

Newtown News

Hakihea/December 2020
Kohitātea/January 2021



Your free community zine:
for Newtown by
Newtowners

Brought to you
by the Newtown
Community
Centre

Kia ora Newtown

Summer is here! For me, that means sand-filled sandwiches next to the ocean, getting out tramping with 'easy-to-carry kai', cold refreshing beverages in the sunshine, and even the fact that salads are suddenly an attractive option, rather than a chore to eat. So the kaupapa of this summer's Newtown News is kai (food)!

Psst, here's a secret: did you know, food is free?!! I mean...don't try and tell New World that when you get to the checkout with your full trolley... but, honestly, it just GROWS. If you leave it alone, food comes outta the ground and off trees - like MAGIC!

Buuuut, of course, capitalism has got in the way (as it tends to, pesky capitalism) and given us a system where very few of us have the time, ability or space to grow our own food. We all spend so much money on something that is absolutely necessary for life, and that I believe should be a free resource that everyone should have access to (also, what the heck Aotearoa, food is soooo expensive here compared to anywhere else I've lived).

But there are still ways to make it free - you can forage mushrooms on the town belt (like Baz, who brought the NCCC team some fancy porcini mushrooms from up there!), find kōihi (NZ spinach) amongst the trees or make whole salads (like my mate Charlie who finds food in the weeds in her garden)! Just make sure you know what you're eating before you eat it...

You can also get involved with local community gardens, who are trying to bring back free food to our communities - like Kaicycle Gardens ([facebook.com/KaicycleWgtn](https://www.facebook.com/KaicycleWgtn)) right here in Newtown on Hospital Road, or the Community Orchard in our sibling suburb Berhampore (bit.ly/3f8dg1K).

If you need something a bit lower commitment, come along to our 'Free Soup Friday' 12-1pm every Friday at the community centre. Our rad volunteers Axel, George and Baz make two beautiful soups every week, plus a delish (defs not a chore to eat) salad and usually garlic bread - all for the community to share. I mean really, what brings us together more than kai?

Ngā mihi,
Ellie

Cover by Maria Teresa Braga, who made this beautiful 'kai' embroidery patch as part of the NCCC's Fabric Mural - read more about this later in the issue!

**Thanks for the support
of our amazing local
businesses! Please
support 'em back!**



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Notorious Newtown

Axel wanders around the Vinnies office with Emma Coelho and finds out what they get up to in there!

If you've ever gone op-shopping in Newtown you've probably visited the St Vincent de Paul (or, more casually, Vinnies) op-shop on Riddiford street. What you might not be as familiar with is what they do outside of the op-shop. Luckily, Emma can clarify.

Emma is Vinnies Wellington's Welfare and Service coordinator, a substantial

mouthful of a title that Emma describes as "being the first face that people see when they come to Vinnies— seeing where they are in the moment and how we can best support them." The support and projects Vinnies runs ranges from things like social work support and pregnancy assistance to a food bank and a yearly Christmas appeal.



As Emma and I speak and she shows me around the office (including a room dedicated to manufacturing altar breads!) people are coming in and out constantly. Soon after starting the interview a couple of people come through carrying armfuls of toilet paper and detergent for the food bank. Emma offers to lend a hand, so we end up helping carry the items up two flights of stairs and into the food bank storage. Emma explains that they're "a small team—everyone is always willing

help out and muck in". She says that's her favourite thing about Newtown, that "kind of closeness and community-sense. Everyone is willing to help each other."

The food bank at Vinnies operates on a choice-based model. Emma says people used to receive a pre-packaged set, but they would sometimes just take out the items they didn't know about or how to cook. Now they can choose things they are familiar with. It's also important that they're in control of the support Vinnies provides them, and there's a feeling of increased dignity in allowing people to make their own decisions. Emma says people can be taken aback by the ability to choose, that there's a sense of control maybe not present in other aspects of their life.

Speaking of choice and kai, I asked Emma what she would pick if she could only eat one meal for the rest of her life: "That's really hard! Probably... Pizza. Or Vietnamese. Rice vermicelli salad, crispy tofu, peanut sauce." Yum. She reckons the best kai in Newtown is either at The Ramen Shop or Mason (she reps the garden at Baobab when the weather is nice, though).

She continues to duck out every so often as we speak. There's the sense that the hustle and bustle never stops. Emma says there's always more demand than Vinnies can really meet, and it's constantly going up—there's currently roughly a 60% increase in demand for food parcels compared to last year. Living costs just keep climbing and it can be hard to keep up. But they'll continue to try.

Any words for the people of Newtown? "Just keep doing what you're doing," Emma says. "I think there's a good vibe and people look out for each other. Especially during these times, when things are even harder for some people."

Quickfire Quick Kai Qs!

Quick Kai are a crew of committed young peeps who make a big pot of delish food each week on Thursday at the Community Centre, which is frozen into single serve portions. You can pick up a single-serve, healthy, frozen ready to heat-and-eat meal for just \$2 from the Community Centre between Monday - Friday 9-4.30. They're also available through the Vinnie's FoodBank. We asked the crew some quickfire quick kai Qs.



Oliver

What is Quick Kai?

"I'm a founding member of Quick Kai - Eryn at the Community Centre suggested we do some community based cooking and I'm glad we did, because I really enjoy helping the community. People around Newtown know us as the Quick Kai team now and we make people happy."



Jaz

Why is Quick Kai important to the people who eat the food?

"It's yummy food, it's healthy, you can enjoy it at home, it's only \$2!! Some of the food goes to the Vinnie's foodbank - for people in the community who need it."



Katelyn

Why is it important to you as chefs?

"So that we can learn to cook for when we move out of home and to help our family out. And helping out the community so they can have healthy food!"

Kai and Karakia

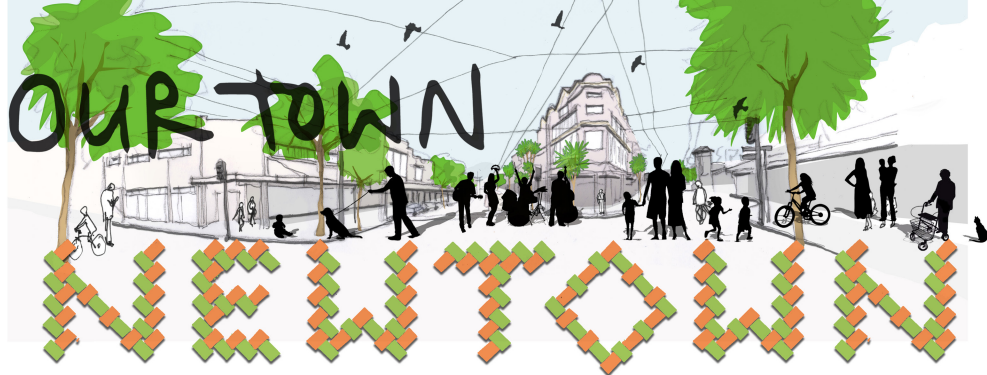
By Srishti Moudgil

Every afternoon I sing karakia with tamariki and kaiako at the daycare where I work. The moment we start singing Whakapaingia Enei Kai my mind goes back to the time when I used to eat food with my whole family together including parents and grandparents. Before starting our meals, we would always join hands chanting mantras in Hindi and Sanskrit. As a child, I used to imitate the elders without knowing what it actually meant. I remember my grandfather always said that we should always thank God and nature for the food on our plate. I loved doing this as a family ritual and even now I continue to do so. But sometimes I used to think why do we need to pray before we eat?

In my early teens, when my intellect had started seeking logic over innocence, one day I asked my dad, "Why do we say prayers and chants before eating?" My dad said, "The food you see on your plate is a result of hard work of a lot of people. He taught me a magical mantra that day, "Annadata Sukhi Bhava". He continued, "You should say it three times before you have any meal. This is a Sanskrit prayer which means ann daata = the giver of food, sukhi = happy, bhava = be.

The first one for the farmers who took great pains to grow the food for us. The second time for merchants and traders who brought it to the market and the third for the ones who cooked the food. Bless them all, for without their efforts it wouldn't have reached your plate. Be grateful to God and nature for an opportunity to enjoy healthy food with whānau and friends."

Amen. Happy Christmas and New Year everyone! Arohanui, Srishti Moudgil



Jumping on the roof of the Community Centre (aka, we're getting an upgrade!!)

Yes, we know, we know, we've said it before, but this time we're hoping it's for real: THE NEWTOWN COMMUNITY & CULTURAL CENTRE (NCCC) IS GETTING UPGRADED! There have been a bunch of delays over the last couple of years, but we're further on in the project than ever before and we're starting to get really excited.

A big part of why we're excited is that we got to actually walk around the flash new community centre! And not just walking - we also jumped onto the roof, flew over the building, poked our heads through walls, dropped down an empty lift shaft - all sorts of shenanigans! NO, we haven't been sat at our desks so long that our brains have started to rot and NO, we haven't grown wings: we did all this in VIRTUAL REALITY!

In late November, we (Eryn and Ellie, the NCCC Kaiwhakahaere / Coordinators, some Newtown community members who have been steering this whole project, plus the Community Services team from our funders (thanks!!), Wellington City Council) headed down to the offices of our architect (shout out to Cushla and her team at WSP Opus) and put on some very futuristic looking headsets. The headset made the person wearing it feel like they were walking around the new community centre (and/or jumping onto the roof). It also made everyone else in the room laugh a lot, as the wearer wandered unseeingly around the room, screeching at how beautiful everything was while tripping over wires and bumping into people.

Unfortunately we haven't found a way to incorporate virtual reality into the Newtown News, but fortunately, we do have some 3D computer generated pictures of what the new flash looking NCCC will look like. Check them out on the next pages!

The next steps of the upgrade project are signing off these final versions of the drawings and then putting in building consent applications. After that's all been approved, the job will go out to tender, meaning we'll choose a building company to work with to make it all a reality! If all goes smoothly, we should be moving into an exciting temporary space in Newtown from April 11th 2021.

If you want to find out more about the build, the plans and the history of the project, check out: bitly.com/OurTownNewtown

Entrance area of the NCCC



Drop-in area



The Dance Hall





View from outside

The Newtown Community & Cultural Centre upgrade



The theatre from up on stage



CommUNITY through Craftivism

Mire, the Community Centre's Artist in Residence, recently organised a series of Craftivism Workshops for the Newtown community. Craftivism is where activism and crafting meet. Around 16 people worked on creating a fabric mural together, which is where Maria Teresa's awesome embroidered cover image for this Newtown News 'kai, papatūānuku' came from. The kaupapa of the mural was 'unity' - come and check it out, (it's just opposite us on the corner of Colombo & Rintoul Streets). You might even be lucky enough to take a part of it home with you: like all street art, this mural is temporary, and Mire is playing into that temporary nature by encouraging people to take a panel home, so it can become a permanent part of Newtown in a different way - there is a pair of scissors hanging next to the mural, so come along and grab one. You'll also see a bunch of the patches are related to kai in some way!

The craftivism was so successful and fun that we've set up a new weekly sesh of crafting with Mire on Wednesdays evenings, known as the Newtown Craftivism Collective! Anyone is welcome. For more info, head to: bit.ly/2UYSa3a

Seeds to Feeds

By Rhona O'Neill

Seeds to Feeds is a summer-long festival celebrating locally grown, naturally grown, community-building food. We support local suburb based teams of cooks, hosts and growers to develop a vision in their suburb; Grow, forage and preserve local food throughout the summer; Run food related events using local knowledge such as workshops, practical classes and working bees; Cook and host a delicious community based dinner where the locally produced food is the star of the show. So the **Newtown Seeds to Feeds** team is busy scheming away!



Seeds are in the ground now, both literally for veggies AND metaphorically, with some exciting workshops in the pipeline. **Feeds** will be on the 27th of February in Newtown, with a ticketed event to share our harvest with friends old and new, celebrating skills learned and connections made. And you can get involved!

- We want your extra home-grown fruits, veggies or herbs, anytime from now!
- We want your recipes! Newtown is a very diverse suburb and we would love to see that reflected in our feed event.
- We want you! If you have time & energy to share, get stuck in, whether it's gardening, foraging, preserving or hosting.

Check out the website and get in touch! www.seedstofeeds.nz



Michael suggested this awesome new regular Newtown News feature after having a nice experience in a Newtown op-shop! Submit your 'Newtown Niceness' experiences to ellie@newtowncommunity.org.nz

Michael decided to buy some new shoes, with a fixed budget! He decided to have a mooch around the op-shops of Newtown, because we have such a great range. Eventually in the last op-shop he checked, he found the perfect pair - high quality, good condition grey trainers, for a bargain price. He transferred the money to the right account, only to be told at the checkout that they were more expensive. When he pointed out the price sticker, and said that the new amount was over his budget, they gave them to him for even cheaper than the stickered price! Hooray!

Newtown Recipes

Ellie's refreshing lemon and elderflower cordial:

I've been making elderflower cordial this spring (I'm lucky enough to have an elder tree in my garden, which donates me flowers for cordial in late spring/summer and berries for jam in autumn!)

Roundabout 2kg of sugar, 2.5 litres of water, 40g of citric acid (helps it keep longer & makes it a wee bit tangy), arouuuund 30 'heads' of elderflowers (on the stalks, but no leaves) & 5 or 6 lemons. In a big saucepan, heat the sugar with boiled water outta the jug (so you don't lose too much liquid boiling it) until it's dissolved. When it's dissolved, chuck in sliced lemons (for max lemonyness, also peel off the zest first & put that in separately), elderflowers (just as they are, on the stalks - you can shake or rinse them carefully to get the bugs off if you don't want the extra protein lol). Cover it, leave it alone for 24 hours (somewhere that ants can't find it or you'll end up with a LOT of extra protein eek) then strain it through a fine mesh sieve - just the kind you use for sifting flour is all good. Comes to about 3 or 4 litres of cordial! Put it in some clean jars/bottles and keep it in the fridge - it'll last about a month (though if you're anything like me it'll be gone way before then) - drink diluted with water, soda, or add to a G&T (mmmm).

Eryn's cauliflower rice:

An awesome side-dish for about 4 people, this cauli rice goes great with falafels and fits heaps of dietary requirements: it's gluten free, keto AND vegan! Dry fry 1 cup of seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, whatever you like) 'til they're golden - set aside until later. Grate half a cauliflower, until it's rice size-ish and chuck it in the pan with 2 tbsp of sesame oil (this is totes essential, makes it delish). Add in a grated zucchini, a teaspoon of GF soy sauce/tamari and squeeze half a lemon over the whole thing. Sprinkle in some onion and garlic powder (if you don't have these, just use a bit of onion and garlic, but put them in earlier). Rip some handfuls of spinach (straight from the garden if you're lucky) and chuck them in. Fry it all until it's heated through and the spinach is wilted. Add your pre-toasted seeds (oh you're so organised, well done), and 1/3 cup of sesame seeds, stirring it all through. Chuck on salt and pepper to taste!

Newtown becomes Booktown!

By Tom Ogier

Newtown is becoming Wellington's book capital. With five established booksellers on one street and another opening round the corner, plus the library, it is now the go-to place for bibliophiles. 'Newtown now has the highest concentration of bookshops in Wellington, possibly even in New Zealand,' said resident writer Francis Cook. Riddiford Street alone boasts Book Haven, Next Chapter, Book Hound and Rainbow Books, as well as the Freedom Anarchist bookshop in Opportunity for Animals.

These are now joined by Food Court Books on Constable Street. 'These spaces are great for community and part of what makes Newtown so friendly, they invite conversation and interest,' said Mr Cook, who co-edits Starling Journal. They also bring events to the area, from poetry and prose readings to the recent Verb Festival functions earlier this month.

Book Haven owner Don Hollander, who hosted Witchy Fiction Writers as part of Verb, was delighted with the developments. 'It's great that people are reading and shopping local, and understandable with such an impressive variety,' he said. 'Our shops do things sufficiently differently that we compliment each other rather than being competitive.'

Book Haven minion Tom Ogier said the suburb's appetite for literature matched its characterful populous. 'Newtown's a bustle of open-minded, thoughtful, creative and alternative thinkers, so we've got to keep fuelling those brains with stimulating books.'

Despite being new kids on the block, Food Court Books owner Jackson Nieuwland was overwhelmed by the welcome. 'This community has been so supportive, encouraging and not at all competitive. Don from Book Haven even came along to offer us chairs and cups for our launch events.'

Nieuwland and partner Carolyn De Carlo held events around the suburb for years before launching their own space to showcase small and independent publishers. 'We sell books people might not know they want yet, so if someone comes looking for anything we don't have, we're happy to send them along to the other shops which have such a wide selection.'

Prolific reader Lani Buchanan was browsing the shelves. 'Shopping for books around here is like treasure-hunting, though most of what you're searching through is treasure too. I can pick up something I've never heard of but find it too interesting to leave behind.'

Book Hound co-owner Annalese Jochems thought the proliferation consistent with other trends. 'This is such an interesting and well-read suburb, with the best eateries, best gardens, most charming people, and now a complete ecosystem of bookshops. We're very happy to be here.'



Lani checking out some books in Newtown

What's the happs?

At Newtown Community & Cultural Centre (Corner of Colombo & Rintoul Streets)

Community Centre summer closure dates

Our last day open is Weds 23rd December, reopening January 11th 2021. Until 8th Feb, the office will have reduced hours - 9-4.30pm Weds & Thurs, 9-3pm Mon, Tues and Fri. For 2021 class dates, check our calendar bit.ly/2lYfoO9

\$2 Yoga & Tai classes at the NCCC

Get your yoga / tai-chi fix before classes pause over the summer break and you have to rely on youtube!

- Tai chi - advanced: Tuesdays 10-11.15am. Last class 15th Dec, restarts 19th Jan
- Baby friendly yoga - Tuesdays 10-11.15am. Last class 22nd Dec, restarts 19th Jan
- Yoga & chai: Thursdays 10-11.15am. Last class 17th Dec, restarts 14th Jan
- Tai chi - beginners: Fridays 10-11.15. Last class 18th Dec, restarts 22nd Jan

Rangatahi movie night, Wednesday 9th December 3.30 - 6pm

14-18 yr olds, come hang with youth-workers Annika & Sinead for popcorn, pizza and a movie. Email youth@newtowncommunity.org.nz / call/text/whatsapp 022 698 2328

Newtown Craftivism Collective - Wednesdays 5.30-8pm (2nd, 9th & 16th Dec 2020)

Drop in weekly crafting sessions, hosted by Mire, our Artist in Residence! We'll have materials. BYO project or start fresh! Find out more at bit.ly/2UYSa3a

FREE circus workshops for kids - 16th Jan 12.15-1.15pm, 17th Jan 1.30-2.30pm

Get moving in exciting new ways with circus skills! Hula hoops, juggling, handstands & acrobatics. Open to all kids in a supportive environment. Registrations essential - email lauraelizabethoakley12@gmail.com.

Flora and the Fantastic Flowers - circus show for kids! Fri 22nd Jan 6pm, Sat 23rd Jan 1pm, Sun 24th Jan 6pm.

A 35 min interactive comedy/circus show for kids. Flora is trying to paint a still life with a floral

flavour but her studio is full of distractions - cheeky bumblebees, a larger than life sunflower and circus surprises! Entry by donation (suggested gold coin - \$5)

At Newtown Hall (71 Daniell Street)

Narcotics Anonymous, Wednesdays 5.30-6.30pm (runs all year)

Holidays are a difficult time for many of us - NA runs through the summer break, so they're here whenever you need them. Call 0800 628 632 for more info.

Zinefest Summer Blessing: workshops & market, Sat 12th Dec, 10-5

A full day of stalls, workshops and creating together as a zine community to manifest a season of inspiration and abundance! More info: bit.ly/2HAXGUH

At Network Newtown (9-11 Constable Street)

Addictive Eaters Anonymous (AEA), Thursdays 7.30pm (runs all year)

Kai can be a tricky issue. Get support with binge eating, anorexia, bulimia, other forms of addictive eating at weekly meetings, running through the summer break www.addictiveeatersanonymous.org

Happening elsewhere

No Sh*t Gift Shop. Saturday, December 12th 10am-3pm, Aro Valley Community Centre, 48 Aro Street

Timebankers show off their talents, selling crafts, homewares, clothing, preserves & more at this market of sustainable, no sh*t gifts! All welcome. More info here: bit.ly/39CLxff

St Tom's last brekkie for 2020, Sunday 20th December 9am, Newtown School

Join for their last 2020 christmas free breakfast!

Kaicycle farm volunteering - Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays 11am-4pm, Kaicycle Farm, Hospital Road

Head down to your local urban farm to help grow veggies! Check out kaicycle.org.nz/volunteer

Get in touch:

www.newtowncommunity.org.nz
www.facebook.com/newtowncommunity.centre

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