Regio News

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News

To be or not to be

Photo by Amanda Searle.

Dubbed "spectacular" by Dame Judy Dench, *Izzard: The Tragedy of Hamlet* will showcase British actor, comedian, activist, and political figure Suzy Eddie Izzard like never before as she takes on 23 roles against a blank canvas and bare stage.

With the spotlight shining solely on the characters and Izzard's interpretation of them, this rendition of *Hamlet* directs the focus onto Shakespeare's words and pure storytelling excellence. The Emmy Award-winning and Tony Award-nominated Izzard will portray men, women, ghosts, scholars, tyrants, courtiers, lovers, fools, and poets, bringing the timeless tale of revenge, destruction, obsession, and madness to life at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa's Soundings Theatre between the 21st and 24th of July.

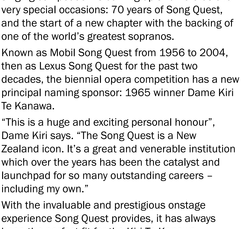
"I have always gravitated towards playing complex and demanding characters and *Hamlet* is the pinnacle", Izzard says.

Adapted by Izzard's brother Mark and directed by Selina Cadell, *Hamlet* has been met with rave reviews around the world, picking up nominations for New York-based Drama League's Distinguished Performance Award and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Solo Performance in the process. It also follows Izzard's sold-out run of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, which played to rave reviews in New York and London.

"This production is for everyone – a timeless drama with an accidental hero", Izzard continues. "Selina, Mark, and I want audiences to see and hear an accessible, touching, scary, and dramatic *Hamlet*".

Get caught up in the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune in the "impressive, sweeping performance" (*The Telegraph*) that is *Izzard: The Tragedy of Hamlet*.

Operatic stars to shine



L-R: 2024 Song Quest head judge Sumi Jo and winner mezzo-soprano Katie Trigg with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. Photo by Hagen Hopkins.

The Grand Final Gala of New Zealand's most iconic singing competition is coming up and heralds two very special occasions: 70 years of Song Quest, and the start of a new chapter with the backing of one of the world's greatest sopranos.

Known as Mobil Song Quest from 1956 to 2004, then as Lexus Song Quest for the past two decades, the biennial opera competition has a new principal naming sponsor: 1965 winner Dame Kiri Te Kanawa.

"This is a huge and exciting personal honour", Dame Kiri says. "The Song Quest is a New Zealand icon. It's a great and venerable institution which over the years has been the catalyst and launchpad for so many outstanding careers – including my own."

With the invaluable and prestigious onstage experience Song Quest provides, it has always been the perfect fit for the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation, which supports young New Zealand classical singers with exceptional potential. Dame Kiri says the foundation has taken "the leading role in sustaining the Song Quest into the future, which is a practical way of ensuring that the opportunity I was given all those years ago will continue to be available to the cream of our young singers".

Those outstanding young singers are gearing up to compete under the discerning ear of internationally acclaimed American mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade, who joins this milestone year as international head judge. The 12 semi-finalists will perform their chosen repertoire with acclaimed accompanist Terence Dennis on Saturday the 4th and Sunday the 5th of July at St Andrew's on The Terrace.

From the semi-finalists, von Stade will select six finalists to perform with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra under the baton of conductor Brad Cohen at the Grand Final Gala, to be held at the Michael Fowler Centre on Saturday the 11th of July. The winner will be announced live at this glittering event.

"I wish all the singers the very best for the journey ahead", Dame Kiri concludes.

Cover: Hay Fever, Wellington Repertory Theatre. Photo by Max Balloch, design by Max Balloch and Micaela Craven.

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Ignorance is Bliss

Photo by Max Balloch, design by Max Balloch and Micaela Craven.

This year, Wellington Repertory Theatre marks a century of attracting, inspiring, and engaging audiences, performers, and supporters through a shared love of community theatre. We've reached the midpoint of 2026 and celebrations are well underway, with the third production of the company's centenary year about to kick off. Noël Coward's *Hay Fever* offers audiences the chance to escape the bitter wintry weather for two hours of warm, sparkling comedy crackling with wit at Gryphon Theatre from the 1st to the 11th of July.

In *Hay Fever*, a comedy of manners from one of Britain's greatest playwrights, each of the four members of the Bliss family invite a guest to stay for the weekend at their country house. Novelist David invites a young flapper. 'Retired' actress Judith invites a young boxer. Artist Simon invites his mother's worst enemy. And the youngest, Sorel, invites a diplomat. Nothing goes to plan as mismatched personalities and misunderstandings descend into chaos and hilarity… and that's *before* they all swap partners!

As a longtime Coward fan, Susannah Donovan chose this 100-year-old play to mark not only Wellington Repertory Theatre's centenary, but her directorial debut. She was drawn to the play, set in 1925, for the brilliant comedic opportunities it presents its nine actors.

"Each character is distinct and over the top, especially the Bliss family themselves, whose rude antics are beyond belief, but which are so funny to watch", Donovan delights. "Audiences will be thoroughly entertained and amused by this comedy of bad manners."

KAT Theatre brings the bite

In 1969, a railway worker falsely accused of anarchism 'fell' out a fourth-floor window at police headquarters in Milan.

"What happened afterwards was a classic case of institutional cover-up", Paul Kay says of the real-life event that inspired *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, a 1970 political farce by Dario Fo and Franca Rame.

Alongside his partner Joy Hellyer, Kay is the co-director of KAT Theatre's production of British playwright Tom Basden's 2022 adaptation of the Italian classic, set in a present-day London police station. He describes *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* as "first and foremost a comedy but also an accessible political satire about power, corruption, and institutional cover-ups", which he knows Wellington audiences will really relate to.

"And they'll very much enjoy the slapstick comedy for which Fo and Rame are renowned."

Playwright and Nobel Prize-winner Fo was an actor and comedian. He and his wife Rame co-wrote some of the most celebrated satirical plays of modern Italian theatre, which Kay has a special interest in. He's always resonated with all things Italian because some of his forebears came from there. In fact, "Fo grew up 15 miles from where they lived."

As Basden is also an actor and comedian, the play is a very clever and well-written physical comedy with real bite.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist will run at Cochran Hall in Khandallah for seven performances from the 16th to the 25th of July. See for yourself why this comedy is an enduring classic, as relevant today as it was 50 years ago.

SNIPS

Three awards
At the 2026 Wellington Regional Architecture Awards, Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Wellington Central Library won the Heritage and Interior categories, plus a Resene Colour Award. Athfield Architects worked closely with Tihei Limited to bring the library's central elements of te taiao (the natural world) to life to create an inclusive and accessible community space.

Remutaka closures
State Highway 2, Remutaka Hill will undergo planned Sunday night closures from 9pm to 4am five more times this year: on the 19th of July, the 16th of August, the 13th of September, the 18th of October, and the 15th of November. Visit www.nzta.govt.nz for the escorted crossings timetable.

Rubifen LA
From the 1st of October, Pharmac will fund the Rubifen LA (long-acting) brand of methylphenidate for people with ADHD. This generic version of the already-funded Ritalin LA will be available in the same strengths (10, 20, 30, and 40mg), along with an additional 60mg strength.

On a cold winter's night

Michael Stewart. Photo by Nick George.

A Southern Hemisphere Christmas often means that the wintry songs and traditions celebrating that time of year get overlooked. That's why music director Michael Stewart has curated a selection of joyful choral music for the concert *In the Bleak Midwinter*, to be performed by the Choir of Wellington Cathedral of St Paul on the 17th of July rightfully in the depths of the season.

Set against the backdrop of the magnificent timber interior and stained glass windows of Old St Paul's in Thorndon, guests can snuggle into the pews, drink mulled wine, and listen to Christmas carols performed a cappella or accompanied by piano or organ, played by Stewart. Stewart is one of Aotearoa's foremost organists and choral conductors. He is organist and director of music at Wellington Cathedral of St Paul as well as music director of The Tudor Consort and deputy music director of the New Zealand Youth Choir.

The Choir of Wellington Cathedral of St Paul consists of 25 singers and has developed a reputation as one of the finest of its kind in Australasia. They will be performing a programme featuring familiar favourites *Deck the Halls*, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, *See Amid the Winter's Snow*, *The Time of Snow*, and different versions of *In dulce jubilo*.

Organised by the Zimbelstern Foundation, established to promote music that features the pipe organ and grow its audience, the evening is sure to uplift spirits and warm hearts on a cold winter's night.

Impossible dreams

Originally from a small town in North Canterbury where everyone knows everyone, last year Emma Rutherford packed up her life and headed to Te Whanganui-a-Tara with the near impossible dream of making it in the music industry. She has been working with producer Toby Lloyd of Tiny Triumphs Recordings to craft a sound exploring themes of change and growth. Inspired by soul heavyweights like Adele, Billy Joel, and Sara Bareilles, Rutherford has since emerged as a new, captivating voice in Aotearoa music, with hit singles like *Gracie* – which reached number 3 on the Hot 20 Aotearoa Singles Chart – and *Losing Sight*.

A regular on the local gigging scene, Rutherford has since turned her attention to debuting her original show, *In Between The Verses*, which she will perform from the 16th to the 18th of July at BATS Theatre supported by pianist Ben Kelly. Written, directed, and performed by Rutherford, *In Between The Verses* is a blend of original music, storytelling, comedy, and small town wisdom that explores, in a deeply personal way, what it is to pursue a path in music.

Set to be an intimate and immersive evening, dealing with themes that feel particularly poignant in a time where cuts to the arts make what has always been a tough road even tougher, Rutherford will give audiences a behind-the-scenes look at the chaos and reality of what it means to pursue a creative career when everyone around you has a 'real job'.

Music news

by Madelaine Empson

Memories, moments, momentum

Wellington-based ensemble Mehana is celebrating 10 years of bringing the rich sounds of the Balkans to Aotearoa listeners. Drawing inspiration from Balkan folk, Roma, Sevdah, and other Eastern European musical traditions, the band performs everything from haunting violin laments to infectious, foot-stomping dance tunes.

As violinist Elisabeth Auchinvole says, "There is always a sense of excitement and mystery when we come together to play Balkan music. When the audience starts dancing, the music transforms into movement and the energy grows." Join the swirling momentum when Mehana plays Vogelmorn Upstairs for the first time on the 17th of July and read on for our interview with the band.

Congratulations on 10 years of Mehana! Please tell me about some of your favourite moments together over that time.

Singer Iva Sajdl: From playing to those beautiful crowds at Gardens Magic, CubaDupa, and Wellington Folk Festival to crazy Paterson house parties, song recordings, and private weddings – we've been fortunate to share many memorable moments. It's hard to believe it's been a whole decade and we are incredibly thankful to all our fans and friends… bring on another 10 years of music and dance!

Elisabeth: Walking home after being invited into the band, I remember thinking I should take each step carefully so I didn't disturb this unexpected bit of good fortune.

Learning tunes by ear from the other band members and listening to wonderful recordings from the 70s, trying to discover how the music could come together.

Trying a dance belt idea, matching body rhythms with the drumbeat – and being given the freedom to just experiment… I'm constantly inspired by the skill, patience, and passion of the other Mehana musicians and the rich traditions behind this music.

Can you describe the atmosphere when you make and perform Balkan music?

Accordion player Misha Mojic: We are all passionate about this music. Many of our band members grew up in the Balkans, so playing these songs is a way of reconnecting with the sounds, rhythms, and memories of our childhoods. At the same time, we love sharing these traditions with audiences in New Zealand, where Balkan music has found a warm following. Our performances bring together people from many backgrounds – some familiar with the music and others discovering it for the first time. Whether they come to dance, listen, or simply enjoy the atmosphere, they help create the vibrant energy that makes every performance special.

What are you most looking forward to about the upcoming celebration gig?

Singer and guitarist Sveta Andic: We're looking forward to performing for an audience that appreciates diverse musical traditions and engages with artists in an open and genuine way. That inspires us to bring our very best to the stage.

Congratulations, Play It Strange!

Cameron Beattie, Play It Strange 2026 Peace Project winner.

The Aotearoa Children's Music Awards | Ngā Manu Tīrairaka are *just* around the corner. In fact, by the time you read this, the most playful and imaginative awards of the year may have already been celebrated, with the winners crowned at the annual ceremony on the 28th of June at The Tuning Fork in Tāmaki Makaurau. But before all the cats jump out of the bag, one announcement sneaks in first.

The 2026 Baysting Prize for Children's Champion, presented to an individual, group, or organisation who has made a significant and outstanding contribution to the development and wellbeing of children in Aotearoa, goes to… drumroll please… Play It Strange!

Play It Strange Charitable Trust was founded in 2003 and is dedicated to supporting young songwriters across Aotearoa through national songwriting competitions, professional recording opportunities, mentorship, and live performance experiences. A small team of just four – three part-time team members and musicians led by full-time CEO Stephanie Brown – Play It Strange is thrilled to receive the prize, established in 2019 by APRA AMCOS Aotearoa in honour of the late children's author, songwriter, and advocate Arthur Baysting.

"For 23 years, Play It Strange has existed to empower and encourage young people to develop interests and skills in music and songwriting", Brown says. "More than 8,000 songs have been written and submitted into our songwriting competitions during that time, by talented and passionate young people across the country. Being recognised as the 2026 Children's Champion is a wonderful acknowledgement, and a fantastic motivator for us to keep growing, keep offering more opportunities to talented young musicians, and keep championing children and young people across the motu for many years to come."

Get 'Appy with Menzies

Photo by Nicola Sandford.

Te Whanganui-a-Tara crooked alt-country rockers Menzies have released their debut album and are feeling great.

"Our tour of the album kicks off at the start of July and we can't wait to play these songs live for people", lead singer and songwriter Chris Brown says.

Holding My Cold Hand, Even Though Yours Is Warm is part concept album, part Aotearoa coming-of-age story. Peppered throughout with real overhead intercom announcements, it plays as if the listener is on a ferry crossing between Te Ika-a-Māui and Te Waipounamu: cruising on the Menzies Islander, sailing to the other side!

"I've worked in children's entertainment for some years", Brown explains. "At the start of 2025 I got a gig performing as Spiderman on the ferry from Wellington to Picton and then back up again in the same day. On that ferry ride I recorded the overhead intercom announcements because they were so damn beautiful. I felt like they really captured something special about the New Zealand experience."

The intriguing album title initially came up as a lyric in the song *Mash Potato* before finding itself in *'Appy* and *Outro*, Brown says, noting that once it made its way into three songs, it became the clear choice.

Holding My Cold Hand, Even Though Yours Is Warm will pulsate through Meow on the 17th of July in a mesmerising, communal, and unpredictable gig.

"We look to make a gig more than just songs back to back, but as fulsome an experience as can be. Previously we've thrown 20 gloves into the audience and everyone has till the end of the song to find their glove-mate, keepy-uppy balloons or else the band stops playing, magic, surprises. At the end of the day, we love having a good time."

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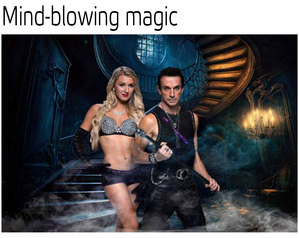
Mind-blowing magic



Chainsaw juggling, levitation, apparitions, a contortion wheel, and a giant unicycle. The *Circus of Illusion Magic Show* is returning to the stage these school holidays, showcasing some of Aotearoa's most talented illusionists and circus performers.

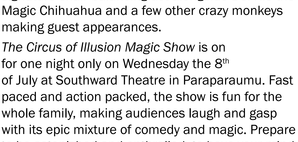
Your eyes may deceive you as Andre Vegas, New Zealand's premier illusionist, performs his new lineup of spectacular grand illusons with his assistent Elise, including the deadly drop spike and the body split. A stalwart of the circus scene, you might've seen Vegas on TV shows like *New Zealand's Got Talent* or at Rainbow's End, where he entertained children and adults alike with his mind-blowing magic for three years.

Joining Vegas is Joel Fenton, better known as The Cirque Stuntman. He'll be performing his big balloon act, chainsaw juggling, and teetering atop his 10-foot unicycle among the many other tricks he's got up his sleeve.

Contortionist Tori Hoskins joins the roster with her signature chair balancing act alongside Del Rio the Magic Chihuahua and a few other crazy monkeys making guest appearances.

The Circus of Illusion Magic Show is on for one night only on Wednesday the 8th of July at Southward Theatre in Paraparaumu. Fast paced and action packed, the show is fun for the whole family, making audiences laugh and gasp with its epic mixture of comedy and magic. Prepare to be astonished and enthralled, to have your mind blown and your socks knocked right off!

Naughty nativity



This July, Greytown will transform into a cosy winter wonderland, bringing Christmas forward and celebrating it in true mid-winter country style between the 27th of June and the 25th of July. Putting their award-winning improv touch on a pretty famous story, PopRox – an ensemble of Pōneke's top improv comedians – will perform on Friday the 17th of July at The Offering. *An Improvised Nativity* offers a retelling of the Christmas-y tale, except this one will be a bit more hilarious, a bit more naughty, and delivered with a heavy dose of Kiwi humour.

Will Mary give birth in the back seat of a Honda Demio? Will the evil King Herod outlaw casual Friday? Will the three wise guys give the audience any help at all? PopRox will bring their signature blend of compelling storytelling, hilarious one-liners, dazzling improvised music, and slick production to the story of a heavily pregnant Mary and her doting Joseph as they embark on their biblical journey.

The award-winning cast features Austin Harrison (winner of the NZ International Comedy Fest Best Newcomer 2026), Nina Hogg (winner of Comic Originality at the NZ Comedy Guild Awards 2025), Dylan Hutton, Jed Davies, Millie Osborne, and Tara McEntee, alongside improvised musician Lia Kelly (winner of Momentous Music at the NZ Fringe Awards 2026).

Get on your winter woollies and head along to the show, where there will be a dinner service before the improv stars guide you through their retelling of that holy, holy night.

Certainty not luxury

Tripadvisor ranked Sojourn Riddiford number three and Sojourn Ghuznee number five among all hotels in New Zealand in 2026.

Travellers don't want luxury. They want certainty. That's the philosophy behind Sojourn Apartment Hotels, recently recognised in Tripadvisor's 2026 Travellers' Choice Best of the Best Awards.

Sojourn Apartment Hotel Riddiford was ranked the third best hotel in New Zealand, while Sojourn Apartment Hotel Ghuznee secured the fifth position. Both properties were also ranked among Tripadvisor's Top 10 Hotels in the South Pacific.

For founder Mike Price, the recognition reflects what matters most to travellers. "Guests aren't really buying a room; they're buying peace of mind", he says. "They want confidence that their room will be clean, comfortable and exactly as described. They want a great night's sleep. They want things to work. They want friendly people who genuinely care."

While many accommodation providers compete on luxury amenities and facilities, Sojourn has built its reputation on consistency, reliability and genuine hospitality. "These awards are based on real guest reviews," says Price. "They're earned one guest, one stay, and one review at a time."

For travellers seeking confidence, comfort and certainty in Wellington – whether they're here for business or pleasure – Sojourn continues to prove that getting the fundamentals right never goes out of style. Book today to make the most of Sojourn's Official WOW Insider Stay Package, which guarantees visitors a tailored and exciting opportunity to experience one of Wellington's largest events.

Timeless time warp

"In the midst of the AI hype all around us, some folks have gone so far as to proclaim that in the no-too-distant future, all of the music that we listen to will be AI generated…" Postmodern Jukebox's founder and arranger Scott Bradlee says. "We'll gladly take the other side of that wager".

Thus, the *The Future Is Vintage World Tour* was born.

Coming to The Opera House on the 11th of July, Postmodern Jukebox's new show will deliver a heavy dose of danceable numbers and jaw-dropping showstoppers to the capital.

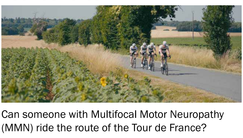
"On the 2026 Postmodern Jukebox UK, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand tour, we're humbly presenting our own unique vision of a spectacular future", Bradlee continues. "One that is built upon the timeless musical genres of the past and the authentically human spirit of creativity that inspired them".

The highly acclaimed troupe of singers, dancers, and instrumentalists will be performing their new show in their signature time-twisting style, putting a retro spin on everything from 70s rock classics to 80s Britpop hits, current chart toppers to movie and video game soundtracks.

The retro music collective took off on YouTube by making today's hits in the classic styles of yesterday. The project enjoyed international sell-out shows in 2014 and today boast billions of views.

Time warp to Postmodern Jukebox's timeless treat.

Tour de force



Can someone with Multifocal Motor Neuropathy (MMN) ride the route of the Tour de France?

The documentary film *No One Rides Alone* follows Clive Phillips, who was diagnosed with the rare disease, as he pushes his body to the limits alongside four fellow veterans, including double Paralympic gold medallist Ben Watson and para-triathlete Ilaria Brugnoli, on the 1955 Tour de France route. One of the most gruelling cycling routes in the world, it covers 4,495 kilometres of mountain passes, starting in Le Havre and finishing in Paris.

On the 2nd of July there will be a special screening of the documentary held at Penthouse Cinema in Brooklyn. A Q&A will be held following the film, featuring Phillips and his wife Ann Braithwaite, who was part of the support team.

From Silvereye Films and the social enterprise Making the Most of Now, launched by Phillips and inspired by the initials of MMN, *No One Rides Alone* raises awareness of the condition and builds community for those with rare diseases. A portion of the profits from screenings go towards supporting MMN research.

Set against the majesty of the Alps, the Pyrenees, and Mont Ventoux, the film is ultimately a journey of discovery, depicting an intimate portrait of how teamwork, positivity, and a willingness to be vulnerable can help people achieve the seemingly impossible. Head along to this special evening to witness an inspiring story that details the upper limits of human achievement.

Information age angst

Alongside its critiques of globalisation, corruption, and consumerism, some say Radiohead's 1997 album *OK Computer* predicted the impending angst and alienation of the information age. Dense, expansive, experimental, full of intricate soundscapes and fuzzy tones, this album continues to be considered one of the greatest ever made.

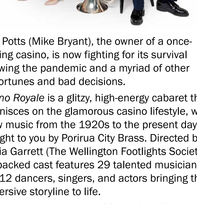
Come Together is a concert series that celebrates seminal rock albums, bringing together some of Aotearoa's most renowned musicians to perform them live on stage. After their success performing Bruce Springsteen's *Born To Run* in June, the supergroup are returning to The Opera House on the 16th of July to perform *OK Computer.*

This time the musicians are Ed Knowles (The Checks), Milan Borich (Pluto), Seamus Johnson (seamouse), Josh Braden (No Broadcast), Anita Clark (Don McGlashan), and the Come Together Band. They will perform Radiohead's third studio album in full, followed by a second set celebrating Radiohead's rich and restless back catalogue.

It has been just shy of 30 years since *OK Computer* was released into the world to shatter rock conventions and establish itself as a masterpiece. With tracks including *Karma Police, Paranoid Android*, and *No Surprises*, the album articulates a political malaise and technological wariness that carries just as much – if not more – emotional weight today as it did back then.

Rug up this July and head to The Opera House for an evening of local musical talent celebrating one of the best albums to reflect life in the 21st century.

Glitz and glamour



Jack Potts (Mike Bryant), the owner of a once-thriving casino, is now fighting for its survival following the pandemic and a myriad of other misfortunes and bad decisions.

Casino Royale is a glitzy, high-energy cabaret that reminisces on the glamorous casino lifestyle, with show music from the 1920s to the present day all brought to you by Porirua City Brass. Directed by Letitia Garrett (The Wellington Footlights Society), the packed cast features 29 talented musicians and 12 dancers, singers, and actors bringing this immersive storyline to life.

Taking centre stage alongside the band's top brass notes is Bryant, a Pōneke-based, award-winning actor who performed in *Once Upon a Time in Homowood, Farrago Bazaar,* 25th *Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee,* and *A New Brain.*

Porirua City Brass has been a proud part of Porirua's cultural and community life for over 50 years. Made up of volunteer brass and percussion musicians, *Casino Royale* is a fundraising project to help get the band to the Australian National Brass Band Championships next year.

Put on your glad rags and dress to impress, the show runs from the 9th to the 11th of July at Linden Community Centre in Tawa. There'll be games of chance, some delicious drinks, and a guaranteed evening of lively entertainment, unforgettable storytelling packed with cheeky charm, and spectacular music inspired by Las Vegas. Prepare to be shaken *and* stirred by this performance.

The angels we wrestle

by Madelaine Empson

Photos by Sabin Holloway.

Delaney Davidson is one of our best, brightest, and most beloved singer-songwriters. Drawing influence from the likes of Johnny Cash, Buster Keaton, The Birthday Party, and Hank Williams, the four-time APRA New Zealand Country Music Song of the Year winner makes "beautifully haunting" (*Rolling Stone*) music that revels in the darker side of things and explores the human condition with a gothic Americana twang and folk-noir sensibilities.

Davidson unveils his 11th studio album *Baby Heavyweight* on the 26th of June. Ahead of the nationwide album release tour – which sees the multi-instrumentalist play St Peter's Village Hall in Paekākāriki on the 10th and Meow in Wellington on the 18th of July with a stacked band – we got into his music, ideas, and hopes for the future of humanity.

How do you feel your music, and the world it reflects, has evolved across 11 albums?

Baby Heavyweight has a feeling that somehow belongs to a story that we know but haven't heard. I've always tried to capture feelings of longing or emotional stirrings as vehicles for the messages I weave through my songs, and over time I have become more and more at home with acting as the foil that reflects this for people. I look at it like some kind of cathartic experience. I am also a fan of not going a direct route to this goal. Sideways crab strategy.

Baby Heavyweight has an interesting theme: Lucifer seeking redemption through recontextualising his past. Could you please speak more to it?

I've always been interested in the story of expulsion and as with everything I think there's two sides to most stories, so combining these seemed like a natural way to explore the concept of The Fall. Once I started digging into it I realised how deep it goes and how many of us have these experiences from our past where we are either living out old events or working to free ourselves from them. Lucifer represents us all in a lot of ways. The ideas of being born helpless into original sin, the burden to carry through life, the anger at being misunderstood, the facing of shame, and ultimately looking for a way to find peace.

If listeners could take away one thing from the album, what would you want it to be?

Self-forgiveness, love, and a deep respect for the life we have. I know it sounds like lofty goals for an album, but I think it's time to collectively stop our unconscious slide into the obvious traps of our times and live consciously again. I guess this stuff passes beyond the hopes for my album into a general call to wake up and become active in our own lives. I also always hope the songs and shows we perform will bring some reflective state where we can experience together the angels we wrestle with.

Cosmic classics

Gremlins.

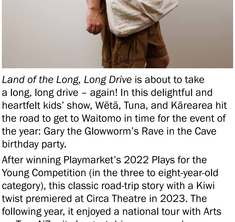
Sci-Fi Sundays are continuing their warp-speed endeavour through cosmic classics this July with three 80s bangers showing at Space Place.

Kicking off July on Sunday the 5th is Steven Spielberg's 1984 horror-comedy *Gremlins,* wacky and chaotic, cheeky yet violent. A gadget salesman buys his son a mogwai, an exotic bat-eared pet that comes with three rules: keep out of bright light, don't get wet, never feed after midnight. When all three rules are broken, the mogwai spawns demonic gremlins that cause a calamity over the Christmas festive season.

Next up on the 12th of July is John Carpenter's 1981 action-packed film *Escape from New York,* set in a dystopian future where crime rates have spiked to such heights that the entirety of Manhattan has been turned into a maximum-security prison. When Air Force One is hijacked and the president is held hostage by prisoners, one-eyed Snake Plissken, a war hero turned bank robber, is given 22 hours to carry out a rescue mission.

Finally, on the 19th of July is Russell Mulcahy's *Highlander*. The 1986 cult-classic features an iconic soundtrack by Queen, and follows Connor MacLeod, a 16th century Scottish warrior who is part of a secret race of immortals – a race destined to duel one another through the centuries, with the victor of each fight absorbing the other's power. MacLeod ends up in the finale of the battle royale in 1980s New York, fighting his most difficult opponent yet.

Raving on a roady



Land of the Long, Long Drive is about to take a long, long drive – again! In this delightful and heartfelt kids' show, Wētā, Tuna, and Kārearea hit the road to get to Waitomo in time for the event of the year: Gary the Glowworm's Rave in the Cave birthday party.

After winning Playmarket's 2022 Plays for the Young Competition (in the three to eight-year-old category), this classic road-trip story with a Kiwi twist premiered at Circa Theatre in 2023. The following year, it enjoyed a national tour with Arts on Tour NZ – its longest drive ever – and was nominated for the PAYPA 2024 Production of the Year. And now, these school holidays, it careens back into Circa for a wheelie fun time!

In this laugh-out-loud, inspiring adventure about three unlikely heroes, our friends face a number of tricky trials on the road, ultimately learning that despite their differences, they can achieve their goals by working together – and going the extra mile for one another. This feel-good tale of friendship and birthdays was written by Catriona Tipene and Ryan Cundy, with toe-tapping fresh waiata from New Zealand songwriter Benny Tipene and stunning costumes from GRIDLEY by Victoria.

Brought to you by Horse With No Name, *Land of the Long, Long Drive* will be parked up at Circa from the 4th to the 18th of July, with a New Zealand Sign Language interpreted performance on Thursday the 16th at 11:30am.

Close-up

by Isabella Smith

Rock band redemption

Photo by Bonny Beattie.

Paper Husbands is Nick Sceats' debut novel published by Te Cuba Press. It's the 90s here in Wellington, and the band of the same name are trying to make it on the music scene. After a song gets put on high rotation on student radio, they get the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to open for UK legends Shimmer. The sudden disappearance of the frontman Pete before the show shatters those dreams. Fast forward three decades, Bob the drummer runs into Pete at San Fran, and a casual catch up leads to them saying: let's get the band back together.

This impressive debut, described by Flying Nun Records founder Roger Shepherd as "A fine work of rock band redemption", features lyrics and QR codes that link readers to the album *Beautiful Edges*, which Nick and his band created featuring the songs mentioned in the book. We caught up to discuss the book, the process of writing it, and the ideas behind the album.

How would you introduce yourself as a writer?

I suppose as a novel writer – it's my first novel, but I've always written. I started life off as a journalist, and I've always written songs. I love singer-songwriters who can write a story in three verses or three minutes like Paul Simon or Paul Kelly. I thought, if I can write a story in three and a half minutes, then I can have a go at expanding it out wider to become a novel. When you're writing a song, you have to move the action along quite quickly. The book does move along at a trot – it is tight and crisp, and I think that's a function of songwriting.

Did the idea of the book emerge through playing in bands of your own?

The initial idea, yes. I was in a band in the late 80s, early 90s in Wellington. We didn't really have any ambition; we were just good mates who liked to play together. We did play at the Clarendon, which is referenced in the book.

But it could equally have been a bunch of guys who go tramping or surfing together, who have unfinished business. It just happened to be a band, because that's the kind of group that I was most involved in at that time. I knew the dynamics of a band, the banter, and what goes on in the practice room.

Did you write your way through, or are you someone who plans it out?

No, it really wrote itself at its own momentum. I remember getting stuck and walking along the beach with the dog, and ideas would come to me. I just let it evolve freely, which was half the fun.

It's a lovely state of mind to be in when you're writing.

People talk about the ability to play *Go Fish* or *You Know what*, I might spend a couple of these guys over to the UK.' You don't have to pay airfares; there's no need to worry about kids anything. You just make it up. It was such fun to have that kind of power and agency.

I enjoyed the editing process as well. You think you've finished something, then the publishers say, 'Hey, I think you should do this or lose that or consider this.' It helps with your brushstroke. After all that editing you stand back and see a much more vivid picture. I don't think every author enjoys that process. But I'm old enough now that my identity is not attached to the work.

Do you think being in journalism had something to do with that detachment?

Not really. I wasn't a journalist for a long time. I co-founded a leadership development company, and a lot of what we do is teach leaders the ability to be coachable, to take feedback. I relate it to being eminently coachable on every aspect. I was just like, 'Bring it on, you're going to get no resistance here.'

Did that result in any drastic or surprising changes?

I got rid of a character and a couple of scenes that were funny but didn't necessarily move the action on. My mantra was always to do what serves the story. It's the same when you're writing and arranging a song, what serves the song?

What came first, the album or the book?

The book. One of the songs were recorded was from the band I had back in the 80s, 90s. I had a couple of others that I'd been working on, but none of those related to the plot so I wrote new ones.

The songwriting and novel-writing very much informed each other. There's one song called *Rear Vision Hearts*, which is about one of the characters trying to support his wife who's grieving the loss of their children leaving home. They've left and she's kind of stuck in the past, He's trying to be supportive and bring her forward. The song captures that much more emotively than if it was just a narrative in the book. It gives you a different, much more moving perspective on it. The hope was that the songs would supplement and give a different kind of angle to the characters.

Another song, *Repo Man*, is about one character's father having dementia. They call it Tenacious D. I wrote the song specifically for that part and new ideas came out of writing it, which then fed back into the narrative.

Did you record everything yourself or did you get a band together?

The guy on the drums, Tim Robinson, played in the band I was in back in the 80s. I've played in other bands with him over the last 40 years as well. Then Murray Cowlishaw was the bass player, I've played with him off and on for years. They're a fantastic rhythm section. Then my son Reuben produced the album and played all the hard guitar parts, he's a fantastic guitarist. He sang on four of the songs as well. It was so wonderful doing it with him, having him produce these four old fellas.

Then the keyboard player, Lee Pryor, I'd never met him before, but I got in touch with him and he came in for the last two days of recording and put the keys on.

We recorded it in about six days at The Surgery with Lee Prebible. My other son Max is an artist and he did the cover art. It was pretty neat to be able to do a project and have both my kids adding their artistic value to it.

Sounds like you had a lot of fun!

Yeah, I really did want to have a book that was positive and plot-driven about friendship between decent, well-functioning men, not numpties or renegade loners – which is often how they're portrayed.

I love reading and I know so many men who don't read, and to me that seems so sad. I think a lot of the time they don't read because they want it to be more pacey, or they don't see themselves reflected. I thought it'd be nice to write a book where men of a certain demographic get to see themselves. I wanted something that was fun too, because there's enough misery in the world.

It's sad how that has happened – less men writing, less men reading.

I had really good feedback from people in my football team and the sailing club who've read it. The fact that they read it all the way through... To me, that's a win. To me, that's success. It's not just for men, obviously, but I think, if guys are reading it and enjoying it, then I'm a happy man.

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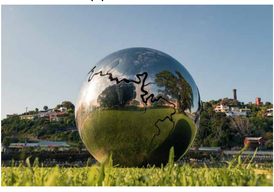
National brand, local builders

Shane Stone Builders Limited is a stalwart of the building industry in Whanganui. Having won countless awards delivering high-quality residential and commercial projects across the region since 2008, it has created lasting relationships within the community, building a reputation based on trust and excellence. From residential to commercial properties, the team's core services include new builds, alterations and additions, renovations, outdoor living spaces, and refurbishments.

Earlier this month, the team added David Reid Homes to their repertoire of services, opening the first franchise in Whanganui. David Reid Homes are a nationwide network that deliver bespoke, contemporary designs for new builds. With new housing consents increasing, Shane Stones Builders can deliver architecturally designed new builds for those wanting more than just a standard build.

The David Red Homes Whanganui-Manawatū team is led by director Shane Stone, who brings more than 30 years of construction experience and has built over 100 homes throughout the region. Supporting Shane are business manager Jodi Bunker, project manager Josh Davy, construction manager Pete Connolly, and new home and sales design consultant Paula Jones. Together, they combine local expertise with the renowned David Reid Homes experience, guiding clients through every stage of the building journey to deliver exceptional homes with outstanding service and attention to detail.

Riverside appeal



Bearing. Photo courtesy of Whanganui & Partners.

With a glorious promenade beside the ambling river, and the largest concentration of heritage buildings in the country, Whanganui is a stunning and thriving township that offers an unbeatable lifestyle. The city has become increasingly popular for Kiwis from across the motu thanks to lower house prices, beautiful properties and sections, easily accessible services, plenty of options for healthcare and education, and all kinds of eateries and social clubs. Art abounds, nature is never far, and the happening social calendar keeps everyone busy.

With all this in mind, it comes as no surprise that young professionals, creatives, retirees, and families are finding this vibrant, eclectic, and centrally located city increasingly appealing.

If you're looking to buy, there are plenty of real estate agents with local knowledge that can help you find the historic home, modern flat, beachside property, or lifestyle block of your dreams. Relocating is easy too – there are several services that can deliver and help you unpack your new life.

If you've stumbled on the perfect parcel of land where you know you'll want to stay forever, consider building a home. There are plenty of professionals around to manage your build from the ground up, so you can live where you love. Otherwise, if you found the perfect character cottage, get in touch with nearby tradespeople to help you revamp, refresh, and restore it to its former glory.

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Gallery news

by Isabella Smith

Elemental beginnings

Portal 4, 2026. Photo by Adrian Vercoe, courtesy of Jhana Millers Gallery.

In Tom Mackie's exhibition *Portals*, on at Jhana Millers Gallery until the 11th of July, each artwork captures its medium in a moment in time. Made of brass, reclaimed timber, and calico cotton, they reveal material vulnerability, celebrating signs of wear and traces of affect. Each stain and scar remind viewers that the present moment behaves as a nexus connecting the artwork to its elemental beginnings.

Tom Mackie is an artist based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara. Across a range of projects, he draws attention to the build-up or 'collateral' that conventionally sits outside of objects, obscured from view. Working with discarded canvases, found materials, and reclaimed surfaces, he is interested in the after-effects of creative production: residues, impressions, and other traces left behind.

Wood moves, brass oxidises, and rather than removing the evidence of time and history working on them, it is instead archived, leaving a feeling of a nostalgia on the walls of the gallery. New life is breathed into a 'ghost print' taken from the backing board of a Robin White screenprint of *This is me at Kaitangata*, 1979. Its reinvigoration and re-presentation enable the histories the work embodies to interface with the present moment anew.

The grain, rings, and discolorations on the surfaces of reclaimed wood create chance beauty that encourages the eye of the viewer to drift out to the peripheries. "I'm trying to slow down the viewing experience", Tom says. "When the centre of the artwork is empty, there is no 'image' for the viewer to look at and our eyes are forced to wander, to breathe, to notice subtle textures. I want the viewer to discover, to decompress in front of the work, to slow down and create their own story."

Similarly, the geometric cutouts on framed sheets of brass invert exterior and interior space and, too, draw the eye outward. In the accompanying essay from arts writer Nina Dyer, she says, "Whereas conventional frames may be thought to insulate a work from the scaffolding of a gallery's walls (and by extension, its wider institutional apparatus), the works in this exhibition make no such distinction."

"I want a partnership with my material, instead of having total domination over them", Tom tells me. "There is a calm battle between control and surrender in my work… A friction between vulnerability and perfection." In contrast to the archival impulse is a more rigorous practice. Near-perfect spherical orbs line the bottom of the wooden frames; hard evidence of a machine or a hand articulating the material into something else. This second tendency toward the anti-gestural creates smooth, linear, geometric shapes that complement the living archives.

Dyer says the work is "neither overtly expressive nor purely abstract, it holds a place in which material memory and formal restraint coalesce, allowing historical layers to assume renewed significance." This restraint allows materials to speak for themselves, to behave like portals that have a story to tell of their own.

Capital of Kai

Miniature food made for Wellington on a Plate, 2017 by Rose Young.

So often, when you take a closer look at an object or image, you discover it possesses stories that reflect an entire era. *Capital of Kai* is the latest exhibition from Te Waka Huia Wellington Museum on until the 6th of September. Curated by Ian Wards, who has collected memorabilia and photos for the last six years, the exhibition encapsulates Pōneke's culinary past to reveal a history of the city itself.

"Food history is a great way to track cultural change, and Wellington's evolution from post-war English staples to one of diversity and sophistication is particularly fascinating", Wards says. The exhibition features objects from some of Wellington's most iconic institutions, including the Green Parrot's original grill plate made from melted World War I gun barrels, The Matterhorn's cowbell, Il Casino's couch, and Hiakai's backlit signage.

"I never cease to be amazed by the inspiring, fascinating stories that are quietly waiting to be shared", Wards says. "One thing that really struck me was the ridiculousness around liquor licensing in the late 1950s. If you went to a high-end restaurant like Orsini's or Cafe Du Boulevard, you couldn't have a drink with your meal; of if you did, you had to smuggle a bottle of wine in and hide it under the tablecloth. Meanwhile drunks would be roaming the streets, having sculled down as much watery beer as they could in the hour between the end of work and the closure of the pubs at 6pm."

The story of food is the story of people. The exhibition highlights the shifting face of Pōneke, tracking the revival of modern Māori cuisine, and the arrival of Dutch, Greek, Italian, Indian, Chinese, and other communities who have shared their cuisines and enriched the city.

Collapsing residue

Cut Painting (PB), 2025. Image courtesy of Russell Kleyn.

Partness and Fullness, on at Hamish McKay Gallery until the 18th of July, is part of Sydney-based artist Huseyin Sami's larger, ongoing engagement with and exploration into a praxis of painting.

Huseyin's paintings are treated as objects, with the physical nature of how he engages with and thinks about material integral to his artmaking. The cut painting series "embody strong conceptual traits connected to the lexicon of abstraction", Huseyin tells me. "They unfold through systems of chance and gestural intervention that allow unexpected forms and relationships to surface."

Arced incisions are made in the canvas producing flaps that peel downwards to create playful, tactile lenticular shapes reminiscent of eyes, tongues, or sailboats. "These works are an example of how I draw upon the spatial and performative conditions of painting while resisting fixed resolution", he says. "The material behaviour and presence of paint itself become an active collaborator within the process, generating tensions between control and surrender, intention and accident."

The pastel pinks and blues – at times contrasted against black – create a lightness and playfulness in his works. "Colour is extremely important for me, it's how we see the world, how we relate to space, objects, and experiences… on a physiological level. Colour within my work becomes a vehicle to explore material and space in a manner that is suggestive of some mode of process, activity, or performance."

Huseyin approaches painting as both an event and a site of accumulation. Central to his practice is a desire to explore how painting can register time, "not as a fixed image, but as a residue of movement, repetition, collapse, and renewal."

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Make the move – real estate

Not how but who

A growing family, a change in lifestyle, relocating, upsizing, downsizing, retiring, investing... there are so many reasons to consider buying a new home or selling your current one. When your horizons expand to the entire lower North Island, there is endless potential for your next move. Full of stunning landscapes, bustling townships, rural villages, and coastal escapes, the area caters to any lifestyle. What matters is not how to realise that dream, but who to trust and work with in order to make it come true.

Navigating the property market often feels like an overwhelming and stressful process, and choosing to buy or sell a home is one of the biggest decisions someone might make in their life. Luckily, no matter where you're looking, be it Manawatū, Horowhenua, Kāpiti, Wairarapa, Hutt Valley, or Wellington, there are generous people out there who are not only experts in the local property market, but are trustworthy, professional, and put your goals first.

A good real estate agent walks beside you, ensuring that you understand the tricky jargon, are aware of what's out there, and that your buying and selling experience is as seamless as it can possibly be. One of the tell-tale signs of an excellent real estate agent is knowing that their clients have returned for their services a second or third time. If you're looking to shake things up a bit this year, look no further than this page.

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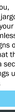

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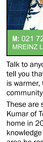

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Talk to anyone from Kāpiti Coast and they will tell you that they live in paradise. The weather is warmer, the beaches are endless, and the community is passionate and friendly.

These are some of the same reasons Lakesh Kumar of Tommy's Real Estate made Kāpiti his home in 2013 and has never looked back. His local knowledge and passion for both real estate and the area he represents makes him the perfect guide for navigating the housing market.

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Feilding

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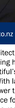

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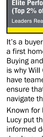
Who better to navigate the market with than Kim Brausch of Property Brokers. Known for her enthusiasm, professionalism, and expertise, Kim is dedicated to helping clients find the perfect home, ensuring they feel informed and supported along the way.

Wellington

Ray White



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Manawatū

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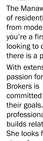

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The Manawatū District offers an outstanding range of residential and lifestyle living, with everything from modern city homes to rural retreats. Whether you're a first-home buyer, growing family, investor, looking to downsize, or dreaming of more space, there is a property to suit every stage and lifestyle. With extensive local knowledge and a passion for real estate, Alison Kinghorn of Property Brokers is committed to helping clients achieve their goals. Known for her integrity, professionalism, and friendly approach, Alison builds relationships based on trust and results. She looks forward to supporting you through every step of your property journey.

Levin

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Situated on the flat Manawatū Plain between the sparkling Tasman Sea and the Tararua Range, Levin is the largest town in Horowhenua District. With plenty of space and affordable housing, it's no wonder those who live there decide to stay.

No one knows this better than local Jan Sparrow of Tremains. With 26 years of experience in real estate, Jan's name is synonymous with success. Known for her attention to detail and excellent communication skills, Jan's expert local knowledge, work ethic, and passion for people make her the perfect person to accompany you on your property journey in Levin.

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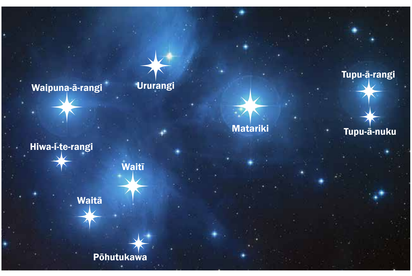
Matariki stars



Matariki: the mother of the star cluster, Matariki symbolises reflection, hope, connection to the environment, and wellbeing.

Pōhutukawa: connecting us to those who have passed on, Pōhutukawa encourages us to remember our dearly departed.

Waitī: this star is linked to fresh water and the kai sourced from streams, lakes, and other bodies.

Waitā: this star is associated with salt water, the ocean, and kaimoana. Waitā and Waitī are twins.

Waipuna-ā-rangi: tied to rain, hail, snow, and more, this star represents lifegiving.

Tupu-ā-rangi: birds, fruit in trees, and all other food sources linked to the sky are represented by Tupuārangi.

Tupu-ā-nuku: from flora to food, Tupuānuku is associated with all that grows within the soil.

Ururangi: winds and storms are linked to this star.

Hiwa-i-te-rangi: known as the wishing star, Hiwa-i-te-rangi is the youngest star and represents dreams and aspirations for the year ahead.

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Matariki
Feature Artist
Jacob Scott

Unique Authentic Precious

19 Allen Street ,Te Aro
Wellington 6011

kura
ART • DESIGN AOTEAROA

ph: 04 802 4934
www.KuraGalleryco.nz

Crows Feet
DANCE COLLECTIVE

Crows Feet Dance Collective celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.
Any woman can join, provided she's over 35. There is no entry requirement.
Previous experience is not necessary and the groups are a mix of experienced, less experienced, and beginner dancers.

Wellington
Wednesday night 7.30-9pm
Vivek Kinra's Studio, Level 1,
22 Webb Street, Te Aro $20.00
Contact Jan Bolwell 027 2265 755
info@crowsfeet.org.nz

Kapiti
Tuesday evening 7-8.30pm
Memorial Hall, The Parade,
Paekakariki $17.00
Contact Jan Bolwell 027 2265 755
info@crowsfeet.org.nz

Palmerston North
Thursdays 6-7.30pm
Danceworks, Studio 3, 60 King Street,
Palmerston North
Contact Tania Kopytko 027 631 0105
taniakopytko@gmail.com

Hutt
Wednesday 10.00-11.15am
Moera Hall, off Randwick Road,
Lower Hutt $15.00
Contact Carolyn 04 389 4944
cajonnz@gmail.com

www.janbolwell.com/crowsfeet-dance-collective/

Jonathan Pitts
National Party Candidate for Wellington North

021 199 7919
jonathan.pitts@national.org.nz
national.org.nz/team/jonathanpitts
JPForWellingtonNorth

National
Authorised by J Pitts, jonathan.pitts@national.org.nz

Porirua glows

Porirua is the place to be during Matariki with an exciting lineup of free, whānau-friendly events designed to bring the community together to reflect, celebrate, and look ahead.

Festivities kick off on Thursday the 9th of July at 4pm at the City Centre Library, where children can craft paper bag lanterns. Families can then take their creations to Wi Neera Drive at 5pm for the ka kaa te rama walk, which launches a vibrant harbourside light display running nightly from 5:30pm until the 12th of July.

On Friday the 10th of July, Pātaka hosts Ngāti Toa-led kōrero, live music, kai, and seedling giveaways. Love Local Expo returns on Saturday the 11th of July. Kai Tahi will have a Weaving Wall art project running daily until the 19th of July. And on the 18th of July from 10am to 12:30pm, you can head to Bothamley Park to help plant 1800 trees and enjoy a free BBQ.

All events are free. Visit poriruacity.govt.nz/matariki for more.

A closer look at Matariki

As Matariki rises, Wellington's space science museum Space Place is helping visitors learn about the stars that signal the Māori New Year.

While many people are familiar with the Matariki star cluster, some iwi in Te Whanganui-a-Tara look to Puanga as their primary signal for the beginning of the New Year. Puanga is the brightest star of the Orion constellation and approximately 79 times the size of our Sun. Puanga rises higher and earlier than Matariki and is often easier to see above the region's hills. In some inland parts of the wider region, both Puanga and Matariki are observed.

Visitors to Space Place during the Matariki season can learn more about these celestial markers through live star talks included with planetarium show bookings. Following most planetarium shows before the 20th of July, presenters will explain the significance of Matariki and Puanga to Pōneke and share tips for spotting them in the dawn sky.

Families looking for a hands-on Matariki celebration can also attend Matariki Together at Space Place on Sunday the 12th of July from 10am to 3pm. Along with planetarium experiences, the day includes storytelling sessions with Moira Wairama, a family craft activity, and a kapa haka performance from local community group Tiwhanawhana. Children under five receive free entry and discounted tickets are available for ages five to 17, students, and Gold Card holders. With limited tickets, families are encouraged to book ahead of time.

For a value-packed general visit to the science museum, use the Take a Red Rocket to Space combo for 20 percent off admission to Space Place and your return trip on the iconic Wellington Cable Car. And just for the school holidays, the combo includes 2-for-1 kids pizzas at Cable Top Eatery. Terms and conditions apply.

Plan your Matariki celebrations and find free stargazing resources at spaceplace.nz

poriruacity

Matariki Festival

July 2026

Celebrate with FREE events across Porirua

Matariki craft session
Thursday 9 July, 4–5.15pm
City Centre Library Tamariki area

Ka kaa te rama – light walk
Thursday 9 July, from 5pm
From the Wi Neera Drive playground around to Porirua harbourside

Light display at the harbourside
Thursday 9 – Sunday 12 July, 5.30–9pm
Porirua harbourside

Matariki at Pātaka Art + Museum
Friday 10 July, 10am–5pm
Celebrating the remembrance star Pōhutukawa

poriruacity.govt.nz/matariki

SPACE IS THE PLACE FOR MATARIKI

Discover more of the universe this Matariki season with interative exhibitions, planetarium shows and live star talks.

Plan your visit at spaceplace.nz

Space Place

Part of Whaam Private Experience Wellington.
Principal Funder Wellington City Council.

Matariki

Connecting nature and the stars

Kāruhiruhi/pied shag. Photo by Zac Painting.

The rising of Puanga and Matariki marks the Māori New Year. It's a special time for reflection, renewal, and togetherness with whānau. Spending time in nature helps clear the mind and reconnect us to te taiao/the natural world. Listening to birdsong, walking beneath the trees, and slowing down for a moment can bring us closer to each other and to the world around us.

What better place to visit than Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne!

On your next visit, grab a copy of our Matariki mā Puanga Activity Book, packed with fun activities to enjoy at the sanctuary and at home. Explore the bush, learn about the stars of Puanga and Matariki, and set goals together as a whānau for the year ahead. This year's theme is Waitā, the star of the ocean and kaimoana, celebrating our connection to waterways, marine life, and food from the sea.

There's heaps happening at Zealandia throughout July for all ages. Highlights include puppet shows, virtual reality ocean exploration, and creative craft sessions inspired by the stars. Don't miss the photography exhibition by Māori artist Manaaki Barrett in Te Māra Toi, the stairwell gallery on the way up to Rātā Cafe. Warm up with some delicious Matariki-themed kai while you're there!

Want to experience the sanctuary after dark? Zealandia By Night tours and Kids Night Walks are perfect after-hours experiences to discover the sanctuary in a whole new light.

Visit www.visitzealandia.com/whats-on

Matariki herenga waka

Photo courtesy of www.matariki.co.nz

The name Matariki derives from the phrase 'Ngā mata o te ariki Tāwhirimātea', meaning 'the eyes of the god Tāwhirimatea'. The story of how the eyes of the god of wind and storms were cast into the sky to become the constellation can be found in the pūrākau of Matariki.

After Tāne separated sky father Ranginui from earth mother Papatūānuku, Tāwhirimātea waged war on his brothers and sisters, angered they had separated his parents. He sent winds, clouds, rains, and hurricanes after them until, in his final battle, he was defeated by Tūmatauenga, god of warfare and humanity. Vowing to never let them forget their betrayal of his parents, he clawed out his eyes and cast them into the heavens where they stuck to his father's chest to become the Matariki constellation.

The presence of Matariki in the sky signifies Te Mātahi o te Tau, the Māori New Year. Its appearance is a sign for people to gather, honour those who have passed, celebrate the present, and plan for the future. This year the public holiday falls on Friday the 10th of July. The 2026 proverb is 'Matariki herenga waka', an adaptation of the proverb 'Tāmaki herenga waka', which refers to Auckland as the gathering place of many canoes. Just as Auckland is home to different peoples, so Matariki is a celebration for everyone. This year's celebrations are all about inclusion, honouring diversity, and inviting people from all backgrounds to connect with and celebrate the Māori New Year together.

YOUR WEEK, REIMAGINED ON THE FAIRWAY

More time. More freedom. More reasons to play.

There comes a time when the pace of life shifts, when the calendar opens up and the days become yours again. At Manor Park, midweek golf isn't just about the game, it's about making the most of that time.

Set among native surroundings and a welcoming, inclusive community, our midweek playing groups offer the perfect balance of light hearted competition, fresh air, and genuine connection. Whether you're looking to stay active, meet new people, or simply enjoy the rhythm of a regular round, there's a place here for you.

Manor Park Midweek Golfers

For those who enjoy a regular fixture in the week and a deeper connection to the game, the Manor Park Midweek Golfers group offers a well-rounded and rewarding golfing experience.

Playing Tuesdays and Thursdays year-round, with morning tee times that shift with the seasons, this group blends structure with variety. Members enjoy a full calendar of golf, including regular Stableford competitions, tournaments, and a mix of pairs and team events—alongside a few light-hearted novelty rounds to keep things fun.

Beyond the course, there are opportunities to travel and connect, with home and away visits to clubs such as Te Marua, Carterton and Waikanae, as well as participation in the Evergreens Interclub competition across the Wellington region.

With a modest annual subscription and daily playing fee, much of which is returned as prizes and added support such as subsidised cart hire, it's a group designed to be both accessible and enjoyable.

It's golf with rhythm, variety, and a strong sense of belonging—perfect for those looking to make midweek play a regular part of life.

Taxi Club – Tuesdays Done Right

If your ideal round includes a bit of banter, a touch of competition, and plenty of laughs, Taxi Club delivers.

Each Tuesday morning begins with a relaxed clubhouse gathering before a shotgun start, bringing players of all abilities together across the course. The format is social, the atmosphere is welcoming, and the focus is firmly on enjoyment. With a small annual fee and weekly competition, players accumulate prizes throughout the year, all leading toward a shared Christmas celebration. It's an easy way to add structure to your week without ever feeling too serious.

Midweek Ladies – Wednesdays Your Way

Wednesday mornings at Manor Park are all about connection, movement, and enjoying the game at your own pace.

Our 18-hole group offers a blend of companionship and friendly competition, while the 9-hole option provides a shorter format for those who prefer a more flexible morning and free afternoons.

Across both groups, you'll find a supportive environment where new players are always welcome. Whether you're returning to the game or playing regularly, it's a space to feel comfortable, stay active, and enjoy golf in great company.

Thursday Club – A Weekly Highlight

For many members, Thursday Club has become the anchor of the week.

A vibrant mix of men and women gather for a midday shotgun start, combining competitive Stableford play with a strong social spirit. Weekly cash prizes, seasonal tournaments, and shared events throughout the year keep things engaging both on and off the course. It's golf that strikes the perfect balance: competitive enough to keep things interesting, relaxed enough to enjoy every moment.

More Than Just a Round of Golf

What makes midweek golf at Manor Park truly special isn't just the variety of playing options, it's the sense of community that comes with it.

Here, you'll find a welcoming environment for all skill levels, opportunities to stay active and engaged, and friendships that extend well beyond the fairway. With low cost entry and thoughtful touches like subsidised cart hire, it's a game that remains accessible, enjoyable, and easy to be part of.

There's no pressure, just an open invitation.

Come along for a round or two, meet the people, and discover the group that feels right for you. Because midweek golf at Manor Park isn't just about filling time it's about making the most of it.

MANOR PARK
GOLF SANCTUARY

TURN YOUR WEEKDAYS INTO GAME DAYS

Join a welcoming community at Manor Park Golf Sanctuary, with vibrant midweek groups and flexible memberships designed to suit your lifestyle.

GOLF ROAD, MANOR PARK, LOWER HUTT 5019 | 04 563 8558

Matariki in Ahuriri Napier

Matariki is a time of reflection, remembrance, and renewal as the star cluster rises to mark the Māori New Year. In Ahuriri, Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi invite manuhiri and locals to gather along the coastline where sky, sea, and whenua meet. These moments honour those who have passed, celebrate the present, and guide us into the year ahead through connection, kai, and storytelling.
www.matariki.events/napier

Matariki Mahuika: Storytelling

Saturday the 11th of July from 4pm to 9pm

Marine Parade (next to the Spirit of Napier), Napier

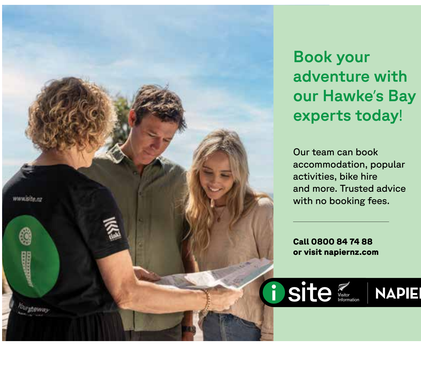
An evening gathering around beach fires with storytelling, kai, music, and shared reflection. A lantern procession carries messages of aroha across the waterfront, inviting whānau to connect, remember, and create new Matariki traditions together under the stars.

Whangai i te Hautapu – Hau Ahi

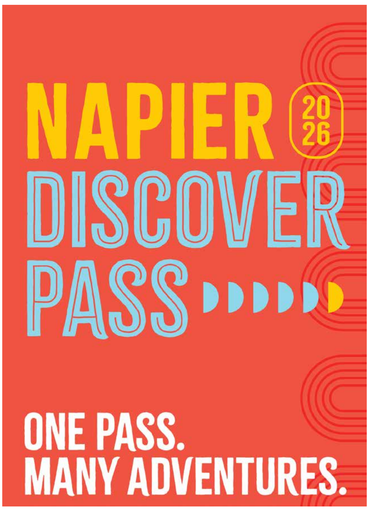
Wednesday the 8th of July from 6am to 7am

Marine Parade (near the National Aquarium), Napier

A pre-dawn ceremony in three parts observing the stars, calling the names of those who have passed since last Matariki, and sharing a food offering through rising steam to the sky. Whānau may submit names to be spoken aloud in remembrance as the first light returns.



Ocean Spa is Napier's premier heated pool and fitness complex located on Marine Parade. Boasting open-air, heated, and chlorinated pools and spas with panoramic ocean views, visitors can enjoy a range of options from the toddler pool to therapeutic pools with water fountains and pool jets. Visitors can unwind in spacious outdoor spa pools and refuel with a coffee or bite to eat at Bach Café. Centrally located, Ocean Spa is the perfect spot to relax and re-energise, rain or shine.



Get adventurous and explore Napier with one simple pass! Take a journey through some of Napier's favourite attractions, from relaxing coastal experiences to hands on discovery and family-friendly fun. Visit five iconic venues across Napier, uncover marine life, roll into skate sessions, tee off by the sea, and bring fascinating machines to life. Choose where to return for a bonus visit and make the most of every experience. Get your pass at www.napiernz.com or instore at the Napier isite.

Hawke's Bay Holt Planetarium

What better time to look up at space and explore the heavens than during Matariki? At Hawke's Bay Holt Planetarium, you can discover the night sky at an entertaining and engaging planetarium show!

Learn about everything from early telescopes to modern particle physics in the foyer. See space come to life in the lecture theatre and glimpse the Sputnik model built exactly to scale.

Come and see the wonders of the cosmos beneath the stars of the Zeiss planetarium dome rain or shine, dark or light. The projector sits beneath a fibreglass dome, six metres in diameter, and a presenter will take you on a tour through the galaxy. Once the lights have dimmed, over 3000 stars can be viewed on the interior of the dome along with the Moon, the planets, the Milky Way, and other wondrous sights.

Completely wheelchair accessible and open to little and big Kiwis alike, come and explore the galaxy from right here on Earth on Sundays between 7pm and 9pm at Hawke's Bay Holt Planetarium.

Community connection

Ceramic artists from across the lower North Island will gather in Ōtaki on the 10th and 11th of July for the fifth annual Star Glaze Festival, a vibrant celebration of pottery, Matariki, and community connection.

Held at the Ōtaki Māori Racing Club, the festival features ceramic exhibitions, artist demonstrations, hands-on activities, live entertainment, and family-friendly experiences. The event begins with a dawn Matariki ceremony and shared breakfast, offering a chance for reflection and connection as the community welcomes the Māori New Year.

Visitors can meet artists from across Wellington, Kāpiti, Horowhenua, and Manawatū, browse and purchase handmade ceramics, and take part in wheel throwing, handbuilding, weaving, and public Raku-firing experiences. Friday's programme runs alongside race day, while Saturday focuses on the popular public Raku event.

For more information, visit www.otakipotteryclub.org/star-glaze

Woven stories

Weavers of Te Ataarangi, hosted at Thistle Hall Gallery on Cuba Street during Matariki from the 30th of June to the 10th of July, honours a whakapapa of language revitalisation and celebrates the deep artistry embedded in teaching, weaving together mātauranga, visual storytelling, and te reo Māori.

Exhibition organiser Pikihuia Reihana says, "Ringatoi (artists) speak through fibre, form, and kōrero tuku iho, casting light on the enduring presence of te reo Māori – not only in the language itself, but in the weave, the pattern, and the aspirations of our people."

All ringatoi are current students of Te Ataarangi, a language revitalisation movement committed to the survival of te reo Māori through full immersion methodologies. The exhibition showcases the depth, diversity, and innovation of ako reo and toi Māori, while fostering engagement, learning, and connection between ringatoi and the wider community.

Head along this Matariki to see this spectacular body of work.

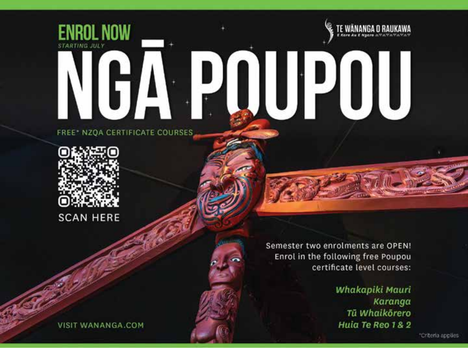
Whānau wellbeing

Kōkiri Marae is passionate and dedicated to serving the needs of its community. Structured yet flexible, focused yet holistic, the compassionate and knowledgeable team offer a range of community, social, and hauora services.

Kōkiri Marae's hauora services encompass a wide range of options to at-risk Māori and their whānau, extending across all four hauora wellbeing principles: physical, social, spiritual, and mental and emotional.

Health service options include outreach diabetes and immunisation services, sexual and reproductive health services, stop-smoking programmes, the car seat rent-to-own scheme, and the Rangatahi Tū Rangatira National Programme. Kōkiri Marae also has a clinical campervan team driving to communities across the region to provide free vaccinations to whānau who may be unable to access them through their GP or medical centre.

From pēpi and tamariki through to rangatahi, pakeke, and kaumātua, Kōkiri Marae provides holistic and comprehensive hauora services for the whole whānau.



Matariki: Returning to the Fires of Learning

Ko te kakara o te hinu raukawa, he tohu o te whakapapa e kore e memeha.

As the stars of Matariki rise once again above Aotearoa, many of us pause to remember those who have passed, celebrate the present, and look ahead to the future with hope.

For Māori, Matariki has always been more than a date on the calendar. It is a time of reflection. A time to ask ourselves where we have come from, where we stand today, and where we wish to go.

In a world that often moves at great speed, Matariki invites us to slow down. To gather with whānau. To share stories. To remember the wisdom of those who came before us. To reconnect with the values, traditions, and knowledge that have sustained our people for generations.

This spirit of reconnection sits at the heart of Te Wānanga o Raukawa.

Established through the vision and determination of our founding leaders, Te Wānanga o Raukawa was created to support the revitalisation of te reo Māori, tikanga, and mātauranga Māori. It was founded on a simple but powerful belief: that our people are strengthened when they are connected to their language, culture, communities, and whakapapa.

Over the years, thousands of students have joined Te Wānanga o Raukawa to deepen their understanding of who they are and where they come from. Some arrive seeking to learn te reo Māori. Others want to strengthen their cultural knowledge, reconnect with their marae, support their whānau, or contribute more confidently within their iwi, hapū, and communities.

Many begin with a single step.

This July, Te Wānanga o Raukawa welcomes new students into a range of free NZQA-approved certificate programmes, including Poupou Huia Te Reo, Poupou Karanga, Poupou Tū Whaikōrero, and Poupou Whakapiki Mauri. These programmes provide accessible pathways for people wanting to begin or continue their learning journey, wherever they may live in Aotearoa.

The Matariki season reminds us that growth often begins with reflection. A seed planted today may flourish tomorrow. A conversation with a kaumātua may unlock a forgotten story. A decision to learn may strengthen not only ourselves, but future generations.

As the stars shine above us this Matariki, perhaps the question is not whether we should reconnect, but how.

For some, that journey may begin around the kitchen table with whānau. For others, it may begin on the marae. And for many, it may begin through learning.

Matariki is a time of possibility. A time to honour the past, embrace the present, and invest in the future. Visit wananga.com to learn more about our semester two offerings.

Nā reira, i tēnei wā o Matariki, maumaharatia ngā taonga tuku iho i waihotia e ngā mātua tūpuna. Kia whakapakari anō ai ngā hononga ki te reo, ki ngā tikanga, ki te mātauranga Māori anō hoki. Kia whai huarahi hou mō āpōpō.

Matariki hunga nui. Matariki ahunga nui.

Hōtoke Winter at Te Manawa

Air Playground

MUSEUMS VICTORIA
A Museums Victoria Touring Exhibition

OPEN NOW until - 11 Oct

For curious kids of all ages, experience the science of aerodynamics and the amazing invisible elemental force of air through 10 interactive exhibits. Developed by a team of science experts from Museums Victoria, this exhibition is jam-packed with hands-on interactive experiences for the whole whānau.

ADMISSION:
Child (3-14 years) $10.00
Adult $5.00 (Community Services Card-holders free)
Family 2+2 or 1+3 $25.00 (additional children $5.00)
2 and under free

Rongomaiaia Te Whaiti, *Lady with the horns*, 2026(detail).

Witipū

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

OPEN NOW until 19 Jul

In Witipū, six wāhine Māori associated with Toioho ki Āpiti, explore the mana and diverse roles of Māori women on the Marae and beyond. Bold and layered, this exhibition centres wāhine Māori leadership, creativity, and strength—told by the artists themselves. Developed and presented in partnership with Toioho ki Āpiti, Massey University.

Experience Witipū and encounter wāhine Māori power, creativity, and leadership.

ART GALLERY
ADMISSION: Free

Paul Rayner, *Split Enz*, 2008. Collection of The Dowse Art Museum.

Screech

OPEN NOW until 18 Oct

The makers in Screech take their cues from subjects like raging rockstars, other-worldly paintings and imaginary creatures. Amongst the colourful chaos of these ceramic sculptures, you'll find a man doing a handstand, a politically incorrect clown and some wayward eyeballs.

This little history of loud ceramics brings together work by 28 arists from the collections held at Te Manawa, with others from our neighbours at The Rick Rudd Foundation and Quartz, Museum of Studio Ceramics in Whanganui and The Dowse Art Museum in Te Awakairangi Lower Hutt.

ART GALLERY
ADMISSION: Free

te manawa
TE PAPAIOEA PALMERSTON NORTH

MUSEUM + GALLERY PALMY

Plan your day escape to Palmy and discover these, and other exhibitions at Te Manawa Museum this Autumn.

326 Main St, Palmerston North. Ph: 0800-4-A-MUSEUM
www.temanawa.nz

A wild and wonderful winter

Te Manawa's current exhibitions bring together a mix of experiences that are fun and thought-provoking at the same time.

Air Playground, on until the 11th of October, allows curious kids of all ages to experience the science of aerodynamics and the amazing invisible elemental force of air through 10 interactive exhibits. Float objects mid-air, send materials shooting through airstreams, and test out your own paper plane designs to see what actually works (and what absolutely doesn't). It's very hands-on, very trial-and-error, and a bit competitive if you're there with others.

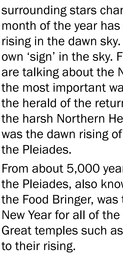
In *SCREECH! A little history of loud ceramics,* on until the 18th of October, nothing tries to be quiet. Named after a work by Bronwynne Cornish, *SCREECH!* drags things a long way away from the world of careful glazing and brown bowls that you'd put in an antique display cabinet. It's all about bold designs, strange shapes, and cartoonish creations. Amongst the colourful chaos of these ceramic sculptures, you'll find a man doing a handstand, a politically incorrect clown, and some wayward eyeballs!

And for something extra special: Santa's Cave will be open from Friday the 17th through to Sunday the 19th of July, with the man himself waiting to meet kids on Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 12pm. Saturday sees the Six to Sixty Choir performing Christmas carols at 1pm, followed by Renaissance Singers at 2pm, and festive craft activities will run throughout the weekend. Cosy up for a magical midwinter at Te Manawa Museum.

Cosmic conversations

Little Eyes

by Richard Hall, astronomical communicator



We live in a world of technology where information is available at our fingertips. But, for the vast majority of human history, there was no such thing as the written word. And even when reading and writing were invented, most people didn't know how to read.

Our ancestors divided the year into the four seasons. With each season came a change in the environment and the availability of food. Thus, the tasks of the people changed from season to season. But, without calendars, how did they know in good time when the season was about to change? Plant your seeds at the wrong time and your crop could fail. Sail at the wrong time and you probably wouldn't come back. The answer is: they used the stars.

As the Earth orbits around the Sun, our view of the surrounding stars changes. Every season, every month of the year has its own pageant of stars rising in the dawn sky. Thus, each season has its own 'sign' in the sky. For most cultures – and we are talking about the Northern Hemisphere here – the most important was the sign of spring. It was the herald of the return of life on earth following the harsh Northern Hemisphere winter. This sign was the dawn rising of a cluster of stars known as the Pleiades.

From about 5,000 years ago, the dawn rising of the Pleiades, also known as the Seven Sisters and the Food Bringer, was the herald of spring and the New Year for all of the peoples of Europe and Asia. Great temples such as the Parthenon were aligned to their rising.

The dawn rising of the Pleiades also signaled the opening of the sea lanes and the beginning of sea trade for that year. It was a sign that it was safe to undertake a sea voyage. They were known to mariners as the Sailors Stars. When the stars rose and the sea lanes opened, it was customary to release pigeons. Consequently, the Pleiades also became known as the Hen and Chicks.

When the migrations into the Pacific began, the Polynesians took this New Year tradition with them. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pleiades are known as Matariki (Little Eyes), and to this day their rising in the dawn in June heralds the beginning of the Māori New Year.

Unichem
Cuba Mall Pharmacy
HUB
Celebrate Matariki by looking after you and your whānau's health
Taking bookings now for Flu Vaccinations, Covid Boosters, HPV, Shingles and Whooping cough
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www.health.govt.nz/measles
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Matariki – Dark Sky Star-spangled getaway

Tucked away in the heart of Tōtaranui Queen Charlotte Sound, Bay of Many Coves is a five-star resort where natural beauty, adventure, and luxury converge. Reopening for a new season this August, the lodge is a sanctuary in every sense, offering guests the opportunity to relax and nourish themselves in the heart of winter.

The secluded sanctuary sits amongst native bush in its own private bay. It will come as no surprise that stargazing is one of the most popular guest activities. Whether from your own personal balcony, down on the beach, or on the walk back from one of the two delicious onsite restaurants, visitors will be treated to a canvas of stars above them.

The well-appointed and thoughtfully designed rooms are the perfect place to relax and recharge. Private and inclusive of everything you may need during your stay, they're designed to make guests feel a world away. For meals, choose between The Kumatage Restaurant, which is open all day serving up breakfast, lunch, and dinner made from fresh, local ingredients, and The Foredeck Restaurant, a fine dining and wine experience. The Quarterdeck Lounge serves as another guest space perfect for an afternoon aperitif.

Other amenities include the Miritu Day Spa, paddleboard and kayak rentals, a games and resort library, dinghies and moorings, and, of course, five-star Kiwi hospitality from the smiling staff. Enjoy a luxury vacation nestled beneath the stars in the Marlborough Sounds at Bay of Many Coves.

Starry-eyed this Matariki

Auckland's planetarium Te Whatu Stardome is marking Matariki 2026 with a month-long programme of astronomy, storytelling, live music, wellbeing experiences, and community events, culminating in the return of its popular free Matariki Open Day on Friday the 10th of July.

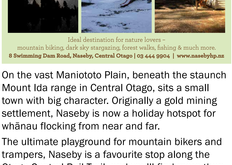
Central to the programme is *Matariki – Ngā Whetū o te Tau Hou / The Stars of the New Year*, Te Whatu Stardome's signature planetarium show exploring the Matariki star cluster and its significance in Aotearoa and te ao Māori.

Free live performances will feature some of New Zealand's most acclaimed musical talents, among them Nganeko, Greatsouth, Mara TK + Iris Little, and Jordyn with a Why. If you're seeking something more contemplative, join a guided meditation session with Kristina Cavit MNZM of The Kindness Institute, held on selected Sunday mornings. Through cosmic visuals, guided reflection, and sound, these sessions weave together hauora, whakapapa, stillness, and wonder.

The Open Day on the 10th will offer free 20-minute screenings of the Matariki planetarium throughout the day. Sessions are free but ticketed, so booking ahead is recommended. From the 8th to the 12th of July, visitors are also invited to experience the sounds and feel of te taiao (environment) on a self-guided hīkoi to the tihi (summit) of Maungakiekie One Tree Hill, timed to see the Matariki cluster rising just before dawn.

See what's on at Te Whatu Stardome Observatory & Planetarium and book at stardome.org.nz/Matariki.

Slice of paradise



On the vast Maniototo Plain, beneath the staunch Mount Ida range in Central Otago, sits a small town with big character. Originally a gold mining settlement, Naseby is now a holiday hotspot for whānau flocking from near and far.

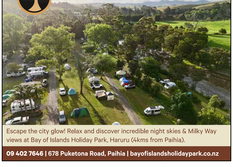
The ultimate playground for mountain bikers and trampers, Naseby is a favourite stop along the Otago Central Rail Trail, and you'll find more than 50 kilometres of mountain biking trails through Naseby Recreation Area.

Naseby Holiday Park is a spectacular 17-acre destination on the edge of the recreation area and adjacent to a stunning summer swimming dam. Owned by locals Beth and Mike Connell, it offers charming cottages and cabins –including two original miners' cottages built in 1893 – alongside powered and non-powered sites.

Whether it's winter and you can see your breath in the air, or it's summer and the temperatures have soared, families can make the most of the great outdoors; hiking and swimming in the heat or curling, ice skating, and luging in the cold at the Maniototo Adventure Park, all before coming back to home base at the Naseby Holiday Park.

No matter the season, Naseby is proudly recognised as part of the Dark Sky Community with Dark Sky International. What better way to finish off a day at Naseby Holiday Park than with a glass of wine, gazing up at the celestial heavens to watch the Milky Way arc across the southern skies? Book in today, the Connells can't wait to invite you to their little slice of paradise.

Winterless north



The Bay of Islands is true paradise. Rich in history, culture, and dotted with countless subtropical islands, the region is the perfect place for nature lovers, water enthusiasts, and history buffs alike.

The Bay of Islands Holiday Park is the perfect location to set up sticks before exploring the area. Positioned between Paihia and Kerikeri, it has an array of accommodation that caters to all needs, whether you're after a fully furnished cabin, a powered site to park up your caravan, or a spot to pitch your tent. With communal kitchens and bathrooms for bunkers and campers, a BBQ and pizza oven, laundry facilities, and an outdoor pool, the holiday park offers 3.1 hectares of space to relax, enjoy, and explore.

The Far North District is designated as an official Aspiring Place for DarkSky International certification. Rugging up and sitting beside a firepit on the banks of the Waitangi River at the Bay of Islands Holiday Park is the perfect evening activity when visiting the winterless north over the next few months. With the sky pulsing with stars, and the sounds of the river rushing close by, it really is a special place for discovering the constellations that hang over the north of Aotearoa.

Bay of Islands Holiday Park is also a proud supporter of the TimeOut Charitable Trust, providing a sanctuary for people with incurable illnesses to relax on their ample grounds and experience the unique beauty and heritage of the north.

Matariki – Dark Sky

Astrological inspiration

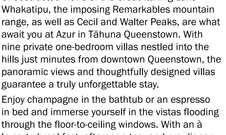
Carved over millions of years by glacial waters, the Ahuriri Valley is located in golden, tussocky highlands surrounded by dramatic mountainous landscapes. On the edge of an International Dark Sky Reserve, the area offers some of the most extraordinary outlooks of the night sky in the Southern Hemisphere.

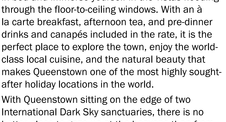
Guests at The Lindis can witness the constellations wheeling across the sky from the luxurious comfort of the lodge, an architectural marvel that blurs the boundaries between indoors and out, moving with the contours of the valley. The thoughtfully designed accommodation offers private suites and pods to immerse guests in the rugged, high-country environment. Guests dine on contemporary, seasonal New Zealand cuisine, crafted by head chef Guillaume Laurent using locally sourced ingredients.

This winter, between the 6th of July and the 31st of August, Lindis are offering an opportunity to gaze up at the wintry skies through their *Under The Stars* experience. Visitors receive complimentary guided stargazing, an evening spent beside an outdoor firepit drinking mulled wine watching the sun disappear behind the Southern Alps, and dining in the dark, a multi-course dinner served in the softly lit Great Hall. Additional experiences include private guided stargazing using high-powered telescopes, a private astrophotography workshop, and a twilight champagne and caviar experience at a secluded private dining space.

Every aspect of your stay at Lindis has been thoughtfully designed to inspire and to slow the pace of the day, allowing visitors to connect with one another and with the natural beauty of the valley.

A midwinter escape





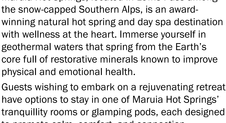
Unobstructed views of the breathtaking Lake Whakatipu, the imposing Remarkables mountain range, as well as Cecil and Walter Peaks, are what await you at Azur in Tāhuna Queenstown. With nine private one-bedroom villas nestled into the hills just minutes from downtown Queenstown, the panoramic views and thoughtfully designed villas guarantee a truly unforgettable stay.

Enjoy champagne in the bathtub or an espresso in bed and immerse yourself in the vistas flooding through the floor-to-ceiling windows. With an à la carte breakfast, afternoon tea, and pre-dinner drinks and canapés included in the rate, it is the perfect place to explore the town, enjoy the world-class local cuisine, and the natural beauty that makes Queenstown one of the most highly sought-after holiday locations in the world.

With Queenstown sitting on the edge of two International Dark Sky sanctuaries, there is no better place to gaze up at the heavens than from up high on the hill, away from light pollution and framed by the rugged mountains and glistening lake. Have a drink from the wine list, light the fire, and cosy up on the deck or beside the window to witness the cosmic show as the sun goes down and the stars come out.

With unsurpassed hospitality designed to ensure your stay is seamless, Azur is the perfect place to relax, unwind, and enjoy a midwinter escape.

A wellness reset



Maruia Hot Springs, located in Lewis Pass among the snow-capped Southern Alps, is an award-winning natural hot spring and day spa destination with wellness at the heart. Immerse yourself in geothermal waters that spring from the Earth's core full of restorative minerals known to improve physical and emotional health.

Guests wishing to embark on a rejuvenating retreat have options to stay in one of Maruia Hot Springs' tranquillity rooms or glamping pods, each designed to promote calm, comfort, and connection to nature. With a focus on full relaxation and presence, there are various activities on offer, including guided sessions in Aotearoa's largest sauna, different types of yoga and Pilates led by resident instructors, thermal showers, a steam room, and walks through the stunning forests that surround the place.

Maruia is a 90-minute drive from Christchurch. Its seclusion allows guests to switch off and gaze up at the star-laden sky without any light pollution. The sky feels only just out of reach due to the elevation of the hot springs, making it that much easier to breathe, and connect to self and your surroundings.

Sustainability is central to the ethos at Maruia, with the sauna, heating, and light run by electricity that is produced onsite by their very own hydropower generator. Whether you're seeking a peaceful escape, a wellness reset, or a moment to simply breathe, Maruia offers an experience that feels both grounding and unforgettable.

Rest and recharge

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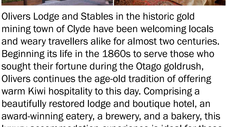

Olivers Lodge and Stables in the historic gold mining town of Clyde have been welcoming locals and weary travellers alike for almost two centuries. Beginning its life in the 1860s to serve those who sought their fortune during the Otago goldrush, Olivers continues the age-old tradition of offering warm Kiwi hospitality to this day. Comprising a beautifully restored lodge and boutique hotel, an award-winning eatery, a brewery, and winery, this luxury accommodation experience is ideal for those seeking a midwinter escape wedged between snow-capped mountains beside the mighty Clutha River in the breathtaking Otago landscape.

Recognised as one of Central Otago's most significant historic sites, Olivers Lodge and Stables buildings have been carefully restored, introducing modern comforts while at the same time preserving its heritage. The stables rooms maintain their schist walls and stable doors, while the lodge offers elegant interiors subtly blended with old-world charm.

With Central Otago being one of the finest locations for viewing the star-laden southern skies, Olivers is the perfect spot to cosy up and seek out Matariki and other familiar constellations. Residing in lodgings that are so rich in heritage, one can't help but feel connected to those who came before, knowing that travellers of old looked up at the same night sky, seeking comfort within the very same rooms. Except today, every room comes with luxurious amenities and a freshly baked breakfast served each morning in the 135 year-old schist-walled dining room.

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Matariki – Kaikōura

The rhythm of waves

Sometimes the holidays we long for aren't about going further, they're about finding the place that helps us feel more grounded.

In Kaikōura, something shifts. Perhaps it's the way the mountains rise dramatically from the sea, the rhythm of waves meeting the shore, or the quiet awe of seeing a whale surface in the wild. Maybe it's the stillness found beneath vast, star-filled skies, or the simple pleasure of exceptional food shared in an extraordinary setting.

Kaikōura is a place that settles a restlessness you didn't realise you were carrying. A place where adventure and calm exist side by side. Where one moment might be spent soaring above the coastline, the next slowing to savour the silence.

For Kiwis seeking a holiday that feels both meaningful and memorable, Kaikōura offers an escape that restores as much as it inspires. The most extraordinary journeys aren't always the ones that take you furthest from home, but the ones that bring you back to yourself.

Luxury with a view

The Fairways at Ocean Ridge offers luxury accommodation in Kaikōura. Replete with one and two-bedroom fully furnished, self-contained spacious apartments, it is the perfect place to stay when visiting Kaikōura and its picturesque surrounds.

Built to reflect the bold natural environment, these luxury suites are suitable for all needs, whether you're after a quiet weekend escape, a base for your Kaikōura adventures, a gathering with friends and whānau, or a romantic getaway.

Hemmed in by the Southern Alps and the Pacific Ocean, where seals lounge on the rocks and whales migrate along the horizon, there is plenty to see and do in Kaikōura. In 2024 it was recognised as an International Dark Sky Sanctuary, and visitors can gaze up to the star-laden heavens from the comfort of their apartment, spotting whales by day and shooting stars by night.

With jetted tubs and cosy indoor fires, what better place to stay this winter than The Fairways Ocean Ridge?

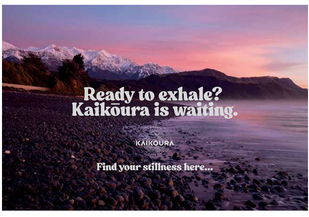
The pub that has it all

Strawberry Tree Kaikōura Limited is a venue steeped in local history, where generations of family fishing knowledge and Kaikōura's rich maritime heritage are proudly displayed through fascinating memorabilia.

Drawing on the family's long involvement in the fishing industry and a passion for quality local produce, the kitchen showcases the freshest local kaimoana, alongside premium steaks, burgers, and some of the region's best fish and chips. The in-house smoker produces a delicious range of carefully crafted smoked meats.

Recognised as the Number One Gastropub in the Upper South Island in 2024 and 2025, Strawberry Tree has earned a reputation for food worth travelling for. In winter, settle beside the indoor fire with a glass of wine. During summer, relax in the shady beer garden and soak up the laid-back coastal charm.

Built on generations of fishing heritage and genuine hospitality, Strawberry Tree is a place where great food, local history, and a welcoming atmosphere come together.



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Matariki – Greytown

A very country Christmas

Each year, Greytown lights up during these dark winter months, filling the streets with glowing lanterns, crackling braziers, festive food and drinks, and an exciting itinerary of markets, workshops, performances, and spectacles.

On until the 25th of July, the New Zealand Festival of Christmas has a brand-new theme: A Very Country Christmas, which celebrates all the talent and small-town hospitality that Greytown has to offer.

Every weekend, snow will fall on Main Street between 6 and 8pm, giving visitors the white Christmas they always dreamed of – without having to pay the airfares. Head around the corner to the Truck Stop, a hub of tasty goodness serving up street food from around the world. Each weekend there will also be a gin garden bar at The White Swan, painting for the kids at the Greytown Art Gallery, and so much more!

Special events include the much-loved Illumination Night Walk, on between the 3rd and the 12th of July. The dazzling interactive light show brings the Cobblestones Museum grounds to life with colour-changing pathways and magical soundscapes. On Saturday the 18th, follow luminous paths before gathering around a bonfire, toasting marshmallows, and watching giant hot air balloons glow in time to the music at Molewood Orchard.

Other events include comedy nights, improv shows, culinary experiences, and arts and crafts workshops. The next five weeks are jam-packed with Christmas delights, so get your Christmas jumper ready and wander down Main Street with friends and whānau!

Bustling little village

Photo by Jet Productions.

Only an hour away from Wellington, Kereitāone Greytown is a charming, bustling little village with a lot going on. Rich in heritage, its Victorian main street is home to a plethora of cafés, restaurants, artisanal shops, and high-end fashion stores. In a region famed for its weather, Greytown has stunning dry summers and crisp winters. It's no wonder more and more people head there to raise a family or retire, or just to have a weekend getaway. Located in South Wairarapa, it's the perfect base when visiting the famous local wineries, with Martinborough under 20 minutes down the road, and plenty of boutique accommodation options.

The locals take pride in their town. Its leafy green streets and heritage buildings are all kept in good nick so that visitors can experience its original, rural charm. They're a spirited and tight-knit community who make moving and visiting there not only about the place, but about the people as well. They fill the Greytown calendar with exciting events, including The New Zealand Festival of Christmas, on now until the end of July; the Greytown Heritage House and Garden Tour; and the monthly Greytown Country Market.

Whether you're after a getaway or want to explore the sites with the kids, Greytown is a treasure trove full of beautiful scenery, lovely cuisine, and even better people. Take a trip over the hill and fall in love with the town yourself – who knows, you might decide you'd like to stay.

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Buy, build, renovate

Solutions from the sky

If there is one thing Wellingtonians have learned over the last few years, it's that we cannot take our drinking water for granted. While the city has made strides in patching up the 3,000-kilometre network of pipes, our infrastructure is still deeply fragile.

With the shift to the new regional water entity kicking in this July, water charges are moving off council rates and onto separate bills, bringing an average increase of over 13 percent for the 2026/27 year, amounting to an average of $2,390 per annum.

We need to start viewing water resilience as a household responsibility. A garden water tank system from The Tank Guy offers a brilliant, two-pronged solution to our current crisis. First, it allows you to harvest rainwater and offset water bills. Second, a tank provides a massive reservoir of emergency water right in your backyard.

The hesitation many have with rainwater harvesting is water quality. Roofs collect debris which can spoil the water and render it useless. But when it rains, a first flush diverter system captures the initial run-off from your roof in a separate chamber so that the remaining clean rainwater flows into your main storage tank, ensuring the water is significantly cleaner and safer.

Installing a water tank requires an upfront cost. But the city's infrastructure is old and our bills are rising. It's time we stopped waiting for the city to fix the water crisis and started catching the solution as it falls from the sky.

Warm up and chill out

Those mid-winter mornings make it hard to get out of bed. It's still dark outside, the air is euphemistically 'crisp', and the comfort of your warm winter sheets makes it difficult to get up and at 'em. But as we enter the darkest and coldest time of the year, there are ways to prepare your home to ensure it is warm and insulated, making that transition a little – no, *a lot* – more pleasant.

Two of the main culprits that prevent a house from heating up are old windows and old doors, which let out the heat and allow a sneaky cold draft to slip in. A warm, dry home free of condensation and mould has double-glazed windows and doors that properly seal to trap in the heat – though be sure you open them every now and then to keep the air fresh!

Making sure the walls, ceiling, and floor are well insulated is essential to keeping heat inside your home and ultimately, the costs down. Once you've done the necessary maintenance around the house, there are many suitable heating systems that are sustainable and efficient, be it a solar-powered heat pump, a small electrical fan heater, a dehumidifier, or an open fireplace – just order the firewood in advance and get the chimney checked!

In a warm home, winter can be the perfect time for reflection, preserving energy, and spending time with people you love. You know what they say, a warm home is a happy home!

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Barry Carr, the main man behind Eclipse Electrical, is dedicated to ensuring Wellington homes are at their best and brightest. Having been a fully qualified and accredited sparky for years, and with plenty of insider knowledge gained from working on all types of homes across the capital, Barry and his team are equipped to help you with whatever electrical solution you need, no matter where you are in the Greater Wellington region.

Eclipse Electrical can help you upgrade to a new heat pump or HVAC system that saves you money with its energy efficiency. They can install security systems, perform small electrical repairs, update switchboards and lighting, and test and tag your appliances.

With a reputation built on customer satisfaction and long-lasting partnerships, what sets Eclipse Electrical apart is their dependability and five-star service. Thanks to Barry's friendly and communicative approach to every job, he exceeds expectations time and time again.

Wild, foot-stomping, haunting

If your home has Klass Fascia/internal guttering, you may already be exposed to hidden water damage, even if you can't see it yet. Originally installed for its clean appearance, the concealed design creates serious structural risk when overflow occurs.

Traditional external spouting overflows outward, but Klass Fascia overflows inward into soffits, wall cavities, insulation, and timber framing. When heavy rainfall or blockages occur, water can track directly into the building envelope.

At Gutterite, we specialise in removing high-risk internal gutter systems and installing modern, durable external spouting suitable for New Zealand conditions. Water ingress from failed Klass Fascia gutters causes severe internal and external damage. We do not patch problems, we eliminate them. External guttering overflows safely outward, is fully visible and easy to maintain, protects framing and foundations, and eliminates concealed water traps. External systems are simpler, stronger, and designed for long-term protection.

Smooth sailing

For legal services from Wellingtonians, for Wellingtonians, Sievwrights Law is the first port of call. The experienced local team have cultivated a reputation for excellence and are committed to helping their community with all personal, commercial, and property-related legal needs.

When it comes to wills, power of attorney (POA), and elder law, Sievwrights can help you get your affairs in order. It's crucial to sort these matters before they're needed to ensure everyone is on the same page and that proceedings run smoothly.

With a deep understanding of the complexities of the New Zealand legal system and a tailored approach for each client, they prioritise communication and listening to your specific needs and concerns, to help you achieve the desired result. Sievwrights Law provide peace of mind, helping you understand all the technical details so that you feel in control of your interests. Find out more at www.sievwrights.co.nz

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The magic inside

It is a tradition among young witches to leave their families on the night of a full moon and fly off into the world to practise their craft. The young witch-in-training Kiki moves to the seaside town of Koriko with her sarcastic black cat Jiji, where she experiences the growing pains of her newfound independence and responsibility.

To pay her way, Kiki gets a job at a delivery service, flying goods throughout the town on her broom. But as Kiki adjusts to her new responsibilities, she experiences burnout and starts to lose her magical powers. A beautiful coming of age story, *Kiki's Delivery Service* is a 1989 cult-classic from legendary filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki (*Spirited Away*, *My Neighbour Totoro*) and Studio Ghibli that is full of charm, loveable characters, and powerful life advice.

Studio Ghibli has captivated the hearts and minds of generations. To showcase the authentic craftsmanship of their intricate, hand-drawn animations, Crunchyroll has remastered *Kiki's Delivery Service* in 4K, and it will be screening exclusively in IMAX cinemas this month. On at Event Cinemas Queensgate in Lower Hutt between the 2nd and the 5th of July, there will be an option each day to view the film in the original Japanese with English subtitles or a dubbed English version.

Head along these school holidays to witness the colourful magic that is the Studio Ghibli universe and to watch how Kiki has inspired people the world over to cultivate their passions.

Explosively expansive

From deep within the Blue Mountains of Australia comes an experience so genre bending, so boundary pushing, so explosively expansive that San Fran audiences will be transported to a world far beyond their imagination on the 24th of July.

The award-winning Australian electronic duo Hermitude comprises Gusto and Dubs, who have continually evolved their craft, blending hip-hop roots with expansive electronic production that has resonated across headphones, dancefloors, and festival stages worldwide. Breaking through internationally with their 2012 album *HyperParadise*, it was the Flume remix of their title track that amassed more than 200 million streams. Their follow-up album *Dark Night Sweet Light* debuted at number one on the ARIA Charts and went gold in New Zealand, with single *The Buzz* becoming a global hit.

The collaborative spirit of Hermitude extends throughout their catalogue, having worked with artists such as Kimbra, Bibi Bourelly, and BJ The Chicago Kid, while remixing tracks for the likes of ODESZA and Alison Wonderland.

Across their eight albums, Hermitude continues to push into new sonic territory, all the while maintaining the experimental edge that has defined their career. Their new record, aptly titled *EIGHT*, is inspired by all things uptempo, with a mix of techno, drum and bass, and UK garage defining their new sound.

Venture forth with Hermitude to explore their globally celebrated catalogue and forward-thinking club sound.

Silliness in spades

Photo by Max Balloch.

Two very special birthday parties are happening at once, and you're invited! It's Wellington Repertory Theatre's centenary year *and* Toybox Theatre's big 1-0! To celebrate, young audiences and the young at heart will get the opportunity to meet Mrs Llama, some very pesky rabbits, and more zany animals on a feel-good theatrical adventure these school holidays.

Mrs Llama the Very Kiwi Farmer sees our titular hero try to keep her lively New Zealand farm under control as she brings a collection of beloved stories to life, each with a playful Kiwi twist. It stars a cast made up entirely of children, all six of whom are excited to deliver surprises, silliness, shenanigans, and farmyard mayhem in *spades*!

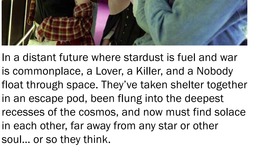
The original script was written by Jamie Byas, who brought the idea for Toybox Theatre – which began as Playbox Theatre by Riccarton Players in Christchurch and was then adopted by Globe Theatre in Dunedin – to Wellington in association with Wellington Repertory Theatre.

"I love working with and for children", Jamie says. "It's so different to other types of theatre in that it reflects the energy of children while setting up the next generation of theatre-lovers. It's rewarding and motivating to champion this".

In their centenary season, Wellington Repertory is proud to support *Mrs Llama the Very Kiwi Farmer* as they nod to a history of producing children's theatre for many years until the late 1990s.

Gryphon Theatre is the setting of Mrs Llama's very Kiwi farm: catch this *hay*-larious show from the 6th to the 10th of July.

Saddle up!



In a distant future where stardust is fuel and war is commonplace, a Lover, a Killer, and a Nobody float through space. They've taken shelter together in an escape pod, been flung into the deepest recesses of the cosmos, and now must find solace in each other, far away from any star or other soul… or so they think.

Inbetween Nowhere and Everything is a play about cowboys in space that sees the Lover (Alex Quinn), Killer (Zoe Harris), and Nobody (Simon Ulm) share songs and stories around the proverbial campfire. With the help of the enigmatic and shadowy THEM (Miren Welsh Ahipene Duffin), they unveil their pasts and true selves, learning that perhaps their lives were not as separate as they once believed. Soon they must choose who they'll become when the chips are down.

Exploring the traditional tropes of the old west – identity, survival, camaraderie – through a sci-fi lens, this ambitious and thought-provoking debut features elements of live music and dance within the structure of a one-room play. It comes courtesy of emerging Wellington theatre maker Nathaniel Smith and In the Mo' Theatre Co., a brand-new company of up-and-coming local practitioners. With a cast and crew comprised largely of theatre graduates from Te Herenga Waka and Te Auaha, this bold and original new project aims to showcase dynamic new talent as it blasts off at BATS Theatre from the 7th to the 11th of July.

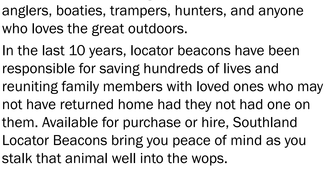
Homing beacon

With winter being the peak season for hunting rusa, chamois, and tahr, it's important to have the right equipment so if things go wrong or the weather packs in, you can call for help and get home safely.

Southland Locator Beacons take the 'search' out of search and rescue with over 50 outlets offering Aotearoa's most popular personal locator beacon, the ACR ResQLink 375, and the very latest models available online. Designed to fit in the palm of your hand, this small but mighty rescue beacon is for anglers, boaties, trampers, hunters, and anyone who loves the great outdoors.

In the last 10 years, locator beacons have been responsible for saving hundreds of lives and reuniting family members with loved ones who may not have returned home had they not had one on them. Available for purchase or hire, Southland Locator Beacons bring you peace of mind as you stalk that animal well into the wops.

Epic expo



We're back at the Lower Hutt Events Centre this July for the NZDA Hunting and Wildlife Expo, and we'd love to see you there.

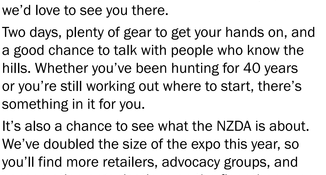
Two days, plenty of gear to get your hands on, and a good chance to talk with people who know the hills. Whether you've been hunting for 40 years or you're still working out where to start, there's something in it for you.

It's also a chance to see what the NZDA is about. We've doubled the size of the expo this year, so you'll find more retailers, advocacy groups, and conservation organisations on the floor than ever before.

Come along, have a yarn, and make a weekend of it from Saturday the 25th to Sunday the 26th of July. Kicking off on the Friday then happening alongside the expo is the NZDA 78th National Conference 2026, this year with the theme of Hunting's Future: Access, Value, Responsibility.

Book into the NZDA Hunting and Wildlife Expo and find out more at www.deerstalkers.org.nz

Wild deer meat donation



For many years, hunters around New Zealand have quietly supported their local communities by donating wild game meat.

The NZ Game Animal Council, Wellington NZDA, Wild Game Recovery Trust, and Cameron Harrison Butchery are working together to help deliver wild game meat to families and communities in need across the Wellington region.

The project is part of Game Changer NZ, a nationwide meat donation initiative led by the Wild Game Recovery Trust. The trust coordinates hunters, butchers, and foodbanks, while using the Game Animal Council's Hunt and Share online platform to provide confidence, transparency, and traceability throughout the process.

These organisations will be at the NZDA Hunting and Wildlife Expo in Lower Hutt on the 25th and 26th of July. Come on down and find out more about wild game meat donation. To learn more, visit nzgac.org.nz/hunt-and-share

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WWW.DEERSTALKERS.ORG.NZ

Hunting and fishing

Broaden your hunting horizons

Going hunting? Why not pack the rod too? Here in Aotearoa New Zealand, we are well and truly spoilt. Not only does this stunning country have excellent game, it also has some of the most sought-after trout fishing in the world. And more often than not you'll find both in the same place. Adding angling to your hunting and gathering repertoire is an excellent way of immersing yourself in the great outdoors.

Once you get a fresh water fishing licence, the next thing to tick off the list is finding the perfect fishing spot. The Fish & Game New Zealand website has a wealth of information on the best locations to cast your line.

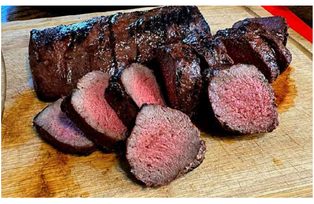
Whether you are completely new to angling or simply looking to make the most of trips into deer country, the website provides a wealth of practical information to help you get started.

One of its greatest strengths is the range of easy-to-use tools available to anglers. Visitors can learn about licence options, fishing methods, essential gear, regulations, and freshwater species, all in one place. Detailed regional fishing regulations help anglers understand where they can fish and what rules apply, ensuring they stay compliant while protecting New Zealand's valuable fisheries.

The Fish & Game access mapping system is particularly useful for hunters. It allows users to identify fishing waters, access points, public access routes, boat ramps, live river-flow information, and other useful features. This makes it easy to locate trout waters that may be close to a hunting block or along the route to a favourite deer stalking destination.

For hunters already carrying a rifle into the hills, adding a fishing rod can open up a whole new dimension of outdoor adventure. The Fish & Game NZ website provides everything needed to turn a chance encounter with a promising river or lake into a successful trout-fishing experience.

Fruits of the hunt



With the hunting season in full swing, it's important that you plan ahead to convert the beast into something that'll fit neatly in the deep freeze to feed the family.

Dave's Homekill is a small, locally owned, Marton-based business that offers professional butchery services across Whanganui, Rangitīkei, and Manawatū. Dave and his team can process your venison, pork, and waterfowl, giving you back your own animal without you having to do the grizzly stuff. The crew operate to the highest standard, following strict hygiene guidelines and packaging everything up professionally.

Dave's Homekill not only tests the quality of the meat but also slice it up to your favourite cuts. It's well known that homekill and hunted animals are often healthier and tastier due to the quality of the animal's life, ageing and butchering techniques, freshness, and a stress-free slaughter process.

Serve your friends and whānau the fruits of the hunt with Dave's Homekill.

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Safety culture strong among New Zealand hunters

Photos courtesy of Matt Winter Photography.

The seven rules of fire safety – involving the storage, handling, transport, and shooting of firearms – should be engrained in every hunter's memory. But for those who might be in need of a quick brush up, the seven basic rules are: treat every firearm as loaded; always point firearms in a safe direction; chamber a cartridge only when ready to fire; identify your target beyond all doubt; check your firing zone; store and transport firearms and ammunition safely; and avoid alcohol and drugs when handling firearms.

New Zealand hunters take firearms safety seriously, but it only takes one mistake to ruin many people's lives, Te Tari Pūreke, the Firearms Safety Authority says.

The Firearms Safety Authority is proud to chair the Recreational Firearms Users Working Group, which was formed to align the important messaging of those involved in recreational hunting in New Zealand. This group consists of Fish & Game New Zealand, Game Animal Council, Mountain Safety Council, New Zealand Deerstalkers Association, Federated Farmers of New Zealand, Department of Conservation, and Te Tari Pūreke.

Partnerships manager for the Firearms Safety Authority, Ewan Kelsall, says recreational hunting is a big part of many New Zealanders' lives. "For all of us involved in the recreational firearms user group, we just want hunters to have a great time out in our wild places and then head home safely to their loved ones at the end of it."

To keep safe hunting top of mind, the Firearms Safety Authority has boiled their advice down to a few key reminders for hunters, including making a plan for your hunt and sticking to it; always treating every firearm as loaded; and always identifying your target beyond all doubt.

Ewan says research has shown that in 80 percent of big game hunting incidents that involve the misidentification of a target, the shooter and victim are members of the same hunting group.

"You can help avoid this by planning your hunt and hunting to your plan. If hunting in pairs and you lose sight of each other, or you are unsure of your location, stop hunting and re-establish contact and your position before moving on."

Ewan points out that deer hunters are lucky to be hunting in a time of high numbers in many places. Hunters don't need to be in a rush to shoot the first deer they see, there will always be another opportunity.

"All hunters get excited at the sight of a deer but don't let that lead to poor decision-making. Slow down and take a few deep breaths. Take your time to analyse the target. Whether you are using optical or thermal imaging devices, you must identify your target beyond all doubt before firing. If you have any doubt, then don't shoot. The best hunters follow the seven basic rules of firearms safety and insist that others with them do the same."

Got questions on firearms safety?

Come and talk with the Firearms Safety Authority team at the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association Hunting & Wildlife Expo.

25 & 26 July, Lower Hutt Events Centre.

firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz

Te Tari Pūreke
Firearms Safety Authority

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Puzzles

	9			7		4	8	
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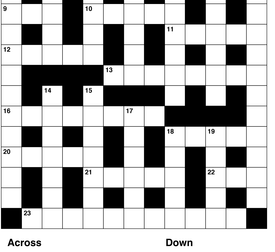


Across

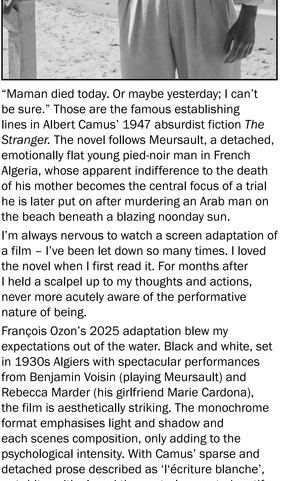
1 - Visually attractive (11)
9 - Pouch; enclosed space (3)
10 - Quantitative relation (5)
11 - Supernatural skill (5)
12 - Poetic verse (5)
13 - Announce publicly (8)
16 - Cloudy (8)
18 - Anxiety (5)
20 - Trees (anag); organic compound (5)
21 - Game of chance (5)
22 - Bitumen (3)
23 - Brevity in expressing oneself (11)

Down

2 - Needing to be scratched (5)
3 - Curt (5)
4 - More precisely (6)
5 - Organ of digestion (7)
6 - Country in South America (7)
7 - Stargazers (11)
8 - Factual TV program (11)
14 - Fear of heights (7)
15 - Sour in taste (7)
17 - Perfumes (6)
18 - Decorate (5)
19 - Entrance barriers (5)

The Stranger

M
122 Minutes
★★★★★
Reviewed by Isabella Smith



"Maman died today. Or maybe yesterday; I can't be sure." Those are the famous establishing lines in Albert Camus' 1947 absurdist fiction *The Stranger*. The novel follows Meursault, a detached, emotionally flat young pied-noir man in French Algeria, whose apparent indifference to the death of his mother becomes the central focus of a trial he is later put on after murdering an Arab man on the beach beneath a blazing noonday sun.

I'm always nervous to watch a screen adaptation of a film – I've been let down so many times. I loved the novel when I first read it. For months after I held a scalpel up to my thoughts and actions, never more acutely aware of the performative nature of being.

François Ozon's 2025 adaptation blew my expectations out of the water. Black and white, set in 1930s Algiers with spectacular performances from Benjamin Voisin (playing Meursault) and Rebecca Marder (his girlfriend Marie Cardona), the film is aesthetically striking. The monochrome format emphasises light and shadow and each scenes composition, only adding to the psychological intensity. With Camus' sparse and detached prose described as 'l'écriture blanche', or 'white writing', and the central, repeated motif of a blinding and oppressively hot sun, it was immediately obvious that a film adaptation could never have been in a colour format.

The novel received criticism due to its upholding of colonial views of indigenous Algerians as second-class citizens and its antipathetic treatment of Arab characters. The film, on the other hand, cleverly sets the story against the backdrop of French colonialism, giving a contemporary perspective on race and empire, and in some ways, challenging the absurdist backbone of the original text.

While the slow burn might be difficult for some to sit through, for me the pacing was fundamental to the atmosphere, enabling each scene to feel essential, layering one on top of the other and building to the crescendo of the trial and Meursault's subsequent sentence. The novel is short yet dense, hailed as a foundational text on absurdism that requires multiple readings. I found that the movie only added new depths to my understanding of the philosophical theory. Watching the film and reading the book calls the viewer's heart into question, which to me is always a sign of excellent art.

Feel free to get in touch with cartoonist Kate Garnyk at katykamf@gmail.com

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Reviews

Romeo & Juliet

Presented by New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
Michael Fowler Centre, 5th Jun 2026
Reviewed by Ruth Corkill

Li-Wei Qin. Photo by Hans Goh.

This evening's programme offers a carefully graded emotional journey, moving from introspective delicacy through virtuosic intensity to full-blooded theatrical sweep. Under Benjamin Northey, the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra navigates these shifts with clarity and purpose, allowing each work to establish its own atmosphere without losing an overarching sense of cohesion.

Ernnoth Young's *Dance Macabre* opens the concert, unfolding in soft pulses and drifting lines, creating an impression of something at cloud that would not feel out of place underscoring a turn-of-the-century period drama. The orchestration is luminous without ever becoming decorative, as the piece ease into silence, I hear murmurs ripple through the audience from "pretty, so pretty."

Samuel Barber's Cello Concerto provides a striking contrast, I didn't know the piece or soloist Li-Wei Qin prior to this performance but I felt hard for both and became enthralled within a few phrases. Barber's language is at once muscular and tender. There's a sense of forces in flux, repeling and aligning in turns as the music pitches through complexity and full-bodied romanticism, and in rare, sublime passages emulsifies intellect and sensuality into delicious combinations. Qin plays with a masterful ease as the concerto's taut rhythms and lyrical intensity demand no more overtly lyrical, sweeping gestures and back again. This intensity primes the ear beautifully for Sergei Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* selections. Heard in this context, the suite's rich harmonic language and dramatic contrasts feel especially meaty. Northey brings an additional degree of confidence and fluency to the Prokofiev and draws out the pleasure and flavours in the music. The programme includes well-loved excerpts alongside less familiar material, opening on the rich, self assured menace of the iconic *Montagues and Capulets*. Throughout, the strings produce carries much of the work's emotional and rhythmic weight with impressive stamina, catching the bite and precision required. Meanwhile, the brass and percussion relish Prokofiev's more dramatic edges, delivering passages of formidable power.

By the end of the evening, we are warm, nourished, and satisfied. This is a concert that understands how to sustain intelligence and interest, leaving the audience, quite simply, well fed.

Weenga

Written by Hariata Moriarty and Tamati Moriarty
Directed by Jim Moriarty and Regan Taylor
Toi Ara Arts Centre, 20th Jun 2026
Reviewed by Tanya Piejus

Photo by Stephen A Court.

The black-box performance space at the new Toi Ara Arts Centre on Market Lane is an appropriately dark and claustrophobic space for staging *Weenga*, a large part of which is set in the cramped confines of a police station holding cell. Even before we go in, directors Jim Moriarty and Regan Taylor are barking orders at us to follow their instructions and move when told as the cast move in unison through the space.

Penned by Moriarty's children, Hariata and Tamati, *Weenga* is a deeply relevant story of institutional racism against Māori performed by an energetic young cast through the lenses of rap and song. The talented Moriarty siblings also play the central characters of Connie and Gavin, a pair of squatts who have very different ways of expressing their whakapapa and culture.

National Music School candidate Connie finds herself at the police station with a serious knock to the head after Māori activist group owners Gwendoline and Gavin (a hilarious pairing of Myah Kwall and Malu Rata) object to her singing protest songs outside Uncle Rama's shop. Idealistic Grayson is brought in as her duty lawyer to help her deal with the trumped-up charges against her, her friend and social media influencer Peyton (a delightfully funny Brooke Wheeler) learns the real meaning of Tangata Tiriti as she seeks to shine light on Connie's unjust arrest.

The ensemble cast of nine expertly uses movement, dance, waiata, and a background of music beautifully provided by Tamati Moriarty on guitar to weave together this story with whakapapa and art. The belly laughs from the exaggerated Pākehā characters and the moments of wry humour offset the seriousness of the predicament and make her eventual fate more intensely emotional.

Importantly, the audience is invited for kai and korero with the cast and crew after the performance. There is much to ponder and unpick after 75 intense minutes, so the opportunity to do this communally is a welcome one.

The Marriage of Figaro

Presented by New Zealand Opera
St James Theatre, 17th Jun 2026
Reviewed by Ruth Corkill

Photo by Stephen A Court.

St James Theatre feels bright and cheerful tonight, already shrugging off Wellington's crisp winter chill as we prepare for a summer romp in an 18th-century country estate. Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* is an opera that never loses its ability to delight, packed with theatrical momentum and comic invention, yet finding moments to blossom into extraordinary beauty.

Conducted by James Judd, New Zealand Opera's production celebrates the work's subversive qualities, shifting attention ever further away from aristocratic dominance and towards the servants and women who drive the action. Director Lindy Hume has achieved this in simple and highly effective ways. The set is deliberately sparse, open the production, busy with tasks and bustling around the stage for the whole of the overture, and remain visible onstage throughout, as if ever-present in gossip.

This evokes a household thinking and acting together, an effect supported by the set design (Tracy Grant Lord). Modular transparent panels, varying palace and garden backdrops and light only suggest new spaces. They are used particularly well to allow considerable movement to remain visible to the audience from all angles. However, the stark white surfaces set against a dark backdrop also evoke the sun-drenched summer day in which the action unfolds.

The principal cast work with notable generosity. Their responsiveness to one another gives the performance a sense of spontaneity and flow. Julien Van Mellaerts is wonderfully comic and expressive as the Count, capturing both the character's arrogance and his underlying fragility with equal precision.

Felicity Ferkins is a standout as the Countess, her voice both powerful and gorgeously controlled. Every line is delivered with poise and emotional clarity, filling the space without ever losing intimacy. She's also a comic powerhouse, especially in the scenes with Cecilia Zhang's Cherubino, where she establishes an authentic, quietly charged connection that is both sensual and barely restrained. During the wedding scene she is entrancing as she dances a defiant pasodoble with Mellaerts.

Throughout, there is a palpable sense of shared momentum as the cast bring this intricate social world to life, ensuring the opera continues to feel vivid, generous, and completely entertaining.

Owk McGee

Written by Jack McGee
Directed by Campbell Wright
BATS Theatre, 23rd June 2026
Reviewed by Oliver Mander

We don't talk about money often enough in New Zealand. For something so critical and pervasive, conversations about money remain largely off-limits in polite company. Rightly or wrongly (usually wrongly), discussions are politicised rather than approached constructively.

It is refreshing to see Owk tackle this head on. The script unfolds across 12 linked scenes, each carrying one character forward from the scene before. This structure allows the play to explore differing ideas of financial success and struggle through a series of interwoven, character-driven stories. The flexible set (Bernin Smith) and fluid staging enable rapid transitions, maintaining the production's pace while the recurring characters create a strong sense of continuity. The result never feels episodic, a credit to Wright's assured direction.

Despite the seriousness of the subject matter, Owk uses audience engagement to humour, encouraging reflection on what is usually the most shared area of conversation. Jack McGee is the stage's only actor, and he carries the weight of the entire production. The flexible set (Bernin Smith) and fluid staging enable rapid transitions, maintaining the production's pace while the recurring characters create a strong sense of continuity. The result never feels episodic, a credit to Wright's assured direction.

Despite the seriousness of the subject matter, Owk uses audience engagement to humour, encouraging reflection on what is usually the most shared area of conversation. Jack McGee is the stage's only actor, and he carries the weight of the entire production. McGee's delivery is sharp and precise throughout, ensuring the humour never becomes overbearing. The strongest moments are those in which the characters measure love, obligation, fairness, generosity, and belonging. Even up-and-coming Spoken Word artist Sophie Kersten's lived experiences his own form of economic insecurity surfacing in a hoarder scene, echoing emotions experienced by Adria (Phoebe Caldeiro) as she is faced with an unexpected cost she cannot afford. Laura Abby (pictured) and Andie (Ava O'Brien) are central in examining the tension between the transactional and emotional dimensions of relationships. Their assured performances stood out amongst a very strong ensemble cast, albeit aided by some of the most thought-provoking lines in the script. Andie in particular invites us to reflect on the ability of transactional relationships; the transactions required to create order, separate from the underlying emotional connection that forms a deeper foundation. A relentless focus on the financials can suck the joy out of life, but enough 'order' is needed to create an accomplished business. Owc recognises the truth in both positions.

There is much more to this show that I can't cover here. I was left wanting more, not because the production was incomplete, but because it tackles subjects that are too often left unspoken. Bravo to Co. Arts Collective's Owk plays at BATS until the 27th of June. A must-see.

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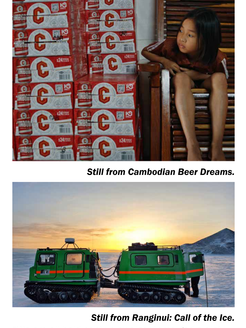
Raw, truthful, uncensored

by Isabella Smith



Still from Cambodian Beer Dreams.

Still from Ranginui: Call of the Ice.

"We are all held captive by algorithms, fed a diet of what the metaverse thinks we want to see", Doc Edge ambassador Judy Bailey says. "That's why this festival is so important to me. It breaks through the social media dross and offers raw, truthful, uncensored takes on an extraordinarily broad range of topics."

Doc Edge Festival is returning to Pōneke under the tagline F#&k the Algorithm from the 15th to the 26th of July, bringing an enormous programme bursting with compelling, powerful stories that capture a diversity of ideas, cultures, and human experiences. The festival celebrates both local and international filmmakers, displaying 49 feature films and 26 shorts – 28 of which are world premieres. Four winners at the Doc Edge Awards will be eligible for 2027 Oscar® consideration.

Documentary is a vast format. Historical, political, journalistic, therapeutic, poetic, it uncovers truths, challenges audiences, and serves as an important record of voices that would otherwise remain unheard. This year's programme features 10 categories that deal with topics ranging from dance to war, music to religion, mental health to conservation, corruption to artificial intelligence.

In the Crime & Conspiracy category, Laurits Nansen's *Cambodian Beer Dreams* explores the impact on local communities of major international breweries battling it out to dominate the rapidly growing beer market. In the Fearless Wahine category, Raha Shirazi's *A War on Women* weaves interviews, archival material, and rare footage taken from inside Iran to reveal 40 years of feminist resistance shaped by prison, exile, and courage across generations and borders.

The category Tūrangawaewae Where We Stand roots audiences in the land, rivers, and oceans that sustain us. *Ranginui: Call of the Ice* (Julia Sartorio) follows Māori astronomer Rangi Matamua and language expert Mataia Keepa after unexpected snowstorms force them to remain in Antarctica longer than they planned. What ensues is a real-time meeting of science and mātauranga Māori on a landscape of shifting ice, auroras, and storms.

Being Oneself features films that celebrate the courage, humour, and heart required to be yourself. *American Doctor* (Poh Si Teng) follows three physicians – Palestinian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian – turned unlikely friends, united by their oath to save lives in Gaza. *Kings of Venice* (S.D. Saltarelli, Sveinn Ingimundarson) looks at the motley paddle tennis community of Venice Beach as they struggle against the arrival of pickleball players who are overtaking their beloved courts.

Several screenings feature live Q&A sessions with filmmakers, giving audiences a chance to dive deeper into the stories. If you can't make it to the cinema, there are virtual cinema passes available. Head online to www.docedge.nz to peruse the programme and immerse yourself in the extraordinary works on offer.

War of the words

P-L-T: Porirua Little Theatre will soon put on a show G-U-A-R-A-N-T-E-E-D to leave you wanting more: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.

Created by Rebecca Feldman with music and lyrics by William Finn, a book by Rachel Sheinkin, and additional material by Jay Reiss, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is a Tony Award-winning musical. It is set in the geographically ambiguous Putnam Valley Middle School, where six delightfully quirky young competitors – Chip Tolentino (played by Clinton Meneses), Leaf Coneybear (Tara Canton), Logainne 'Schwartzy' Schwartzandgrubeniere (Sarah Holswich), William Barfée (Monèt Faifai-Collins), Marcy Park (Meg Tisdall), and Olive Ostrovsky (Corrie Milne) – bring their hopes and dreams to the podium.

Three equally quirky grownups – Official Bee Moderator Rona Lisa Peretti (Caitlin McDougall), Vice Principal and Official Word Pronouncer Douglas Panch (Allegra Canton), and Official Comfort Counsellor Mitch Mahoney (Addi Peters) – oversee the Bee as our tweenagers battle it out for glory, navigating impossible words, awkward adolescent moments, family pressures, and unexpected friendships along the way.

Directed by Rob Ormsby with musical direction from MC Peters and choreography by Nea Warmouth, Porirua Little Theatre's talented cast of nine bring this colourful collection of characters to life in a production that is equal parts hilarious and heartfelt.

Whether you're a champion wordsmith, a crossword E-N-T-H-U-S-I-A-S-T, a Wordler supreme, or simply looking for a great night out, head to *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* at Niblick Hall in Titahi Bay from the 2nd to the 11th of July. Bee there or bee square!

Loop-pedal wizardry

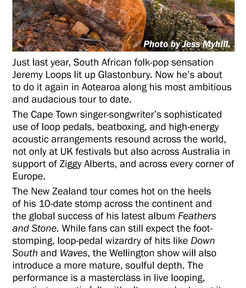


Photo by Jess Myhill.

Just last year, South African folk-pop sensation Jeremy Loops lit up Glastonbury. Now he's about to do it again in Aotearoa along his most ambitious and audacious tour to date.

The Cape Town singer-songwriter's sophisticated use of loop pedals, beatboxing, and high-energy acoustic arrangements resound across the world, not only at UK festivals but also across Australia in support of Ziggy Alberts, and across every corner of Europe.

The New Zealand tour comes hot on the heels of his 10-date stomp across the continent and the global success of his latest album *Feathers and Stone*. While fans can still expect the foot-stomping, loop-pedal wizardry of hits like *Down South* and *Waves*, the Wellington show will also introduce a more mature, soulful depth. The performance is a masterclass in live looping, merging acoustic folk with alt-pop and urban grit. With live debuts of tracks from the new album, attendees can howl to the anthemic single *Wolves* before the deeply personal *Deep Cuts* slices them to their emotional core.

Joining Loops in Te Whanganui-a-Tara is Australian folk artist Tom River, who is one half of the internationally celebrated duo Salt Tree. His new solo music marks him as a fresh and compelling new voice in Aotearoa.

For fans of local favourites Six60, Tiki Taane, Mako Road, and The Black Seeds, may we introduce you to Jeremy Loops, lighting up Meow Nui on the 8th of July with signature high-energy modern folk sound.

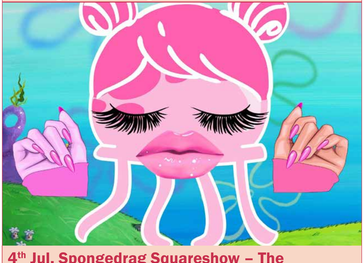
10th Jul. The Jungle Giants: *Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. The Jungle Giants have just released their newest record *Experiencing Feelings of Joy*. Careening from crushing personal loss to hopeful exuberance, the fifth album by the Aussie indie rock band will be played to a rip-roaring capital crowd with support from up-and-comers The Tullamarines and Tear Drive.

4th Jul. DJ Craze: *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. Five-time DMC World DJ Championship-winner DJ Craze is a heavyweight of global turntablism, renowned for pushing the boundaries of drum and bass, hip-hop, and bass music. His Wellington set will see him seamlessly weaving rap, dubstep, Miami bass, and D&B into a high-impact dancefloor experience.

11th Jul. Creepy Cute Market: *Thistle Hall, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 9:30am. Sweet meets spooky at this local market featuring all things, well… creepy and cute! Following previous years' success, 2026 brings a fresh lineup of talented local makers, artists, and creators with their most hauntingly charming treasures in tow. Find all things dark and delightful in store.
Artwork by Jenna Karl.

4th Jul. Queens of Comedy!: *Copthorne Hotel & Resort Solway Park, High Street, Masterton* – 7pm. Join award-winning drag queen and comedian Anita Wigl'it (*RuPaul's Drag Race Down Under*) and her two drag queen friends Betty and Nivalia for a night of dinner, drag, and hilarity! Enjoy a three-course meal over a fabulous show chocka with stand-up, sequins, and stilettos.

10th Jul. Date Night with Caitlin & Reuben: *The Fringe Bar, Allen Street, Te Aro* – 6:30pm. Comedy couple Caitlin Owen and Reuben Crisp are letting audiences tag along for their date night, which is an evening of standout stand-up, of course! This show is about anything and everything, but mostly about the delightful duo keeping you cackling.



4th Jul. Spongedrag Squareshow – The SpongeBob Drag Show: *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 9:30pm. Are you ready, Wellington? I can't *hear* you! Take a trip to Bikini Bottom from Ivy Bar & Cabaret to chum it with all the sea creatures in Neptune's kingdom, including King Markiss, MANNNTIS, Silica Gel, Neon Lux, Dickslexia, Rainn Bowes, and host Darryl Parton.

What's on

Wairarapa

5th Jul. Wairarapa Cinémathèque Presents: The Godfather: *Regent 3 Cinemas, Queen Street, Masterton* – 7.30pm. Experience one of the greatest mafia movies of all time on the big screen in all its gritty glory.

10th Jul. Celebrate Matariki: *Stonehenge Aotearoa, Ahiaruhe Road, Carterton* – 4:30pm. Celebrate the appearance of the Pleiades or Matariki star cluster while learning about its myths and legends at Stonehenge's Matariki festivities.

17th Jul. Prelude Presents: An Improvised Nativity: *The Offering, Main Street, Greytown* – 7:30pm. A heavily pregnant Mary and a doting Joseph embark on a road-trip – escaping an evil king, meeting three wise guys, and trying to deliver a holy baby. Think *Life of Brian* with a heavy dose of Kiwi humour!

Kāpiti

4th Jul. Kāpiti Choral Festival Gala Concert: *Te Raukura ki Kāpiti Coastlands Theatre, Raumati Road, Paraparaumu* – 5:30pm. Featuring Beachside Harmony and many other community choirs, this showcase will present a repertoire spanning hundreds of years and diverse cultures.

5th Jul. Circus of Illusion Magic Show: *Southward Theatre, Otaihanga Road, Paraparaumu* – 6pm. Illusionists, magicians, acrobats, and clowns come together for an out-of-this-world circus show.

5th Jul. Kāpiti Star Glaze 2026 Mid Winter Ceramics Festival: *Ōtaki Racing Club, Te Roto Road, Ōtaki* – various times. Art and the traditions of Matariki collide at this festival featuring demonstrations, workshops, stalls, music, food, and so much more.

Events

1st Jul. Stand Up, Sing Back: People Have the Power: *Two/Fiftyseven, Willis Street, Te Aro* – 7pm. Join local Wellington artists Ru Mundy and For Future's Sake Singers in a protest-singing creative, communal, political, and irreverent event.

2nd Jul. No One Rides Alone: *Penthouse Cinema and Café, Ohiro Road, Brooklyn* – 6:30pm. Can someone with Multifocal Motor Neuropathy ride the route of the Tour de France? Clive Phillips and four fellow veterans set out on the journey in this inspiring film.

5th Jul. Sci Fi Sundays: *Space Place at Carters Observatory, Salamanca Road, Kelburn* – 6pm. Screening cult classic science fiction films, this month's movies include *Escape from New York, Gremlins,* and *Highlander.*

11th Jul. Tamariki Takeover: *Wellington Museum, Queens Wharf, Wellington Waterfront* – 10am. Bring the whole whānau to Wellington Museum for a day packed with creativity, storytelling, play, and hands-on fun for all ages.

11th Jul. Love Local Expo: *Te Rauparaha Arena, Parumoana Street, Porirua* – 10am. Showcasing local products, services, crafts, and community services, the Love Local Expo celebrates Porirua's finest.

Music

4th Jul. The Warratahs: *The Thistle Inn, Mulgrave Street, Thorndon* – 4pm. One of New Zealand's most beloved country-rock bands comes to the capital for some good ole-fashioned noisemaking.

8th Jul. Jeremy Loops: *Meow Nui, Vivian Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. Known for his legendary live performances that blend acoustic folk, alt pop, and urban grit with loop-pedal wizardry, Jeremy Loops delivers a show that is part intimate storytelling and part stadium-sized party.

9th Jul. Porirua City Brass Presents: Casino Royale: *Linden Community Centre, Linden Avenue, Tawa* – 7:30pm. Step into a world of glamour, music, and high stakes at *Casino Royale* – a unique brass band show with singers, dancers, and actors.

10th Jul. Rag Poets Matariki Concert: *Hilltop House, Upland Road, Kelburn* – 7pm. The Rag Poets play songs of those "heady" Wellington hits from the 60s and 70s, as well as new material and covers by the likes of John Prine, Boz Scaggs, and Neil Young.

10th Jul. Grafix: *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 10pm. With a unique sound that blends high-energy dancefloor beats with intricate melodies and driving emotional, melancholic elements, Grafix brings the *DSD Album Tour* to Wellington.

10th; 18th Jul. Delaney Davidson: *St Peter's Village Hall, Paekākāriki; Meow, Wellington* – 7:30pm. A very sense of humour, some theatre of surrealism, and a voice classed as not conventionally beautiful all combine to breathe life into Davidson's 11th studio album *Baby Heavyweight.*

11th Jul. Postmodern Jukebox: *The Opera House, Manners Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. The highly acclaimed troupe of singers, dancers, and instrumentalists will present a time-twisted show – putting a retro spin on everything from 70s rock classics and 80s Britpop hits to current chart toppers and soundtracks.

11th Jul. Mark de Clive-Lowe: *Meow, Edward Street, Te Aro* – 8pm. New Zealand-born, Tokyo-based pianist, composer, and producer Mark de Clive-Lowe returns with *Remixes & Reimaginations,* a collection celebrating decades of boundary-pushing work across genres.

16th Jul. Come Together Presents: Radiohead: *St James Theatre, Courtenay Place, Te Aro* – 8pm. New Zealand's most successful rock series starring national legends will showcase Radiohead's *OK Computer* album cover to cover, with favourites and deep cuts to boot.

17th Jul. Orpheus Choir Wellington Presents: In The Bleak Midwinter: *Old St Paul's, Mulgrave Street, Thorndon* – 7pm. Experience the beauty and force of one of the capital's most respected choirs at this midwinter treat.

24th Jul. Hermitude: *San Fran, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 8:30pm. The Australian duo has spent more than a decade shaping the future of electronic and hip-hop music – catch their boundary-pushing sound, global collaborations, and explosive performance live.

Performance

1st–11th Jul. Wellington Repertory Theatre Presents: Mrs Fever: *Gryphon Theatre, Ghuznee Street, Te Aro* – various times. The eccentric Bliss family invite guests for a weekend at their country house, but nothing goes to plan. Mismatched personalities, outrageous antics, and misunderstandings create crack-up chaos.

2nd–11th Jul. Porirua Little Theatre Presents: The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee: *Nikītik Hall, Nikītik Lane, Titahi Bay* – various times. Six 'tween-agers' battle it out for the glorious title of spelling bee champion or perhaps a consolation juice box in this hilarious play.

3rd–11th Jul. The Tiwhas Present: Māreikura: *Circa Theatre, Taranaki Street, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. In this bold celebration of wāhine Māori, audiences will experience everything from celestial realms to the frontlines of history while meeting the trailblazing women who have left a beauty mark on the face of te ao!

4th–18th Jul. Land of the Long, Long Drive: *Circa Theatre, Taranaki Street, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. Wētā, Tuna, and Kārearea are mates of Gary the Glowworm, and are travelling to attend his rave-in-the-cave birthday party in this play about working together!

6th–10th Jul. Mrs Llama the Very Kiwi Farmer: *Gryphon Theatre, Ghuznee Street, Te Aro* – various times. In this silly show brought to Wellington by Toybox Theatre and supported by Wellington Repertory Theatre, Mrs Llama is trying to keep everything under control on her lively farm. But between some very pesky rabbits and a cast of unforgettable animal characters, things quickly spiral.

6th–11th; 16th Jul. KidzStuff Theatre for Children Presents: Shalakazap!: *Tararua Tramping Club Clubrooms, Wellington; Te Raukura ki Kāpiti, Paraparaumu* – various times. How will an apprentice MatheMagician and a Fire Chief from Kindle save the village from the Flabberfamish? With some MatheMagics, of course!

7th–11th Jul. Cirque du Mort Presents: InBetween Nowhere and Everything: *BATS Theatre, Kent Terrace, Te Aro* – 6:30pm. Set in a distant future where standard fuel is fuel and war is commonplace, a Lover, a Killer, and a Nobody find shelter within an escape pod flying into the deepest recesses of empty space.

11th Jul. Kotahitanga: A Māori Drag Extravaganza: *Ivy Bar & Cabaret, Cuba Street, Te Aro* – 9pm. Takatāpui drag artists The Tiwhas!, Myrtle Montgomery, King Cobra Tamekeihu, Veronica Heart, and 2026 Mx Capital winner Maria Richman will deliver a stratospheric Matariki performance.

12th–14th; 17th–18th Jul. The Pantoloons Present: Alice in Wonderland: *Southward Theatre, Paraparaumu; Wairarapa Events Centre, Carterton; Little Theatre, Lower Hutt* – various times. When curious Alice falls down the rabbit hole, she lands in the topsy-turvy world of Wonderland, where nothing makes sense and everything is silly!

16–18th Jul. In Between The Verses: *BATS Theatre, Kent Terrace, Te Aro* – 7pm. After years of chasing a music dream, Emma Rutherford presents a hilarious musical to face the question everyone with a creative degree eventually hears: "Have you thought about teaching?"

16–18th Jul. Royal New Zealand Ballet Presents: Winter Season: *St James Theatre, Courtenay Place, Te Aro* – various times. This programme of three exceptional works features the New Zealand premiere of Sir Frederick Ashton's *Birthday Offering,* performed as a centenary tribute to Australian ballet ballerina Rowena Jackson, at its heart.

16th–25th Jul. KAT Theatre Presents: Accidental Death of an Anarchist: *Cochran Hall, Cashmere Avenue, Khandallah* – various times. A play by Italian playwright Dario Fo, this gripping tale is based on the 1969 Piazza Fontana bombing and the death of anarchist Giuseppe Pinelli during a police interrogation.

21st–23 Jul. Suzy Edile Izzard performs Shakespeare's Hamlet: *Roundings Theatre, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington Waterfront* – various times. Izzard will play every character in *Hamlet* on a bare stage, letting Shakespeare's words and pure storytelling take the spotlight.

Galleries

Until 11th Jul. Portals: *Jhana Millers Gallery, Victoria Street, Te Aro.* Tom Mackie presents a new body of work crafted from reclaimed timbers, found objects, and polished brass, drawing attention to histories that remain embedded within the materials.

Until 18th Jul. Permanent Economy: *Wallish Gallery, Willis Street, Te Aro.* New and recent work by Ben Buchanan, Ruth Buchanan, Stella Corkery, and EXIST collide in a multi-disciplinary exhibition.

Until 6th Sep. Capital of Kai: *Te Waka Huia Wellington Museum, Queens Wharf, Wellington Waterfront.* Spanning 100 years of culinary history explores how Wellington developed a diverse palette of hospo treasures.

Festivals

15th–26th Jul. On Edge: *Various locations and times in Wellington.* Discover 75 films, 12 immersive projects, and an epic industry event at this Oscar®-qualifying documentary film festival.

For your inclusion in the what's on listings email: whatson@regionalnews.kiwi. Close off for the next issue's listings is noon Tuesday 7 July

To the best of our knowledge, the information provided to us regarding the above events was correct at the time of press. Our company accepts no liability for events postponed, cancelled, sold out, or otherwise adapted.

Regional News
Connecting Wellington

Answers to the puzzles on page 32

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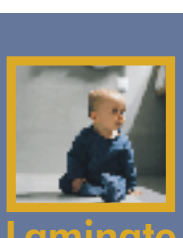
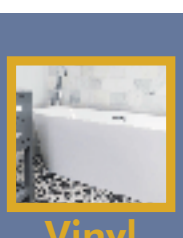

Laminate

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