out the route. However, Let's Get Wellington Moving also looked at a diagonal tunnel option, and the Government spent a reported at least \$1.6 million exploring a 'long' tunnel from the Terrace through to Kilbirnie. Although Government ministers such as Transport Minister Simeon Brown and Infrastructure Minister Chris Bishop appeared to favour the ambitious 'long tunnel' option, the NZTA Board finally selected the parallel tunnel to go ahead. The parallel option will have the greatest impact on the suburb of Mt Victoria due to the requirement to remove houses. The project will now move through an investment case which will be brought back to the NZTA Board in mid-2025. **TL**

"In terms of potential further property acquisitions, NZTA aims to treat all landowners with respect and empathy."

32-unit 'exemplar' apartment block proposed

The developer of the Westbourne Grove site has submitted plans to the Wellington City Council for a new apartment building, saying it will be an 'exemplar' project, which will set a 'new standard' for Wellington apartment accommodation.

Neighbours have been waiting to see the final size and shape of the controversial development, which will replace the prominent 'Westbourne' house at the end of the narrow Westbourne Grove, off Austin Street.

A resource consent application for the 'Mayfair' development has been made, which will consist of 32 'high-end' apartments, along with an outdoor heated pool, sauna and gym.

Developer Mark Quinn of Forma Group said they were going 'above and beyond' requirements, to show the new District Plan rules can be implemented responsibly.

Architects Design Group Stapleton Elliot were briefed to 'produce a design that enhances the area in terms of the new District Plan, rather than simply utilising all the available permitted volume that the new District Plan affords.'


The developers had taken the 'rare step' of 'volunteering' that four neighbouring properties, 43A, 43B, 43C and 45 Austin Street, be considered as notified parties to the resource consent application.

"Developer Mark Quinn of Forma Group said they were going 'above and beyond' requirements, to show the new District Plan rules can be implemented responsibly."

"We have done this to recognise the interest those parties have shown in the development, and because we understand the new District Plan... is confronting for many and we are sensitive to that."

The city's new District Plan enables six storey developments in areas such as Austin Street, and allows the demolition of old houses that were formerly part of a character area.

A spokesperson for neighbours, Ralph Highnam, said there were major concerns about the need to remove 650 truckloads of dirt down a small, single access private driveway (as stated in traffic management plans), and the fact the new development had parking for 29 cars, meaning increased traffic.

"We look forward to WCC doing the right thing and allowing the whole neighbourhood to comment on this huge tower block development during the consent process, so we end up with an appropriate and respectful development that works." 

We made it to the end of the year!

That marks one year of *The Local*, and I would like to thank the readers, volunteers, contributors and advertisers for all your support.

When I mentioned at home that I'd managed to publish a year's worth of newspapers, my daughter remarked with mild surprise: "Hmm, and I thought this was going to be just another one of your ideas that goes nowhere."

It's true that I am known at home for my regular 'bright ideas' that fail to enthuse anyone else but myself.

But fortunately in this case I picked something I did know a bit about, and have a real passion for: local news.

Setting up a media outlet to deliver an actual newspaper at a hyper local suburb level has been a leap of faith, but I'm very glad I did it.

There's no shortage of news, and in fact in this edition I was spoilt for choice of big stories to lead with.

I am very grateful to my willing delivery people, who have walked the steep gradients of Mt Victoria to ensure we reach every (available) letterbox.

Thanks to the writers and contributors of news and information that have helped keep the paper fresh and informative, and huge thanks to Cherie and Nic at Home Studio who are responsible for the great design of the paper.

And I am super grateful to the growing band of advertisers who recognise the value in this local newspaper and the novelty of a print publication in the age of digital.

There is always a price to pay for taking on a new activity – not much housework has occurred this year, and the garden is looking like a jungle. But getting feedback from local residents that they really appreciate hearing what's going on in the community is what keeps me going.

Speaking of which, please do let me know what you like and don't like about the paper by take the survey – see page 5.



Have a great Christmas and New Year break, and see you next year! **TL**

Jane O'Loughlin
Editor

THE LOCAL Mt Victoria

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If you missed out on your copy, want extras or would prefer not to have a paper copy delivered, contact us at editor@the-local.co.nz

Subscribe to the electronic edition via our website the-local.co.nz

Embassy centenary success

One hundred years of the Embassy Theatre was celebrated in Wellington at the end of October with much media attention, historical tours, and a screening of the silent movie *The Ten Commandments*.

Victoria Historical Society unveiled its new information board on the side of the Embassy. This was marked by an event for supporters and donors, featuring the cutting of a cake with Historical Society convenor Joanna Newman (left) and Wellington city councillor Nicola Young. **TL**



Chocolate mystery

The mystery person leaving Lindt chocolates around parts of Mt Victoria has been revealed as a 92-year old woman. Her son-in-law reports that she and her husband buy multiple packets of Lindt chocolates at the supermarket.

"She proceeds to give them out to anyone/everyone on her way home and when she goes for walks around the neighbourhood. At some houses she leaves the whole packet, if she thinks that children live there." **TL**

Courtenay Carnival seeking volunteers

Organisers of the 'biggest dress-up party in Aotearoa' are looking for volunteers to help bring it to life.

The party, a new family-friendly event for Courtenay Place, will take place on New Year's Eve.

"Whether you love event planning and crowd management or just want to be part of an epic community celebration, we have a spot for you. From assisting with kids' discos to supporting live music stages and street activities, your help will make all the difference."

Volunteers will get snacks, cool merchandise and an unforgettable experience!

Apply at: courtenayprecinct@gmail.com **TL**

Give your feedback about *The Local*

It's been a year of publishing this community newspaper for Mt Victoria.

It would be great to hear what you think about it, and any suggestions you may have for improving it.

Please use the QR code to access the survey, or go to the URL surveymonkey.com/r/JB8TJ7V

It will take less than 5 minutes and your comments are anonymous. **TL**





Contractors trash their own work

The Wellington City Council is making resurfacing contractors fix the damage they caused to new curbing they installed in Elizabeth Street, the latest bizarre episode in a lengthy project plagued with difficulties. **Jane O'Loughlin reports.**

Nearly all the curbing around new trees planted in the street was damaged by resealing work, with most of the concrete structures badly crushed and broken.

Contacted by *The Local*, the council said it issued non compliance and rework notices to the maintenance and resurfacing contractor.

"This will be repaired at the contractor's expense," a spokesperson said. "Council will not pay for this damage."

But local resident Ian Robertson says part of the problem is that the sealing work should have been done before the curbing, and the workers were 'cursing' when they realised what they were supposed to do.

"It was sprung on them that it would be fiddlier than they thought."

The workers told Robertson they hadn't been allocated enough time to do the job properly. When

they asked their superiors for more hours they were told to get on with the job, whereupon "they trashed every single tree surround."

Ironically, residents say it was Fulton Hogan contractors that both built the tree surrounds in the first place, and then destroyed them.

Robertson says this lack of coordination was typical of the project overall.

"The team did this lovely finish to the footpath and another group came along and dug it up."

Another local resident, Judi McCallum agrees. "That seems to be the main problem – they haven't done their due diligence before they make a plan."

McCallum says contractors did not seem to have checked records for local underground streams, and were surprised to discover a high water table when they went to dig deep holes for the tree pits, an issue that made the pits problematic to build.

The Elizabeth Street renewal project started in April last year, with the goal of replacing trees that were uplifting the pavement and damaging pipes, and touching the power lines.

The council replaced 22 trees, putting the new ones on the road instead of the footpath, and in pits to contain the roots. The new trees also had curbing installed around them.

But placing the trees on the road means they are at the mercy of cars knocking them.

“Within a month half of them have been broken by people reversing into them,” says Robertson.

The neighbours list a wide range of problems and concerns with the project.

Residents “went ballistic” when the council proposed losing 21 car parks, and eventually settled for losing just one.



A kowhai tree planted in memory of a deceased resident had to be moved, upsetting locals. The council first promised to move it, then when that became too difficult, said it would be replaced. No replacement has yet appeared.

McCallum says speed humps have been removed – despite the council promising they would be retained – and she’s worried that the street will now become attractive to boy racers, having already experienced one incident.

The pair are also frustrated at the weeds that have sprung up around the new planted trees, due to the lack of weed mat or underplanting.

Contemplating the street with its broken tree surrounds, battered baby trees and messy seal, Robertson wonders whether it was worth it.

“The street looks pretty sad compared to what it used to look like.”

According to the council, the total cost for the tree removal, procurement, building structural tree pits, replanting, surfacing of the footpaths, kerbing works has cost \$331,541. This doesn’t count the asphalt paving works which part of the maintenance contract.

McCallum and Robertson were both surprised the figure was so low, given the length of the project and rework that had been required. **TL**



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MORTGAGES

What's involved in selling a house

If you're thinking of selling in 2025 but haven't sold a property in several years, you might not be familiar with the costs involved in the sales process. Anji Foster from Lowe&Co outlines what a typical sale process looks like in terms of expenses.

Firstly, it's good to know that your real estate salesperson won't earn a cent unless they secure you an unconditional sale at a price you are satisfied with. At that point, the commission is generally a percentage of the total sale price. Some companies might have a staggered rate, where the rate is higher for the first \$500,000 and then decreases from there, and some companies will offer a flat commission rate. Most companies will also have an administration fee of approx. \$1000 in addition to the commission rate. These rates are plus GST and can range from 2–4% of the sale price depending on what price bracket your property is in (i.e. a lower rate for a more expensive home, higher rate for a cheaper home).

The marketing of a property is essential to ensure as many potential buyers as possible are aware that your property is on the market. This critical part of the process can range in cost; however, most marketing schedules will be in the range of \$3500–\$4500. If you include print such as The Post this will increase this cost.

Legal fees for conveyancing can also vary and are dependent on the complexity on the sale process. Generally legal fees are in the range of \$1500–2500 for the sale of a property.

It is an expectation these days from purchasers that a Land Information Memorandum Report from the local council will be supplied; this will cover any building permits and consents that have been obtained, information regarding resource consents for any adjoining properties and any information regarding the land that would be important to know. A LIM from the Wellington City Council costs \$552.50.


A building inspection report is a very helpful tool to assist buyers in their due diligence but also to

highlight to the seller any work that either needs to be done before selling, or potential quotes to be obtained to pass over to buyers to help them determine what budget might be required to remedy issues raised in the report. I find it is better to let people know exactly what they are dealing with rather than the buyer being surprised when they get a report done, know exactly what we are dealing with rather than being surprised by information if a buyer gets a report and we have not had one, so in most cases I would recommend having a reputable inspection company provide a report for the sale process. These range from approximately \$700–\$1000.

If the property you are selling is vacant, in most situations it will present better if it is home staged. Clearly the cost of this is influenced by the size of the property, however for a four bedroom, two bathroom, two living area home, the cost to have it professionally home staged is likely to be \$2,000 at the more cost effective end, through to approximately \$10,000 for high end furnishings, art and so on.

As you can see, selling a home isn't a cheap exercise, and therefore it's essential to give yourself the best opportunity to get a result by working with an experienced, creative and enthusiastic salesperson.

The listings that James and I post on TradeMe receive 19% more views than the Wellington average and this translates to more people through open homes and a greater chance of success within the campaign period.

We would love to share how we achieve this so please reach out if you would like a chat. 

The marketing of a property is essential to ensure as many potential buyers as possible are aware that your property is on the market.



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The tip shop in the centre of town

Looking for a sustainable Christmas gift? Head to the inner city tip shop.

Inner city dwellers looking for affordable quality second hand goods should head to Te Aro Zero Waste. It's also the place to bring unwanted items so they can find a new home, be recycled or responsibly disposed of.

Te Aro Zero Waste, located in the Sustainability Trust building in Forrester Lane, sells second hand goods but also acts as an extension of the tip shop located at the Happy Valley landfill.

"The tip shop's fantastic, but if you don't have a car, there's no buses to go out there," says Te Aro Zero Waste Coordinator Vikram Govindasamy.

Books, clothes, household goods, furniture, toys, appliances and tools are all accepted.

Smaller items and electronics will be sold at the Te Aro shop, whereas books and larger items like furniture will be taken to the Happy Valley tip shop.

People are encouraged to bring the larger items in on the day the truck is coming, says Kim Tabrum, the community education manager: "The tip shop comes down the second and the fourth Saturday of every month and CBD people are welcome to come and give their bigger items to them. We also will take them in the hours that we're open and store them ready for the truck as well but ideally we want people to engage by coming down on the day because we don't have huge amounts of space to be storing stuff."

Old computers and computer equipment are something that many people want to get rid of, and can be brought to Te Aro Zero Waste.

"It's either new enough or in good enough condition for us to be able to do a quick fix up on it and sell it. Otherwise, we'll send it to our e-waste or our metal waste partner for it to be recycled," says Govindasamy.

Old televisions, monitors and printers can be deposited, for a fee, the same as at the tip shop.

"You're doing two good things if you recycle a device," says Govindasamy. "One, you stop it from going to landfill. And two, there's enough components



Kim Tabrum, Te Aro Zero Waste Community Education Manager


"Te Aro Zero Waste, located in the Sustainability Trust building in Forrester Lane, sells second hand goods but also acts as an extension of the tip shop located at the Happy Valley landfill."

in there that can be recycled and reused in making new electronics."

The new shop and the services offered have had a positive reception. There's no need to buy anything – people are welcome to can pop in, sit in the library, read the books, or ask for advice on sustainable living.

But visitors have also been 'amazed' at the bargains: "the affordable prices of some of the goods that we sell here have been really well received by the community," says Govindasamy.

One thing that's a hit with young people is old computers from the 90s. Tabrum says a regular crowd of young people likes to come in and check out the older electronic equipment for sale.

"They set up stuff in their bedroom... they love the 90s...'I need the beige'!" 

New Clyde Quay School principal announced

Clyde Quay School has announced that its new principal will be Cameron Ross, the current deputy principal.

Ross will take over from retiring principal Liz Patara, who has served at the school for 26 years.

His appointment was made after a 'thorough, intensive and robust recruitment process', according to the Board of Trustees.

"Cameron has been at Clyde Quay School for 7 years, and our excellent Deputy Principal for the last 3 years," Board Chair Michelle Little said.

"He is well loved and respected by fellow staff, our tamariki and our whanau community, evidenced again by the relief and happiness when his Principalship was announced.

"As a role model of our school values, he keeps the children's wellbeing and outcomes at the heart of all he does. We know CQS will thrive under his leadership."

Ross said it was an honour to accept the role.

"I think we have an amazing school and community and am very excited about the opportunities ahead. Our school grounds are going to see some changes



next year which will be a big challenge first up, but the final product is going to be a huge positive for us all. I am really looking forward to working with our children, parents, staff and community in this role."

He will start the position in term one of 2025. 

"As a role model of our school values, he keeps the children's wellbeing and outcomes at the heart of all he does."



Kia ora Mt. Vic!

Let's talk about our community.

Get in touch about any local issues or if you need support. I'm here to help and would love to hear from you!

Tamatha Paul MP for Wellington Central
wellington.central@parliament.govt.nz
(04) 3891290

Auth Tamatha Paul, MP for Wlg Cntrl. 72 Adelaide Road, Wellington. Funded by Parliamentary Services.



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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. If there's more than one correct answer the winner will be selected at random. Congratulations to Tracey Gabbitas, who correctly identified November's ULO as a mural on Home Street.





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 Whakamaru, 4-8 Oxford Terrace, Mount Cook, Wellington

Whakamaru is a hub for our whole community, and Craig and Gail's café is at the heart of that hub. Serving high quality food and excellent coffee, Craig and Gail's operates under a 'contribute-what-you-can' model. The model means those who can't afford to pay can enjoy a koha meal, while those who can afford to contribute are able to provide kai and companionship to others.

A welcoming and inclusive café for everyone, our manuhiri, and indeed any member of the public, can enjoy Craig and Gail's for as long as they want during opening hours. The space provides opportunities for people to strike up unlikely connections and friendships with people who they wouldn't usually connect with. Open Monday to Saturday, we will also occasionally have live music and karaoke on the stage.



The Wellington City Mission



@wellingtoncitymission



wellingtoncitymission.org.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*.

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 or phone 04 801 9556.

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

Pikopiko Clyde Quay Kindergarten

Spaces Available! Pikopiko is open for 2–5 year olds, Monday to Friday, 9am–3pm during school terms. 20 HOURS FREE FROM 2 YEARS OLD. Phone 04 385 0441 or email pikopikoclydequay@wmkindergartens.org.nz Please see wmkindergartens.org.nz for more information.

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 or check out our website innermostgardens.org.nz to find out more about how the gardens are run and allotment and composting opportunities.

Join the Mt Victoria Historical Society

Ever wondered who lived in that little cottage or grand villa you walk past, or famous people who have lived in Mt Victoria? If you're curious about why our suburb looks and feels the way it does, or want to learn more about its heritage, join Mt Victoria Historical Society. We've been researching its stories since 1996 and offer a range of events, guided walks and a newsletter packed full of interest. See our website for details mtvictoria.history.org.nz

Mt Vic Gift Swap and pikelet day

The Mt Vic Hub is running a pikelet day and a gift swap on 13 December. The day starts with 'Pikelet day' where you can drop in for a snack from 8–9.30am. The gift swap is taking place 2–5pm, with the aim of "getting a bit of joy out there by supplying folks with holiday prezzies for their loved ones without any money involved". Drop donations such as clothing, kids' toys, puzzles, and home wares to the Hub at 24E Elizabeth Street.

Farewells planned for principal

A number of farewell events are planned for retiring Clyde Quay School principal Liz Patara, who is finishing up at the end of 2024 after 26 years serving at the school. A farewell assembly is being held on 10 December at Wellington East Girls' College and a community picnic on 12 December at Clyde Quay School starting from 5pm. Those wanting to leave a message for Liz Patara can sign a book in the school office.

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

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

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

Weather you like it or not

It was when a large leaf blew into my open mouth, and I nearly got blown into a flowerbed that I remembered that this time of year is the peculiarly Wellington season officially known by some people as sh*tsville.

According to proponents of the 'Realistic Wellington Calendar' it is the two-month period between 'spring 1' (August) and 'spring 2' (late December) when – well – the weather fails to live up to expectations.

I think disappointment is a key part of this phenomenon, and the proponents acknowledge that 'false hope' would have been a more polite label had they not presumably been rendered so bitter and twisted by the weather.

The days get longer, and the weather warms up and we start to say reckless things like 'looks like winter is finally over!' or 'I guess summer is almost here!'

This kind of bold assumption is the just the sort of thing to rankle the gods, and next thing you know tāwhirimātea is unleashed, the winds howl, the rain blows sideways and you're stumbling along the road trying to keep your balance, clutching a broken umbrella, wondering what happened.

The grumpiness that affects so many of us at this time of year is not just exhaustion from being so close to Christmas, it's frustration at the crappy weather that fails to deliver on its promises.

When it comes to weather, Mt Victoria is usually envied among Wellington suburbs for its sunny aspect. And indeed, the temperature seems to go up about 2 degrees when I cross Kent and Cambridge Terrace from Te Aro.

Whether or not you get to enjoy that sun at your house is another story.

Do you have a view? Then you probably also often have a howling gale ripping around your house. Is your backyard nice and sheltered? Then you probably also suffer from shade and a view of the side of your neighbour's house.

There is no such thing as 'having it all'. (Please don't write in and disprove my theory.)

But rather than moan about the weather, we should probably embrace it as our point of difference. We already have the windy Wellington sign at the airport, but I'm talking about more ambitious commercial ventures.

For example, I am sure a wind 'theme' park would go down well with visitors to our city. They could pay money to have a go at fun attractions such as 'try to keep your umbrella up while crossing the road and running for a bus on Lambton Quay' or 'attempt to withdraw cash from a money machine without it being whisked away by the wind' (this one based on an actual event I witnessed the other day).

I also think a range of wind appropriate clothing could work well. I often see women in floaty dresses spending their time trying to stop them from flying up in the breeze, and I think: 'must be from Auckland'. Most Wellington people would (or should) know that a floaty dress can only be worn about one day a year and you'd better examine the weather forecast pretty closely to make sure today is that day.

My solution to this is dresses with heavy weights sewn into the hems. That way the strongest wind will have little effect. It would be inadvisable to swim in such a dress and if you go through an airport you'll probably have some explaining to do but at least you could walk the streets without being worried that your underwear will be on display. I predict that visitors will be quite taken by the 'Wellington weighted dress'.

The city needs bold ideas and fortunately I have them. Now I just need an angel investor to make them happen. I'll keep you posted on progress.

Meanwhile rather than enduring our seasonal sh*tsville, perhaps we should celebrate it, as just another one of Wellington's endearing quirks. **TL**

“... this time of year is the peculiarly Wellington season officially known by some people as sh*tsville”

Years of play at the Pirie St Reserve

The Pirie Street Reserve has been a playground for more than a hundred years, as Joanna Newman from the Mt Victoria Historical Society explains.

Today on the Pirie Street reserve near the bus tunnel there are climbing and hanging frames for the big boys and girls and for the littlies, shaded benches for the watchers, all on a beautiful, all-weather surface allowing year-round enjoyment.

The area's use as a planned recreation area goes back 100 years to an announcement by the Council in December 1923 that the Pirie Street playground would be ready for children by Christmas. The public play area was much bigger then. The main entrance was where it is now, but the ground ran between that point and upper Elizabeth Street. A portion was reserved for a special play area for children with ladders, chutes, swings, a 'rock-a-bye' and a sandpit like a miniature sand hill, "which the kiddies may climb and burrow into to their heart's content".

But not all activities were equal. For some time, playing of games on Council-owned land was prohibited on Sundays – though it was clearly not always observed, to the dismay of some. In 1929, a resident complained to the Mayor:

"At the Pirie Street playing ground there is a notice stating the playing of games on Sunday is prohibited. Up to within a few weeks ago this has been fairly well observed, but during the last few Sundays, in the mornings, football is in full swing up to noon. Of course, there is perhaps nothing in the kicking of a ball around the ground, but when the players get into "scrums" and "rushes", the excitement grows, and with it a torrent of blasphemy and filthy remarks which, on a quiet morning can be heard all over the neighbourhood, so that one can not sit in

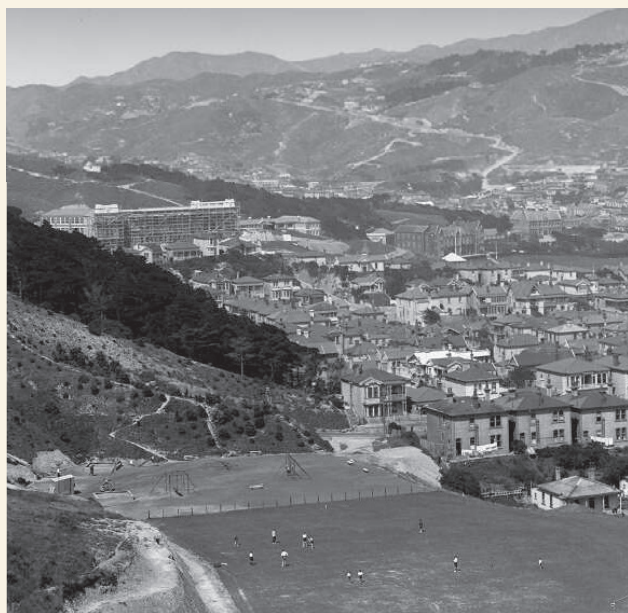
one's garden without one's ears being assailed with the verbal muck..."

The area started to see more organised use for recreation with the construction of a pavilion for the Mt Victoria Croquet Club in 1930. Then, in 1931, a playing area of about two acres was proposed by The Education Board of the District of Wellington for the proposed new Clyde Quay School. Work for this was carried out under an Unemployment Scheme.

The grounds continued to be booked by many groups for events, however, from Girl Guides to Indian sports clubs. One of the more interesting ones was by the Friends of the Soviet Union in 1935 for a Children's Fete. The programme for the day included sack, egg and spoon and skipping races, a baby show, performing dogs, a bran-tub (a lucky dip with items hidden in bran), a fortune teller and Punch and Judy.

In 1955, croquet gave way to bowling and the Council approved land to be taken for the Victoria Bowling Club and the Victoria Women's Bowling Club, essentially privatising much of the original playing ground. Bowling was still big and many city worthies were bowlers.

The return, not so long ago, of the former Victoria Women's Bowling Club area to community use as a garden and hall was a welcome development. **TL**



Pirie Street reserve in 1925 (looking towards Wellington East Girls College, still under construction) [Pt 1 of a 4-part panorama, ATL 1/2-046443-G]



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