

Haratua - May 2021

# NEWTOWN NEWS



YOUR FREE COMMUNITY ZINE  
FOR NEWTOWN, BY NEWTOWNERS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY NEWTOWN  
COMMUNITY & CULTURAL CENTRE

# Kia ora Newtown

Kia ora e te whānau,

Welcome back to the Newtown Newzzzz! The kaupapa of this edition is birth, first because this month 117 years ago in 1904, the WORLD'S FIRST state-run hospital dedicated to bubbas being born, was built right here in Newtown, on Rintoul Street (check out the History Files article for more deets later in the edition!).

The other reason for the birth kaupapa is that the Newtown Community Centre is starting the process of being rebirthed! We're having our renovations, starting in May 2021, but we've already started the moving process. So from May 3rd, we'll be open for about a year at our new space, **2a Green Street**, above the old ANZ bank.

We'll be back at the old centre (corner of Colombo & Rintoul Streets) for our amazing ART JAM farewell party on May 14th, 15th and 16th. All the nooks and crannies and secret rooms of the empty community centre are gonna be full of art, graffiti all over the walls, installations, music and performances for you to explore. Think of this event as the clicking of the lighter, to set the fire, to rebirth the phoenix out of the flames - bigger and brighter and better. (the phoenix being the community centre, obvs). Also, just to stretch the metaphor even further, artists kinda birth their work as well, right??!

So, a general shout out to all peeps who give birth, and those that help them; whether it's babies, art, or new community centres; yay for yous.

Ngā mihi,  
Ellie Clayton - [ellie@newtowncommunity.org.nz](mailto:ellie@newtowncommunity.org.nz)

Cover art by the amazing George Banach Salas! THANK YOU!

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



*The views and opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. They do not necessarily reflect those of the Newtown Community & Cultural Centre.*

# Notorious NEWtowner

**Ellie from the Community Centre and artist Nicole Gaston chat political pottery**

Nicole is from Chicago, but has lived in Aotearoa for around 11 years, having come here to do a PhD with Vic Uni, who she had collaborated with whilst overseas. But there's more to her journey! "From living in West Africa and Europe to Southeast Asia and the Caribbean...from education and library work to social justice & the Peace Corps".



Nicole's day-job is as a librarian, which nicely complements her love of pottery. Her PhD was (naturally) very writing heavy, so she looked around for something else to do - stumbling across a pottery course. "I just really fell in love with clay - that was 10 years ago. I'm mostly self-taught, after an 8-week introductory course in 2011, pretty much everything else I've just taught myself, done workshops, and watched YouTube videos."

Nicole works out of her warehouse/home studio on Mansfield Street, on a hidden laneway of artists, woodworkers, tattooists and more. She's set up with a kiln and wheel and the art she creates here melds politics with pottery, with soap dishes imprinted with "wash your hands of capitalism" and other works highlighting anti-racism, the environment and more personal messages like "go away I'm reading". The first time I saw Nicole's work was when my friend was drinking coffee from a mug saying 'ask me about my white privilege' which certainly sparked my interest. "Yeah - pottery is accessible and functional. People use it, so it starts conversations."

Nicole credits her hometown for starting her interest in social justice - "Chicago is a really diverse but segregated city. There's lots of issues...I always knew about racism and my privilege". Chicago is also what drew Nicole to Newtown - "it reminded me the most of Chicago, with the same diversity vibe, good restaurants and a supermarket." Mechanical Tempest, the free bike workshop is also one of Nicole's fave things about Newtown - "I've been a volunteer there for like ten years - I LOVE that space."

"I just love the community here, I love how there's so many great people doing all sorts of different awesome things and supporting each other. Keep being awesome...and hopefully we can survive the housing crisis and gentrification and not let it destroy our community."

Check out Nicole's work at [www.niceassets.co.nz](http://www.niceassets.co.nz) on Insta @[@nice.assets](https://www.instagram.com/nice.assets) or in real life at *Veronica Design Life, 261 Mansfield Street*

# Underfunded & Overworked

By Kirsten Van Newtown

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In February I spent several weeks on level 4 of Wellington Hospital, plucked from the muggy summer heat outside. For ten days I was there for observation and to prepare for a potentially complicated birth, and then in the foggy haze of hormones and newborn cries. I am terrible at cooking and love a routine, so the predictable days punctuated by cheerful meal delivery were a calming antidote to the curveball that my placenta had decided to throw at me.

It took over a fortnight from first receiving the diagnosis of placenta accreta before I saw the Maternal Fetal Medicine team. I spent these weeks anxious crying and reading everything I could about management of this condition and so when I finally met with the obstetrics team a plan was agreed on swiftly and I was admitted for observation a few days later. I had never in my life been so enthusiastic about being admitted to hospital.

The staff on the ward were incredible. The doctors and nurses provided complicated explanations and medical care with patience and compassion. The midwives were a total dream team, dashing from ward to ward to support whānau at all stages of pregnancy and birth. Every day I was astounded at the kindness and generosity they displayed. And every day I grew more and more aware of how chronically understaffed the maternity ward was, and how this is a problem the length of Aotearoa.

There are myriad reports and recommendations from professional organisations highlighting the issues with our maternity sector and detailing the solutions that we need. But these recommendations are consistently ignored and our maternity sector is now perilously under-resourced and under-staffed. I cannot overstate how dangerous the current situation is - for pregnant and birthing people and their families, and also for our brilliant midwives, doctors, and nurses who are desperately juggling constantly shrinking staffing and resources, and increasingly complex care needs of their communities.

It is sheer luck that I didn't experience a catastrophic haemorrhage before I made it to admission. But having a safe birth shouldn't be down to luck - it should be down to our government providing excellent maternity infrastructure so that everyone can birth in the way that is safest for them.

It's our government's responsibility to fix this crisis, and it's our responsibility to demand they do the fixing. I started a petition that you can sign to show that you want a properly resourced maternity system too: [bit.ly/3dgCFqC](https://bit.ly/3dgCFqC)



# History Files: Newtown's first midwifery hospital



By Chris Rabey

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In 1904, the Wellington Hospital Trustees became concerned at the lack of clean facilities used for the care of parents and their babies. That year they approved the erection of a nurse's home (built the same year) costing 17,000 pounds, placed on a rise close to the main hospital. The three-storey brick building, with towers and verandas, gave the nursing staff much improved facilities, with greater comfort and additional freedom. By 1910 it was providing accommodation for 96 nurses and maids.

Now that the nurses had a home of their own, the Trustees sought further accommodation for nursing staff caring for babies and parents. The quality of midwives' work varied from caring and competent to dirty and dangerous. The Assistant Inspector of Hospitals, Grace Neill, wanted to improve the midwifery work for parents and babies.

It was Grace who was instrumental in seeing a specialist facility for the midwives and their patients erected, and it was ready for occupation on Monday 28 May, 1905. At that time it was situated in a 24-room building on Rintoul Street. Grace had engaged two very experienced women as matron and sub-matron.

Grace Neill gave the hospital the name "St Helen's", named after the birthplace of the Premier, Richard Seddon. Seddon had previously passed legislation which allowed for registration of midwives, state-subsidised midwives for the poor, and state-owned maternity homes. Neill then set up three more St Helen's hospitals, which were the first state-run maternity hospitals in the world.

As well as providing care for expectant parents, the St Helen's Hospitals trained midwifery students. Seven St Helen's hospitals were set up around NZ, and survived as such until 1990, when the last one—in Auckland—was renamed National Women's Hospital. When a new block was opened in Wellington Hospital grounds to cater specifically for midwives and their patients, it was named 'Grace Neill Block' in honour of the creator.

# Birth place

Art & words by  
Mirella Moschella  
Instagram @mira\_a\_mire



Lima la loca, la gris la hermosa,  
Ciudad de los Reyes, los Quispe, los trece  
millones y los Costa.

Lugar que levantó el desierto con material  
noble y esteras de libertad,  
En donde las olas empujan carreteras para  
darse su lugar.

Ni los Andrades ni los Muñoces pudieron  
contigo, con tu caos y belleza.

Eres como un rompecabeza que nadie ha  
podido terminar de armar

Con tantos colores, caras, gente; pero todo,  
todo diferente.

Sin un plan o sentido, creciste como un árbol  
fuerte, pero torcido.

Trataste de refugiar a aquellos que llegaron  
dejándolo todo y esperando tanto

Pero encontraron un gigante arisco, de  
concreto y con asco.

Ellos siguieron y crearon sus espacios, esa  
parte tuya alegre, estridente, de fiestas  
coloridas.

Sigo encontrando piezas tuyas aquí  
conmigo,

A un Pacífico de distancia, desde donde te  
miro.

Y se que bajo la tierra nuestras raíces se  
unen cual serpiente dorada,

Que nos cuida, nos protege y respalda.

Lima de las cruces, los cerros, Chifas y  
tanques.

Lima conmigo, en todas partes.

The crazy and beautiful Lima  
City of the Kings, the Quispes, the thirteen  
million, and the Costas.

Place that rise the desert with noble  
materials and sticks of freedom  
Where the waves push the roads to take  
their space.

Not the Andrades, neither the Muñoces  
could make it with you, with your chaos  
and beauty.

You are like a puzzle that no one can  
finish.

With so many colors, faces, people but  
everything so different.

With no plans or sense, you grew like a  
strong tree but all twisted.

You tried to host to those that came  
leaving everything behind and waiting  
for much.

But what they found was a concrete giant  
that looked at them with disgust.

They kept building their spaces, the  
happy, strident, colorful, festive part of  
you.

I keep finding you here with me, one  
Pacific distance from you. From where I  
watch you.

And I know that under the ground, our  
roots together like the golden serpent.

Take care of us; they protect us and  
support us.

Lima of the crosses, the mountains,  
Chifas, and tanks.

You are with me, everywhere.



# Newtown Community Centre is moving!

The Community Centre is having MAJOR renovations, starting late May 2021. So we've moved out! From May 3rd, the Newtown Community Centre, our Youth Programme & Wellington Timebank will all be at our new space

at 2a Green Street for about a year during the renovations! We'll have some community space to hire, our Free Soup Fridays will continue there and we'll have a rad drop-in room if you want a free cuppa. Newtown Hall and Network Newtown are still available for hire. Our \$2 yoga and tai chi classes are all ongoing. Some things have moved, so check what's the Happs (on the back page!), [bit.ly/nccctimetable](https://bit.ly/nccctimetable) or email [info@newtowncommunity.org.nz](mailto:info@newtowncommunity.org.nz) / call 04 389 4786 for info on new venues! Come say kia ora!



## Newtown's Time Capsule

The Newtown Community Centre is putting together a time capsule to be buried in the community centre during the renovations, and opened in 2071! We've had a couple of events and had some awesome things included - here's a sneak preview. Let us know if you want to include something- email [info@newtowncommunity.org.nz](mailto:info@newtowncommunity.org.nz)



A drawing of Newtown!

A t-shirt from a Newtown anti-loan shark campaign



The original sketch of Kerb's 2021 mural on Newtown Hall



# What's the Happs?

The Newtown Community Centre is having renovations! So from May 3rd, for about a year, we'll be at our new space - **2a Green Street**, above the old ANZ bank. Check our timetable at [bit.ly/nccctimetable](http://bit.ly/nccctimetable)

## **At the OLD Community Centre (corner Colombo & Rintoul Sts)**

**ART JAM GIG - Friday 14th, 6-10.30pm**  
The Community Centre & Neptune Collective are coming together to present an awesome gig to open our closing event! Bands Souldrop and NahBo confirmed + more TBC! \$20. Gig at 7pm, ticketholders can explore Art Jam from 6pm. [bit.ly/newtownartjam](http://bit.ly/newtownartjam)

## **ART JAM - Sat 15th 9am-2pm & Sun 16th May 12-7pm**

To farewell the empty centre - we're opening all the doors, hidden rooms and nooks & crannies. What might you find? Local artists' work to admire and buy, light shows, art installations, graffiti art all over the walls, live music, dance and community performances. [bit.ly/newtownartjam](http://bit.ly/newtownartjam)

## **At Newtown Hall (71 Daniell St)**

### **\$2 Yoga - Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10-11.15**

Our \$2 yoga classes run every week during school holidays. Tuesday is a relaxed/baby-friendly class! Both suitable for all levels - mats provided. [bit.ly/3tYsfSH](http://bit.ly/3tYsfSH)

### **Lunchtime Koha Kundalini Yoga - Wednesdays 12-1 from 12th May (not running during school hols)**

Have a lunch-break & work your physical and emotional energies, strengthen the nervous and glandular systems, shine your aura and build stamina! All-levels with adjustments offered. Koha. Some mats provided.

## **At the NEW Community Centre (2a Green Street)**

### **Welcome afternoon tea! Tuesday 4th May, 1-3pm**

We're super excited to show off our new space - so come share arvo tea with us and we'll show you around. Check out our community lounge, pacman machine, coffee machine & foosball table! [bit.ly/2PcKjZW](http://bit.ly/2PcKjZW)

### **Free Soup Friday - Fridays from May 7th, 12-1pm**

Join us for a free soup lunch for the whole community, every Friday veggie/vegan available- now at our new space!

### **Free lawyer - Wednesday 5th May 11-12**

Monthly on the first Wednesday, a Community Law rōia/lawyer joins us to give you FREE advice! No appointment needed. [bit.ly/2PtFtaZ](http://bit.ly/2PtFtaZ)

### **Youth Spoken Word Showcase - Friday May 14th, 6pm**

Rangatahi aged 14-24 are invited to perform at this safe and fun spoken word showcase! Come and give it a go! Email [youth@newtowncommunity.org.nz](mailto:youth@newtowncommunity.org.nz) if you're interested in performing. Everyone welcome to watch - FREE, plus we have snacks! [bit.ly/2R2yO88](http://bit.ly/2R2yO88)

## **At St Anne's Hall (22 Emmett St)**

### **\$2 tai chi - Tuesdays (advanced) and Fridays (beginner), 10-11.15am**

Join our experienced tai chi teacher for classes that will improve your balance and strength, all for just \$2! [bit.ly/3sRVNQs](http://bit.ly/3sRVNQs)

## **Get in touch**

[www.newtowncommunity.org.nz](http://www.newtowncommunity.org.nz)  
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