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# Standing down



By Frank Neill

Long serving Ōhāriu MP Greg O'Connor has decided to retire from politics.

The first indication that he was stepping down came when the Labour Party announced its line-up of list MPs on 8 June. Mr O'Connor's name was not on the list.

*Continued on page 2.*

Ōhāriu MP Greg O'Connor in the Speaker's chair. Photo: Frank Neill.

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## A fantastic local member

Continued from page 1.

The 'Independent Herald' contacted Mr O'Connor and asked him what was happening and he confirmed that he had decided not to stand as a list MP.

"From the day Ōhāriu disappeared my political world changed," he says.

"I came to the realisation that when you are an electorate MP you are beholden to the people of the electorate.

"I was always beholden to the good people of Ōhāriu.

"The only people I owe is Ōhāriu people," adding that he has "gratitude for what they have done for me.

"Ōhāriu disappeared on me last year and I missed out on standing for Wellington North, which was already spoken for, as was Keneperu, so the list was my only real option."

Earlier in the year Mr O'Connor indicated he would seek being a list MP and that if Labour became the government he would put his name forward to be Parliament's Speaker.

Then having thought it over, he came to the conclusion that "when you are a list MP you are beholden to the party, because you are only there because the party put you there.

"I came to the realisation that probably is not my gig."

As a result, he decided to retire from politics. "You have got to learn to recognise when the time has arrived, and this is the right time," he says.

"I will be sad to be leaving Ōhāriu, but that was already out of my hands.

"I'm already looking forward to my next gig," he says, adding that he does not yet know what that will be.



Ōhāriu MP Greg O'Connor. Photo: Supplied.

"I'm sure I will get an opportunity out there to use my skills."

In the meantime "any suggestions gratefully received," he says. People with suggestions can contact Mr O'Connor at Greg.OConnor@parliament.govt.nz.

With the changes in the electorate boundaries Mr O'Connor says he is hoping the people of Ōhāriu "continue to get good service."

He notes that the three suburbs "which make up the core of Ōhāriu, which are Newlands, Johnsonville and Khandallah, will now be on the periphery of three different electorates."

"Greg has been a fantastic local member," Wellington's Deputy Mayor and Takapū/Northern Ward Councillor Ben McNulty says.

"I think his super power has been the ability to bring people together to solve problems. "You see that in things like setting up the Johnsonville Business Group.

"He's laid the foundation for Newlands to do the same."

Mr O'Connor meets with Councillors and business leaders regularly to talk about issues, things like street safety or the "ongoing saga" of redeveloping Johnsonville, Cr McNulty says.

"All of these conversations don't just happen by themselves.

"You really do need someone who is there and making it happen.

"That has been Greg's legacy – getting things fixed quickly and getting the right people in the room talking to each other."

As a result of the work Mr O'Connor has done "the community is much better connected and able to respond and work with each other to solve problems as they come up," Cr McNulty says.

Mr O'Connor was elected to Parliament in 2017, and will have served as an MP for nine years when the election comes around.

After being selected as Labour's Ōhāriu candidate that year, he aimed to challenge long serving MP Peter Dunne. However Mr Dunne withdrew and Mr O'Connor won the seat ahead of National list MP Brett Hudson with a margin of 1,051 votes.

He then retained the seat in the 2020 election with a big margin of 11,961 votes.

At the last election in 2023 he defeated National's Deputy Leader Nicola Willis with a margin of 1,260 votes.

Mr O'Connor was in the Police for 41 years before being elected to Parliament, including being elected by the Police officers to be the President of the Police Association.

## New Vice-Chancellor for Victoria University

Internationally-recognised scholar and national award-winning teacher Professor Bryony James has been appointed as the new Vice-Chancellor of Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington.

Originally from Cornwall, Professor James has been studying, working and leading in the New Zealand tertiary sector for more than 30 years.

She is currently Te Herenga Waka's Provost, having previously held leadership roles as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Waikato and Deputy Dean (Research) at the Faculty of Engineering, University of Auckland.

Professor James is a researcher in materials engineering, with her research interest having moved from traditional areas of the subject into the intersection of materials, food and nutrition.

Professor James says leading a university she loves, in a city she loves, is precisely the place she wants to be.

"I'm going to be taking up this role at a time of change in the tertiary sector, but with the privilege of leading a fully comprehensive, established and excellent university, right here among the halls of government, in the capital city."

She notes that as the current Provost, she brings continuity, but also "very purposeful evolution".

"I want to lead the university community forward with a strategy that is deliberately connected into Wellington, into the country and the world.

"To be able to do that with our community of passionate staff, students and alumni is



Victoria University's new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Bryony James. Photo: Supplied.

a wonderful position to be in."

Te Herenga Waka Chancellor Mr Alan Judge says that, following an extensive global search, the university's Council was delighted to have been able to appoint someone of Professor James's calibre from within the university itself.

"Her initiative, clarity of thinking, and strong connections built on trust, which are evident throughout the university and into the capital city beyond, led us to choose Professor James from a strong set of candidates.

"The Council is confident that she has the energy, drive and values we need to lead our staff, students and community into the coming years."

Professor James will take up her appointment on 12 June.

Current Vice-Chancellor Professor Nic Smith has been appointed as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Auckland.

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# Plane Sense loses flight path case

By Frank Neill

Plane Sense Wellington's judicial review of the DMAPS flight path changes has been dismissed by the High Court.

The Court's judgment was issued on 5 June. Plane Sense says it is disappointed by the judgment and believes the outcome highlights the need for a broader conversation about how communities are considered when major aviation decisions affect where people live.

It is now reviewing the judgment and its implications.

"We are disappointed that New Zealand's current framework appears able to accommodate significant impacts on communities without requiring those communities to be consulted or considered before those impacts occur," a Plane Sense Wellington spokesperson says.

"The Court acknowledged evidence that residents have experienced significant disruption to their lives, including sleep disturbance and impacts on health and wellbeing.

"This judgment does not end the suffering of affected residents, nor does it change the reality faced by thousands of people living beneath the flight path every day.

"While the Court has determined the legal issues, Plane Sense believes the outcome highlights a gap between what may be legally permissible and what many New Zealanders would consider fair and ethical decision-making.

"Throughout this campaign, Plane Sense has been contacted by communities from around New Zealand facing similar concerns about aircraft noise, flight path changes and a lack of meaningful involvement in decisions made by airports, Airways NZ and aviation authorities that affect their homes, health, wellbeing and quality of life.

"Most New Zealanders would expect consultation and consideration if a major transport corridor or highway was proposed through their community.

"Similar principles of transparency, accountability and community participation should apply when flight paths are introduced over established residential neighbourhoods."

Plane Sense notes that Australia is pursuing reforms to strengthen aviation noise oversight and provide communities with independent avenues to raise concerns about aircraft noise and flight path changes.

Plane Sense says it believes New Zealand should be looking closely at these reforms

to ensure it does not fall behind emerging international approaches to community protection, independent oversight and aviation accountability.

"The issues raised by this case are not unique to our community, or to Wellington," the Plane Sense spokesperson says.

"The outcome highlights the need for a broader discussion about whether communities have sufficient protections and meaningful opportunities for input when significant aviation decisions affect where they live, and their health and wellbeing."

"The outcome also highlights the need for a wider conversation about aviation law reform, stronger independent scrutiny of aircraft noise impacts, community involvement in flight path decisions, transparent and proper process, and measures that may reduce impacts on affected residents, including stronger noise protections, tighter aircraft curfew settings and other practical measures that better balance aviation operations with community wellbeing."

The group thanked residents, supporters, donors, experts and legal advisers who helped bring the case before the Court.

"This community has shown extraordinary commitment, resilience and courage," the spokesperson says.

"We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped ensure the voices of affected residents were heard and believed strongly in our cause.

"Our thoughts are with those in our community who we know will be hit hardest by this result."

The decision has, however, been welcomed by both Wellington Airport and Airways.

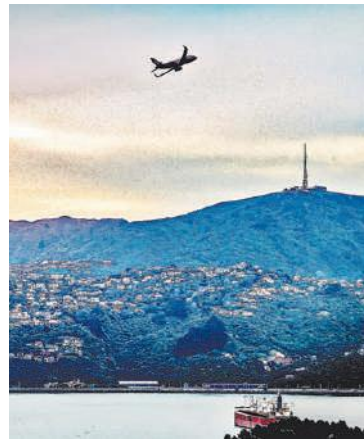
"We support DMAPS because it's safer, more efficient and was the most popular option from the public consultation we carried out in 2024," Wellington Airport's Chief Executive Matt Clarke says.

"It has reduced delays, travel times and costs, lowered emissions, and affects the fewest number of people with noise.

"Of the four options we publicly consulted on in 2024, the status quo was the most popular choice as first preference (49.78%), more than twice the level of other options.

"We understand this is disappointing for some people.

"However, the unavoidable challenge for a city like Wellington with an airport relatively close to the CBD is that aircraft must fly over residential areas at times, no matter which flightpath option is preferred," Mr Clarke says.



An aircraft flying low over northern suburbs homes. Photo: Phil Greig.

"Airways welcomes the decision to dismiss the judicial review brought by Plane Sense against Airways, the Director of Civil Aviation and Wellington International Airport," says Jamie Gray, Airways General Manager People and Partnerships.

"The Court has found no legal errors in decisions to implement the Divergent Missed Approach System (DMAPS) at Wellington Airport.

"Airways is responsible for providing safe and efficient air navigation services across New Zealand.

"DMAPS was designed to increase safety at Wellington Airport and was implemented after a number of incidents related to missed approaches (which occur when an arrival aircraft is unable to complete its landing).

"It has resulted in residents in some suburbs experiencing more noise, and residents in others experiencing less.

"DMAPS was developed in accordance with the Civil Aviation Rules, and applicable ICAO standards.

"It ensures that flight paths followed by departure aircraft diverge from the flight path followed by missed approach aircraft, separating both aircraft by default.

"Since the introduction of DMAPS at Wellington Airport in 2022, the number of missed approach safety reports at Wellington Airport has reduced significantly, from 27 in 2019 to only five in total over the last three years.

"DMAPS is and always has been safe."

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## Greg O'Connor MP for Ōhāriu

Spokesperson for Courts and Veterans' Affairs  
Assistant Speaker

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Authorised by Greg O'Connor MP,  
Parliament Buildings Wellington.

## inbrief news

## Grants available

Community groups, schools, sports clubs and not-for-profits across the greater Wellington region are being encouraged to apply for support through Kinetic's Moving Communities Fund, with grants of up to \$10,000 and additional in-kind assistance available.

Now in its second year in Aotearoa, the fund provides financial support alongside practical assistance such as transport, marketing support, bus-back advertising, radio campaigns and digital billboard advertising, helping organisations expand their reach and impact within their communities.

A total of \$80,000 is available through the 2026 programme, supporting organisations working across areas including accessibility and health, youth and community wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, education, environmental sustainability, cultural connection and local support services.

Applications are now open at [www.wearekinetic.com/community](http://www.wearekinetic.com/community) and close 24 June.

Successful recipients will be announced in August.

## Newlands Community Centre reopening

The Newlands Community Centre will officially reopen at 10am today, 11 June.

The community had to close after the roof was lifted during the storm that hit Wellington on 16 February.

As well as having to repair the roof, the community centre discovered black mould in the walls of the centre, and this also had to be repaired.

As a result, the work has taken longer than originally expected, resulting in the temporary closure needing to be extended.

Located at 9 Batchelor Street, the community centre was opened in November 2009 with a blessing from a kaumātua from Ngā Hau e Whā o Paparāangi.

Initially a community initiative, Council designers worked with representatives of several local groups to come up with a concept for the centre. The drop-in lounge is open for the community to share a cup of tea or coffee, use the free internet computers, read the newspaper, or just relax and chat with others.

## 'The Marriage of Figaro' capital debut

Voted the greatest opera of all time by 172 of the world's leading singers in a definitive BBC Music Magazine poll, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's masterpiece 'The Marriage of Figaro' makes its production debut in the capital this month.

Renowned for its wit, musical sophistication and enduring popularity, this celebrated staging by New Zealand Opera remains a high-water mark in the company's history.

'The Marriage of Figaro' has a three-show season at the St James Theatre between 17 and 21 June. Bookings are available at [www.nzopera.com](http://www.nzopera.com).

A comic whirlwind of love, lies and glorious chaos, the production features a stellar cast of principal singers from Aotearoa and Australia, alongside the outstanding voices of the Freemasons Foundation New Zealand Opera Chorus.

This talented vocal lineup joins forces with Orchestra Wellington for a highly anticipated Wellington debut season.

This sumptuous staging by superstar trans-Tasman creative trio of director Lindy Hume, set and costume designer Tracy Grant Lord and lighting designer Matthew Marshall has been described by reviewers as "ravishingly full of fun," "glorious" and "dazzling."

Set over the course of a single chaotic day, the story follows the clever valet Figaro and his sharp-witted fiancée Susanna as they attempt to navigate the pitfalls of their wedding day.

The pair must stay one step ahead of the philandering Count Almaviva, who is intent on exploiting his 'aristocratic privileges' before the wedding night.

What follows is a web of mistaken identities, secret trysts, and upstairs-downstairs antics, as the household's women and servants band together to outmanoeuvre the nobility.

"Our production finds inspiration in the revolutionary spirit of Beaumarchais, whose original play was famously controversial for depicting servants outsmarting their masters," says director Lindy Hume.

"This challenged the Ancien Régime – the rigid social order at the time – where aristocracy held absolute power over everybody else."



Soprano Felicity Tomkins in a scene from NZ Opera's 'Marriage of Figaro'. Photo: Sacha Stejko.

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The panel that will take part in *Activists, Allies & Beyond*. Image: Supplied.

# Free Comic Book Day at Central Library

Wellington City Libraries is celebrating Free Comic Book Day on Saturday 13 June from 9:30am to 1.30pm at Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library.

The library has thousands of free comics to suit all ages and tastes to give away.

There will be something for everyone. Just pop along to Ngā Paiaka, the bleachers, from 9:30am and pick up a free comic.

Due to demand there will be a limit of two comics per person.

Meet one of your favourite local comic/graphic artists, Sam Orchard, Sarah Laing and Jem Yoshioka as they draw and talk about their work in fabulous informal half hour demonstrations.

They will take place on 13 June from 10am to 11:30am at Ngā Paiaka | the Bleachers.

Sarah Laing is a multi-award-winning Wellington-based writer and illustrator. Her work includes graphic memoir 'Mansfield and Me', comic anthology 'Let Me Be Frank' and 'Sylvia and the Birds'.

Jem Yoshioka is an illustrator and comic artist living in Wellington. Jem deftly weaves words and pictures together. Jem's comics tell evocative and emotional stories with themes of belonging, place, and heritage. Jem's works include the webcomic 'Circuits and Veins', which has attracted a large following on Webtoon.

Sam Orchard is the Assistant Curator for the Cartoon and Comics Archive at the Alexander Turnbull Library. He is a comic artist and illustrator, who has been involved in community and youth development campaigns and practices for over a decade.

A drawing competition will take place from 9:30am to 12:30am on 13 June at Ngā Paiaka | the Bleachers.

Draw your favourite character from a book, movie or TV show – or perhaps a character from your own imagination. There is a panoply of various prizes up for grabs.

The prize categories are age 8 and under, age 9-13 and age 14+.

*Activists, Allies & Beyond: 40 Years Since Homosexual Law Reform* will be held on Sunday 14 June from 2pm to 3pm at Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library, Ngā Pou Ruahine (Level 2).

This is a free event celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Homosexual Law Reform Act 1986.

Trevor Mallard, Linda Evans, Bill Logan, Onjei Bond, and host Gareth Watkins will participate in a panel discussion exploring the social and political climate, and the long history of community activism that contributed to the landmark 1986 reform passing through Parliament.

The panel will discuss the political processes behind the bill and the opposing community campaigns that emerged during a deeply divisive period in New Zealand's history.

People attending will hear about the personal impacts this had on members of the rainbow community, the resulting legacies of the reform, and the ways it continues to shape the lives and rights of queer people in Aotearoa today.

Sir Trevor Mallard was an MP for 35 years and served as a Minister and Speaker. More recently he was New Zealand's Ambassador to Ireland.

He is now retired and spends his time gardening, walking his dog and helping with grandchildren.

Sir Trevor acted as 'whip' for the Homosexual Law Reform Bill. His role was to keep a day-by-day count to help ensure the numbers were there to make sure it became law.

Linda Evans has been an activist in lesbian, feminist and gay politics in Wellington since the 1970s.

She was involved in the ongoing campaigns for homosexual law reform and anti-discrimination laws in the 1970s and 1980s.

Linda is a trustee and voluntary curator for Kawe Mahara Queer Archives Aotearoa.

In 1985 Bill Logan was a radical Wellington bookseller and involved in the Gay Switchboard and the response to the AIDS pandemic.

He became one of the organisers of the Homosexual Law Reform campaign to decriminalise sex between men. He remains engaged in socialist and community activism, and now works as a counsellor and marriage and funeral celebrant.

Onjei Bond is a recent Master's graduate in Museum and Heritage studies, interested in the queer history of Aotearoa.

He has recently finished a six-month research project focused on documenting and preserving the queer history of the Taranaki region, in collaboration with Pride Taranaki and Puke Ariki.

Gareth Watkins founded the non-profit community website PrideNZ.com in 2009. It has become the largest online audio repository of local Takatāpui LGBTQIA+ Rainbow histories.

In 2017, Gareth and his husband Roger Smith also founded Walktours NZ – a volunteer group that has run over 100 free, accessible, inclusive and community-focused walking tours exploring the city's rich queer heritage.

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Johnsonville Lions Club President Phillip Henty and Kim Edgecombe consider the food bank supplies. Photo: Supplied.

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## Lions gift boosts Johnsonville foodbank

Funds recently donated to the Johnsonville foodbank will enable purchase of perishable items such as meat, frozen vegetables, bread and margarine.

"These items accompany the other food included in parcels provided to people in need," says Community Centre staff member Kim Edgecombe.

"Generosity such as this Lions Club support enables us to help many people in our local community," she said.

In the month of April, the Johnsonville Foodbank provided 27 parcels that helped to feed 68 people.

Johnsonville Lions President Phillip Henty recently visited the food bank to present a \$1,000 donation, the proceeds of their recent fashion parade at Balantynes.

"Hunger" is one of Lions International worldwide focusses," Phillip says.

"We are pleased that at a local level our club can support this worldwide focus of Lions Clubs."

President Phillip acknowledged local sponsorship of the event from The Innkeeper, Newlands New World and Puku Pies.

"Johnsonville Lions is proud to be part of a strong and supportive local community where we can make a positive difference," he says.

The Johnsonville Lions Club supports a range of youth activities and has 23 members.

The club meets on the first and third Monday of each month at 6pm.

The Lions Club is a group of men and women who enjoy working together with the community to support various community improvements. For more information contact Stephen Cook at 027 647 1747 or email [Johnsonville@lionsclubs.org.nz](mailto:Johnsonville@lionsclubs.org.nz).

## GirlBoss awards now open

By Frank Neill

Applications are now open for the 2026 GirlBoss awards.

These awards are presented to trailblazing young women aged 11 to 18 who are defying stereotypes and creating change in their communities.

Churton Park teenager Avin Khajezadeh was named one of New Zealand's top Girl Bosses at the 2024 New Zealand GirlBoss Awards.

Avin won the GirlBoss Inclusion Award, sponsored by PwC New Zealand.

She was presented the award

for her work to transform health outcomes for refugee mothers.

The awards are made in eight categories – leadership; science, technology, engineering and maths; enterprise; arts and culture; innovation; emerging leader; digital impact and community.

People can apply or make a nomination for the awards at [www.girlbossawards.com](http://www.girlbossawards.com).

Founded in late 2015, GirlBoss is a network of high school aged "changemakers".

Its mission is to close the gender gap in Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Leadership and Entrepreneurship.



Avin Khajezadeh receiving her GirlBoss award from Chloe Gallagher, PwC's Chief People Officer, who judged the 2024 GirlBoss inclusion category. Photo: Greg Campbell.

# Art Scene

## Exhibition of Wellington paintings

An art exhibition featuring paintings of Wellington will run at Petone's Artspace Gallery starting this Saturday, 13 June. Entitled 'Impressions of Wellington', the exhibition features the work of Kit Ong and follows his highly successful debut exhibition last year.

The exhibition will run until Sunday 12 July.

Since retiring from a career in architecture, Kit has devoted himself to painting almost every day, often venturing out to capture the landscapes, streetscapes, and character of the local area around him.

Originally from Malaysia, Kit has been painting in watercolours since childhood and won several art awards during his school years.

Since retiring from architecture, he has combined his passions for art and architecture, creating atmospheric watercolours inspired by buildings, cityscapes and the unique spirit of Wellington and its surrounds.

Known for their vivid colour, mood and sense of place, Kit's paintings have become highly regarded both in New Zealand and internationally, earning him further recognition and numerous art awards.

Kit enjoys the expressive freedom and versatility of watercolour painting and strives to capture the fleeting atmosphere, light and memorable moments of the places and scenes that inspire him.

Alongside Kit Ong's exhibition, visitors can explore four additional gallery spaces showcasing artwork by more than 200 local and New Zealand artists across a wide range of styles and genres.

The gallery is open from 10:30am to 4pm Wednesday to Sunday and entry is free. There is easy parking near the Artspace Gallery.



### Kit Ong - Impressions of Wellington

Alfred Memelink Artspace Gallery 223 The Esplanade Petone

Exhibition Season - Sat 13 June - Sun 12 July

Gallery Open Wed - Sunday 10.30 - 4pm FREE Entry and parking



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**PORTRAIT CLUB WELLINGTON**  
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## song quest



### Semi-Finals are now open!

Secure your spot at St Andrew's on The Terrace for:

Saturday 4 July at:

<https://events.humanitix.com/kiri-te-kanawa-song-quest-semi-final-1>

Sunday 5 July at:

<https://events.humanitix.com/kiri-te-kanawa-song-quest-semi-final-2-mlbm7tmq>

Seating is limited, so registration is essential. Get in quick!

Watch the twelve semi-finalists perform for Head Judge Frederica von Stade in the hopes of being selected as one of the six finalists who will go through to the Grand Final Gala and perform with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra on 11 July at Wellington's Michael Fowler Centre.

Haven't booked for the Grand Final Gala? Follow the whole Kiri Te Kanawa Song Quest journey and get your tickets before they're gone.

Tickets from \$39 available at:

[ticketmaster.co.nz/kiri-te-kanawa-song-quest-wellington-11-07-2026/event/24006491C52B6EA9](https://ticketmaster.co.nz/kiri-te-kanawa-song-quest-wellington-11-07-2026/event/24006491C52B6EA9)

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# 2026 FIFA World Cup

## MATCH SCHEDULE

### GROUP A

Mexico • South Africa • Korea Republic • Czechia

12 June  
Match 1 Mexico vs South Africa 7:00 AM  
Match 2 Korea Republic vs Czechia 2:00 PM

19 June  
Match 33 Czechia vs South Africa 4:00 AM  
Match 34 Mexico vs Korea Republic 1:00 PM

25 June  
Match 57 South Africa vs Korea Republic 1:00 PM  
Match 58 Czechia vs Mexico 1:00 PM

### GROUP B

Canada • Bosnia & Herzegovina • Qatar • Switzerland

13 June  
Match 3 Canada vs Bosnia & Herzegovina 7:00 AM

14 June  
Match 4 Qatar vs Switzerland 7:00 AM

19 June  
Match 35 Switzerland vs Bosnia & Herzegovina 7:00 AM  
Match 36 Canada vs Qatar 10:00 AM

25 June  
Match 39 Switzerland vs Canada 7:00 AM  
Match 60 Bosnia & Herzegovina vs Qatar 7:00 AM

### GROUP C

Brazil • Morocco • Haiti • Scotland

14 June  
Match 5 Brazil vs Morocco 10:00 AM  
Match 6 Haiti vs Scotland 1:00 PM

20 June  
Match 37 Scotland vs Morocco 10:00 AM  
Match 38 Brazil vs Haiti 12:30 PM

25 June  
Match 61 Scotland vs Brazil 10:00 AM  
Match 62 Morocco vs Haiti 10:00 AM



### GROUP D

USA • Paraguay • Australia • Türkiye

13 June  
Match 7 USA vs Paraguay 1:00 PM

14 June  
Match 8 Australia vs Türkiye 4:00 PM

20 June  
Match 39 USA vs Australia 7:00 AM  
Match 40 Türkiye vs Paraguay 3:00 PM

26 June  
Match 63 Paraguay vs Australia 2:00 PM  
Match 64 Türkiye vs USA 2:00 PM

### GROUP E

Germany • Curaçao • Côte d'Ivoire • Ecuador

15 June  
Match 9 Germany vs Curaçao 5:00 AM  
Match 10 Côte d'Ivoire vs Ecuador 11:00 AM

21 June  
Match 41 Germany vs Côte d'Ivoire 8:00 AM  
Match 42 Ecuador vs Curaçao 12:00 PM

26 June  
Match 65 Curaçao vs Côte d'Ivoire 8:00 AM  
Match 66 Ecuador vs Germany 8:00 AM

### GROUP F

Netherlands • Japan • Sweden • Tunisia

15 June  
Match 11 Netherlands vs Japan 8:00 AM  
Match 12 Sweden vs Tunisia 2:00 PM

21 June  
Match 43 Netherlands vs Sweden 5:00 AM  
Match 44 Tunisia vs Japan 4:00 PM

26 June  
Match 67 Japan vs Sweden 11:00 AM  
Match 68 Tunisia vs Netherlands 11:00 AM

### Quarter-Finals

11-12 July

11 July  
Match 108 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 109 TBC vs TBC 11:00 AM

12 July  
Match 110 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 111 TBC vs TBC 11:00 AM

### GROUP G

Belgium • Egypt • Iran • New Zealand

16 June  
Match 25 Belgium vs Egypt 7:00 AM  
Match 26 Iran vs New Zealand 1:00 PM

22 June  
Match 49 Belgium vs Iran 7:00 AM  
Match 50 New Zealand vs Egypt 1:00 PM

27 June  
Match 73 New Zealand vs Belgium 3:00 PM  
Match 50 Egypt vs Iran 3:00 PM

### GROUP H

Spain • Cabo Verde • Saudi Arabia • Uruguay

16 June  
Match 27 Spain vs Cabo Verde 4:00 AM  
Match 28 Saudi Arabia vs Uruguay 10:00 AM

22 June  
Match 51 Spain vs Saudi Arabia 4:00 AM  
Match 52 Uruguay vs Cabo Verde 10:00 AM

27 June  
Match 74 Cabo Verde vs Saudi Arabia 12:00 PM  
Match 75 Uruguay vs Spain 12:00 PM

### GROUP I

France • Senegal • Iraq • Norway

17 June  
Match 13 France vs Senegal 7:00 AM  
Match 14 Iraq vs Norway 10:00 AM

23 June  
Match 53 France vs Iraq 9:00 AM  
Match 54 Senegal vs Norway 12:00 AM

27 June  
Match 76 Norway vs France 7:00 AM  
Match 77 Senegal vs Iraq 7:00 AM

### Semi-Finals

15-16 July

15 July  
Match 112 TBC vs TBC 3:00 AM

16 July  
Match 113 TBC vs TBC 3:00 AM

### GROUP J

Argentina • Algeria • Austria • Jordan

17 June  
Match 15 Argentina vs Algeria 1:00 PM  
Match 16 Austria vs Jordan 4:00 PM

23 June  
Match 46 Argentina vs Austria 5:00 AM  
Match 47 Jordan vs Algeria 3:00 PM

28 June  
Match 69 Algeria vs Austria 2:00 PM  
Match 61 Jordan vs Argentina 2:00 PM

### GROUP K

Portugal • Congo DR • Uzbekistan • Colombia

18 June  
Match 17 Portugal vs Congo DR 5:00 AM  
Match 18 Uzbekistan vs Colombia 2:00 PM

24 June  
Match 69 Portugal vs Uzbekistan 5:00 AM  
Match 70 Colombia vs Congo DR 2:00 PM

28 June  
Match 80 Congo DR vs Uzbekistan 11:30 AM  
Match 81 Colombia vs Portugal 11:30 AM

### GROUP L

England • Croatia • Ghana • Panama

18 June  
Match 19 Ghana vs Panama 11:00 AM  
Match 20 England vs Croatia 8:00 AM

24 June  
Match 44 England vs Ghana 8:00 AM  
Match 45 Panama vs Croatia 11:00 AM

28 June  
Match 62 Panama vs England 9:00 AM  
Match 63 Croatia vs Ghana 9:00 AM

### Bronze Final

18 July

Match 114 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM

### KNOCKOUT STAGE

Round of 32

3-6 July

3 July  
Match 84 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 85 TBC vs TBC 10:00 AM  
Match 86 TBC vs TBC 1:00 PM  
Match 87 TBC vs TBC 4:00 PM

4 July  
Match 88 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 89 TBC vs TBC 10:00 AM  
Match 90 TBC vs TBC 1:00 PM  
Match 91 TBC vs TBC 4:00 PM

5 July  
Match 92 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 93 TBC vs TBC 10:00 AM  
Match 94 TBC vs TBC 1:00 PM  
Match 95 TBC vs TBC 4:00 PM

6 July  
Match 96 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 97 TBC vs TBC 10:00 AM  
Match 98 TBC vs TBC 1:00 PM  
Match 99 TBC vs TBC 4:00 PM

### Round of 16

7-10 July

7 July  
Match 100 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 101 TBC vs TBC 10:00 AM

8 July  
Match 102 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 103 TBC vs TBC 10:00 AM

9 July  
Match 104 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 105 TBC vs TBC 10:00 AM

10 July  
Match 106 TBC vs TBC 7:00 AM  
Match 107 TBC vs TBC 10:00 AM

### FINAL 19 July

TBC vs TBC 8:00 AM

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# Health & Wellbeing

## Tighter controls on nitrous oxide come into force

Tighter controls on nitrous oxide have come into force, aimed at reducing the risk of serious harm from recreational inhalation.

From 5 June, importers must have approval from the Director-General of Health to bring nitrous oxide into New Zealand. The new permit system supports legitimate medical, catering, and industrial uses, while helping prevent diversion for recreational use.

Medsafe will assess permit applications on behalf of the Director-General. Approval will be conditional on Medsafe having confidence the imported product is intended for a lawful purpose and appropriate steps are in place to prevent misuse.

Medsafe has already been engaging with importers and has begun assessing early applications, with priority given to importers with imminent shipments.

In addition, nitrous oxide canisters over 10 grams sold as cream chargers will automatically be classified as psychoactive substances under the

Psychoactive Substances Act 2013. Canisters used for legitimate medical and industrial purposes are excluded.

The law says anyone who sells or supplies nitrous oxide to someone for the primary purpose of inducing a psychoactive effect is liable on conviction (to a term of up to two years' imprisonment or a \$500,000 fine). Someone possessing nitrous oxide for that purpose is liable to a \$500 infringement fine. The new regulations give Police strengthened ability to act against those supplying it for recreational misuse.

Dr Joe Bourne, Chief Medical Officer, Ministry of Health, says nitrous oxide misuse carries real and preventable risks. "Short-term effects include dizziness, impaired judgement, and blackouts, which can be especially dangerous if someone is driving. With heavy or repeated use, we are seeing cases of serious neurological harm, including nerve damage that can affect movement and coordination.

"These changes are about reducing

access to higher-risk products and supporting safer behaviour."

New Zealand Police says the changes will support enforcement and improve road safety.

"We've seen incidents where nitrous oxide use has contributed to dangerous driving and, in some cases, serious and fatal crashes," says Tusha Penny, Police Assistant Commissioner for Road Policing and District Support.

"Stronger controls on supply make it harder to access for misuse and give us clearer tools to act where it is being sold or used unlawfully."

Customs Group Manager Border Operations, Craig Chitty says Customs will play a critical role in enforcing these new controls at the border while working closely with the Ministry of Health, and Police as part of a coordinated, whole-of-system response.

Nitrous oxide misuse can have serious health impacts. Alongside immediate effects such as dizziness and blackouts, frequent use can lead to long-term neurological damage, including weakness, numbness, and difficulty walking.

Source: MoH

## Kiwis helping other Kiwis beat prostate cancer

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of New Zealand - Te Kāhui Mate Pukupuku Repe Tātea o Aotearoa Manatōpū, (PCFNZ) provides vital support, education and information to individuals, their families and whānau across Aotearoa New Zealand affected by prostate cancer.

PCFNZ provides a comprehensive portfolio of free in-person and remote support services to help those living with

prostate cancer, at any stage of diagnosis, treatment and survivorship.

PCFNZ is also dedicated to reducing the impact of prostate cancer through raising awareness, funding NZ-based research and advocating for improved standards of care and investing in research that raises the understanding of prostate cancer and its effects on men, their families and our communities.

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# WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

## June 15, 2026 Spot the Signs

"Every step towards awareness is a step towards dignity, respect, and safety for our elders."

## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day: Take the Step

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On 15 June, New Zealand marks World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, a reminder that abuse of older people is more common than many realise.

As many as 1 in 10 older New Zealanders will experience some form of elder abuse, yet many cases go unrecognised or unreported. Often, it is perpetrated by someone the older person knows and trusts. This year's theme is Take the Step. You're Not Alone.

If something doesn't feel right, if someone is making you uncomfortable, or if you're unsure where to turn - take the step. There are people who will listen and support you. People who care about your safety, your dignity, and your wellbeing. Reaching out is not a burden. It's an act of strength. And when you do, we'll walk with you, every step of the way.

At all Enliven Homes, we believe every older person deserves to live with dignity, respect, purpose, and freedom from harm. Our approach to care is guided by the Eden Alternative philosophy, and all staff are trained in its principles. These values emphasise person-directed care, meaningful relationships, independence, and ensuring older people feel safe, heard, and valued. Creating environments where people can thrive is not just about meeting physical needs; it is about protecting their rights, wellbeing, and sense of belonging. If you are concerned about an older person, don't look away, Speak Up. A simple conversation, welfare check, or request for advice could make a big difference. Many older people experiencing abuse or neglect may feel isolated, embarrassed, or unsure where to turn for support. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is an opportunity for all of us to help build communities where older people are respected, protected, and empowered to live well. If you are worried about the wellbeing of an older person, please support through Age Concern New Zealand (0800 65 2 105) or the Elder Abuse Helpline (0800 EA NOT OK / 0800 32 668 65) or text 5032.

For more information or to find an Enliven service near you, visit [enlivencentral.org.nz](http://enlivencentral.org.nz)

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## Take the Step

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is an opportunity for all of us to help build communities where older people are respected, protected and empowered to live well.

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# Train crash in Khandallah

By Frank Neill

A Matangi train crashed into a concrete barrier near Khandallah Station at around 7:20pm on 6 June.

Two passengers, the train driver and a staff member were injured in the crash.

The train was on the double track that runs through the Khandallah Station.

"Rather than going onto the single track, it carried on on the double track and hit the concrete block," Wellington City Councillor Diane Calvert says.

It was good that it hit the concrete block, she says, "because it saved it from going down the bank, which would have been catastrophic."

"People [on the train] would have been severely impacted and the train would have landed on a house or two."

Cr Calvert, who lives close to Khandallah Station, heard the crash.

"There was a massive boom. I've never heard a sound like that before," she says.

"At first I thought earthquake but there was no shaking and then I thought thunder but there was no thunder and lightning, so I really didn't know what was going on."

"Then we heard the fire engines and police sirens and realised it was the train."

"Locals right next to where it hit went round to help until rescue services arrived," Cr Calvert says.

Now that it has been a few days since

the crash, "people are saying have we got enough safety measures in place to prevent such an accident happening in the future," she adds.

The crash "is a very heartwrenching situation for all involved," Wellington Regional Councillor Simon Woolf says.

"Thankfully from what I understand the protections for this type of event worked," he says, referring to the concrete block to stop trains that have continued running down the double track, rather than diverting onto the single track.

It was yet to be confirmed, but the accident was possibly the result of the train running a red signal light, Cr Woolf says.

Continuing down the double track and hitting the concrete block "is what the train would have done if it had run a red signal."

The cause of the crash is being investigated.

Investigations are under way by the Transport Accident Investigation Commission, TransDev, Metlink and KiwiRail.

Investigators from the Transport Accident Investigation Commission were on site from late on the evening of 6 June.

The train was still on the track when the 'Independent Herald' went to print.

It was due to be lifted off the track by a crane some time in the next few days.

In the meantime buses are replacing trains on the Johnsonville line, and will be until further notice.



The inside of the train following the crash. Photo: Supplied.



The Matangi train crashed near Khandallah Station. Photo: Diane Calvert.

## Nominated for major prize

Mountains to Sea Wellington Trust has been nominated by Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington for the prestigious international climate solutions award, The Earthshot Prize.

It is one of six New Zealand climate solutions nominated for the multimillion-dollar funding award.

"The Love Rimurimu project, led by the Mountains to Sea Wellington Trust, is restoring declining kelp forests in Wellington Harbour through science, community action, and Indigenous partnership," Victoria University says.

"It also empowers communities with hands on education and opensource knowledge sharing."

This includes working with local schools, community groups and volunteers to provide

immersive environmental education and conservation activities.

Every single one of the New Zealand nominees "has the power to change the world," Andrew Wilks, Manutaki/Director, Sustainability at Victoria University of Wellington, says.

"They're affordable, immediately scalable and could create true global transformation."

Mr Wilks says the prize is awarded to projects that highlight human ingenuity, drive change and inspire collective action.

"The very best national qualities are clear in our successful New Zealand nominees," he adds.

"The power of the Kiwi working bee is evident in the community-building work of ... Mountains to Sea Wellington Trust."

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Call in the Experts



# Goals galore in Johnsonville and Karori

By Hamish Wareham

Saturday brought about the half-way point in both the men's and women's Central League competitions with the tables starting to take shape.

For Fusion 5 Waterside Karori, despite being transferred from Karori Park to Martin Luckie Park a change in venue brought about their second win of the Central League season.

Opponents Island Bay United (IBU) could've been accused of riding off a Chatham Cup high having beaten Phoenix Reserves who are in the midst of an awful run of form 3-2 in extra time.

Waterside Karori ran in three first half goals, a brace from Tyler Hornsby and a goal from Oscar Crowe.

Seven minutes into the second half a cracking goal from Albie Francis-Alles, who returned to the black and white stripes after some time spent in Auckland and at Miramar Rangers, helped Karori extend the gap on FC Western at the bottom of the table to four points with their second win of the season.

Elsewhere, FC Western closed the gap on Karori again picking up their first win of the season 2-1 over Phoenix Reserves.

Draws were the result between

Olympic and Miramar (1-1), as well as Wests and Napier Rovers (3-3), while Upper Hutt scored two second half goals to beat Petone 2-0.

The Central League ladder sees Olympic, Miramar and Napier on 23 points, Wests 21, Upper Hutt 15, Island Bay United 12, Phoenix, Petone and Karori 7, and FC Western Suburbs (3).

In the women's Central League it's definitely the case of the battle of the top three teams as one point and goal difference separates Petone (22 Points), Wellington United (21) and Waterside Karori (21) at the top of the table.

A second hat trick of the season

from Sophie Burchfield saw Karori fire nine goals past Seatoun.

Sophie was supported by two goals each from Nicola Ross and substitute Jessica Woodside. Amelia Abbott and debutant Ella McMillan were on the scoresheet also.

Elsewhere, on the topic of goal difference Wellington United thumped Palmerston North Marist 13-1 while Petone were held scoreless by Miramar Rangers in a 0-0 draw.

A glimpse into the top of the women's central league table and how it unfolds could take place this weekend as round three of the Kate Sheppard Cup sees Petone host

Waterside Karori at 11am.

The week off clearly did TFS North Wellington a world of good, as they claimed just their second clean sheet of the season thrashing Seatoun 4-0 at Alex Moore Park.

Sidney Sharp-Judge gave Norths a 1-0 halftime lead, before second half goals from Miles Woodhall, Jerram Tuck and Benji McMillan made it two wins on the bounce for North Wellington.

Elimination from the Chatham Cup means no game this weekend for either North Wellington or Waterside Karori men's sides, with both teams back in action on 20 June hosting Taradale and Phoenix Reserves respectively.

## Acclaimed pianist performing Sunday

Internationally acclaimed concert pianist Nikolai Saratovsky will be in concert at the Paekakariki Memorial Hall on Sunday 14 June in an appearance sponsored by Mulled Wine Concerts.

Mary Gow, organiser of the Paekakariki-based Mulled Wine Concerts discovered Saratovsky in 2018 when he played in Brussels as a young pianist after succeeding in several important piano competitions in Europe.

"I was amazed by his virtuosity" says Mary, a concert pianist herself.

"He not only had a love for the music, he had all the technical skill-set you need to express yourself fully on the piano".

She told him she came from New Zealand and he then told her that he and his Japanese-born wife had always dreamed of visiting New Zealand.

"From there, it was a short step to discussing possibilities," Mary says.

"His effect on audiences here was remarkable. Everyone who heard him knew that they were seeing and hearing something special."

Saratovsky is now a professor of piano at the huge music school of Taiwan University where he combines teaching and academic research with his performing career, appearing in major concert venues worldwide. He also gives master-classes for aspiring international concert pianists.

"This will be already the fifth time I am coming to New Zealand, and every time I feel extremely happy to come," Nikolai says. "I have many memories from NZ."

"Coming to New Zealand is the ideal choice, [a] combination of meeting my lovely friends, conversations beside the fire place, fantastic sunsets and music making makes

this trip truly remarkable."

He has chosen a wonderful set of music for his recital.

"I chose this programme by myself, because at this moment of life I prefer to play something that gives me a positive energy," he says.

"I feel very compassionate with these music works, and they help me to recover during difficult times."

"I am happy to share this beautiful music with the audience, and I am looking forward

for this fascinating musical journey".

The concert will start with Western European romantic composers and conclude with pieces by Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff.

Mary feels that his visit to New Zealand represents a wonderful opportunity for Kapiti audiences to catch a star already well known in Europe, Russia and the Far East.

"This concert I regard as one of the most important and for the North Island, not-to-be-missed."

## National's Kenepuru candidate

Matthew Evetts has been appointed the National Party candidate for the Kenepuru electorate in this years upcoming general election.

The Kenepuru electorate includes Johnsonville, Ōhariu and Tawa.

Matthew is a local Wellington business leader and family man originally from Taranaki.

He is a fifth generation Kiwi with a deep love of Aotearoa and its people.

His career has spanned business and government with a background in technology and cyber security.

His focus has been on enabling strategy with technology, and leading organisations through transformation and change.

He has strategic, planning and operational expertise, and is regularly called on to share insights and speak in public forums.

Matthew is also a keen outdoorsman, and can often be found in the hills and mountains enjoying the incredible flora and fauna of New Zealand.

Matthew is married to Vanessa and they have three children.

Their eldest daughter attends Victoria University, their son is at Tawa College, and



Matthew Evetts who is the National Party candidate for the Kenepuru electorate. Photo: Supplied.

their youngest daughter is at Tawa Intermediate School.

They have lived in Tawa for more than 15 years.

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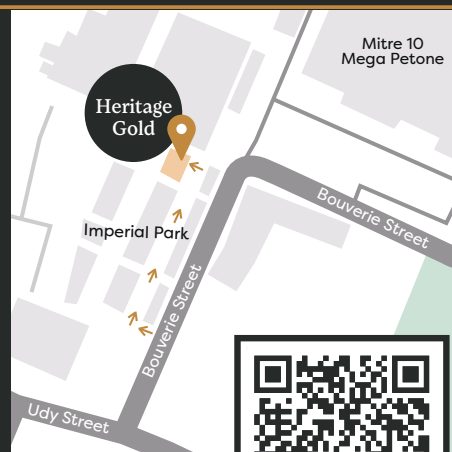
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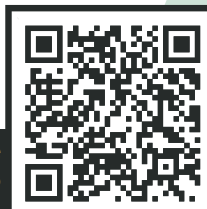
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