

Newtown News

Nā Te Whare Hapori o Newtown / Brought to you by the
Newtown Community & Cultural Centre



Poutū-te-rangi / March '22

Tō koutou makahīni hapori: mō Newtown, nā
ngā tāngata o Newtown /
Your community zine: for Newtown, by Newtowners

Kia ora Newtown

Kia ora tātou / hey everyone!

As you probs already know, Newtown Festival - one of the highlights of Newtown's social calendar - has sadly been cancelled this year, due to Covid. Usually this Newtown News is an extra special Newtown Festival edition, so to tide you over until next year, we have an interview with Rhona, who's essential to the Fest's inner workings, a message from the organisers and a lil' quiz. Looking at this beautiful cover pic of Bic Runga's set, it seems surreal right now to imagine being around all those people! I often remember that same year when Eryn and I gave out GALLONS of sunscreen to punters - NF is charmed eh, always sunny!!

But yeah, this Covid stuff is getting real for us now eh? I just read that today (28th Feb 2022) marks 2 years since the first Covid case was recorded in Aotearoa, although we've spent most of the time since then (at least here in Wellington) without restrictions! I've watched friends and whānau overseas struggling with this disease while we've been lucky enough to avoid it. I'm glad that we're truly facing Covid now that most of have been vaccinated, unlike my overseas friends, but it still can be a very serious disease, especially for people who have other conditions already. So keep it up Newtown - masks, physical distancing, staying home & getting tested if you're sick. I appreciate when I'm walking through Newtown and I see everyone wearing a mask. We're smashing it!

If you or someone you know is isolating because of Covid, there's lots of support available - go to the Government's advice here: bit.ly/3sAjjkh or if you'd like some local support / advice, or just a friendly chat with Eryn or I, feel free to give us a call on 04 389 4786.

Ngā mihi,
Ellie

Cover photo of Bic Runga on Newtown Festival's South Stage in 2019, by Mark Russell of Renegade Peach

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 & Rhona catch up in Rhona's sunny, art-filled living room and kōrero over the sound of windchimes from the garden

Rhona Carson is the President of the NRA (that's the 'Newtown Residents Association', NOT the notorious US gun club you're thinking of!) and a key part of Newtown Festival. She doesn't love the limelight (thanks for being Notorious Newtowner despite that Rhona!!), so you may not know her, but she's an essential force making things happen behind the scenes in our 'burb.

Rhona has whakapapa to the UK on both sides - the Welch family on her father's side arrived in Petone in 1840, while her mother's side escaped WW2 bombing in the UK for Wellington. Her parents met in Wellington and moved to the Hokianga where Rhona was born. Later moving to Nelson (where she met her husband Nev as a teen!), she did her BA in Canterbury, before studying social work at Vic and had a year in 1976 gallivanting overseas (Europe, Fiji, the US, Mexico, India, Iran!). When she returned, she ended up where she clearly actually belongs - the southern suburbs of Wellington - Berhampore and then Newtown. Her home since 1990 is a charming cottage nestled on the town belt, with a lush garden, which Rhona now dedicates to the community as it's become more difficult for her to maintain. "Seeds to Feeds are growing veggies there at the moment!" (check them out if you don't know their mahi www.seedstofeeds.nz)

Rhona's roots have grown deep in Newtown - she worked as a social worker and psychotherapist for the hospital for more than 30 years - but it's really when retirement kicked in that she really dug into community mahi - a call from her festival-organising sister Anna to "come down to the office and help out answering calls from stallholders" turned into her being the General Administrator for the whole Festival! This takes all year, including Festival day itself "my day starts at around 5am to prepare for stallholders to arrive". Rather than being out and about, enjoying the sights, sounds and vibes of the Festival, Rhona is usually on a walkie talkie, personing the Festival office and being a port of call for anyone with questions. The last couple of years she did "have a chance to take a short break and get around on the Council mobility scooter, which was great."

The NRA, Rhona says, exists to "be the interface between the community and official bodies, like Council or Government, to do submissions that will benefit Newtown ...We do what we can to maintain the Newtown we've always loved, which is diverse and welcoming." They made a huge submission on the Council's Spatial Plan last year, proposing heaps more housing. Anyone who has a love for Newtown can join, and Rhona's message to Newtowners is to get involved! "We want a more diverse membership so more Newtown voices can be heard" - check out newtown.org.nz for more info.

When Rhona's not busy making our community a better and cooler place, she loves the theatre and reading - she's in a monthly book club - and has a long list of favourite Newtown spots "Peoples, the library, Baobab, Cicio Cacio - we've been going there for celebrations of one sort or another for many years!" I stop her before she names every place in Newtown.

So, when you turn up on Festival day in March next year, or when you notice that Council has been lobbied to make improvements in the 'burb, give thanks to Rhona (and others like her!). You might not see her front and centre, but rest assured, she's backstage making something happen.



NEWTOWN FESTIVAL

Last December, organisers of the beloved Newtown Festival made the decision to cancel the event scheduled for the 6th of March. With the Omicron outbreak imminent, the call was made to give the public, stallholders, and performers clarity so time, effort, and funds weren't wasted when there was a strong likelihood of forced cancellation. Uncertainty incurs stress for people and caring about people's wellbeing is a core part of our Newtown Festival kaupapa.

On the 21st of December, organisers posted this statement to their website and Facebook page. "After a lot of planning and consulting, we're sad to let you know that the Newtown Festival we know and love cannot take place in 2022. This has not been an easy decision for us, but the safety and wellbeing of everyone is our first priority in these COVID times. We have been blessed with 25 years of awesome Newtown Festivals, and we're planning to keep the spirit of Newtown Festival alive during 2022 as we focus on bringing you a spectacular event in 2023."

Newtown Festival has a family-friendly focus with lots of free carnival rides and games for tamariki. Children won't all be safely vaccinated and COVID resistant by the first Sunday in March

To help support stallholders and local businesses who missed out, the festival team are creating an online marketplace at no charge with a webpage for every stall to promote their products and services. This is expected to be up and running during March.



Photo credit: Vanessa Rushton vanessarushon.co.nz

Newtown Fest quiz!

Are you an experienced Festival goer or a Newtown newbie? Test your knowledge with this handy quiz to prep for 2023!

1. When did Newtown Festival last go ahead on the date planned?
a. 2021, b. 2020, c. 2019, d. all of these
2. Newtown Festival's whole suburb takeover evolved out of a smaller local celebration. Where was that held? a. MacAlister Park, b. Carrara Park, c. Newtown Park, d. at the Zoo
3. What is the name of the stage at the intersection of Russell Terrace, Mansfield Street & Riddiford Street? a. North Stage, b. East Stage, c. South Stage, d. West Stage
4. What time does Newtown Festival usually kick off with a mihi whakatau (welcome) from local iwi Te Āti Awa? a. Dawn, b. 9.30am, c. 11am, d. midday
5. How many stalls were there at the last Newtown Festival? a. 80 b. 290, c. 420, d. 630.

Answers on next page. **Mostly correct?** You are such a Festival expert, you've probably already got your sunnies and bumbag on for 2023. **Mostly incorrect?** No worries, Newtown Festival is chill as - remember your sunscreen though!

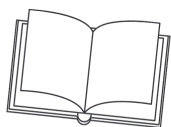


"To the person with pigtails and denim culottes, who bought the amazing belt at the Salvation Army op shop on 8th Feb, and got called by some very gendered language by the staff - you looked uncomfortable afterwards and I thought you were probably on a different gender journey.

Just wanted to let you know that you were seen for your awesome self and that I spoke to the staff member afterwards who realised that she might have misspoken and was sorry. Me and my kids came looking for you to tell you how great your look is but couldn't see you. Keep rocking your look! From Kayte."

Editor's note: I try to use 'they' instead of 'he' or 'she', or 'this person/customer' instead of 'this lady' / 'this gentleman' for anyone whose gender I don't know! Give it a try - it's easy!

FIND YOUR NEXT READ



WITH TE WHARE PUKAPUKA O OMĀRŌRŌ /
NEWTOWN LIBRARY



Midnight Library by Matt Haig. Library link: bit.ly/33KmvUG

Review by Khadro Mohamed, illustration by Milly Hampton.

I'd been seeing the Midnight Library by Matt Haig hurdled through our returns slot for weeks before I decided to read it. The cover, in all of its blue and shimmery glory, pulled me right in. It follows the story of Nora Seed, a troubled adult with an unsatisfied life. However, through the



midnight library she's given the chance to see what her life could have been like had she made different choices in her past.

From a world famous rockstar, to a scientist studying the glaciers of Norway, Nora is given a new lease on life. And while Nora learns more and more about herself, her family and everything she's capable of, she also learns the value of the life we're given—even if it's far from where we imagined we would be.

The Midnight Library was a very enjoyable read that touched on a range of different topics, it was simple, easy to read and very entertaining. An easy favourite! Add it to your to-read list.

Newtown Festival quiz answers

1. b. In 2021 it was moved from the planned March date to April 2. b. Carrara Park - the Carrara Park Carnival was the precursor to the Festival as we know it now. It moved to Riddiford Street in 1997. 3. c. South Stage. 4. b. 9.30am. 5. 420 - heck! so many stalls.

Neighbours day kai connections!

My name is Sacha and I am the Neighbours Day Aotearoa Connector for Wellington. And wow, it's such an honour and pleasure to bring people closer together. It's so wonderful to see that a lot of Wellingtonians already practice that Neighbours Day feeling in their every day life. I see it on local Facebook groups, in our community centre initiatives and by witnessing small acts of kindness around town. This year's theme is Kai Connections. Do you have recipes from your cultural dishes to share? Is there a seasonal fruit or vege that just grows abundantly in your backyard? Now's the time to share some kai around, or share joy by connecting online or with neighbours through your letterbox!

I wanted to share my awesome experience with Bronwyn, a true Newtownian with an abundant herb garden. She posted on Facebook that she wanted to share her excess tarragon, thyme, sage and spring onions...she left a bunch of fresh herbs on her back porch. I made a homemade aioli with the tarragon and dropped Bronwyn off a small jar to try. The joy of sharing and caring was yum in many different ways! If you want to kōrero about Neighbours Day in your community, or want some stickers or recipe flyers dropped off to share with your neighbours, contact me!

sacha@neighboursday.org.nz / 0210444294
www.neighboursday.org.nz

Here is my aioli recipe to try at home - makes 1 big jar & keeps 2 weeks in the fridge:

- 500ml light olive oil (LIGHT or MILD not regular olive oil, that tastes bitter)

- 3 egg yolks

- Apple cider vinegar 2-3 tbsp

- salt tsp

- 3-5 garlic cloves finely chopped

- boiled water 1-2 tbsp

Optional:

- herbs of your choice (tarragon is yum, basil too)

- spices (paprika, turmeric, curry, wasabi, whatever you want to spice your mayo up with, just try things out!)

- You can replace apple cider vinegar with balsamic if you're adventurous and want a Mediterranean twist!

1. Split egg yolks and put in food processor on highest setting for 30 seconds
2. Keep food processor on highest setting
3. Add 1 tbsp vinegar, run for another 30 sec to 1 minute
4. Start pouring oil in, very slowly, continuously very slowly
5. Add the rest of vinegar, chopped garlic, salt and herbs & spices of your choice
6. Add 1-2 tbsp of boiled water at the end (this lengthens the use by date)



Pics: left, the herbs Sacha picked up right, Bronwyn with delish aioli

WHAT'S THE HAPP'S?

Please note: You need a Vaccine Pass for all listings.

At the Community Centre, 2a Green St

Free Soup Fridays! Fridays 1-2pm. All welcome for a free bowl of veggie soup with the community. You could even prevent food waste and grab some free kai from the Community Fridge while you're here.

Isolating? Don't be isolated. Weekly zoom chats - Mondays, 11-11.30am.

More & more of us may soon be isolating with Covid. Join us on Zoom. We can connect you to support or just chat! bit.ly/3IIHDcX

Elsewhere

Adventure Playground exhibition @ Baobab Cafe, March 4th - 31st, Baobab opening hours. Did you know that back in the 70s there used to be a huge ramshackle, DIY adventure playground on the corner of Daniell and Constable Streets? There was! It was a radical space for tamariki and rangatahi to explore and grow. Pics from the playground will be on show at Baobab during March. bit.ly/3K4bj4T

Seeds to Feeds New-to-Town picnic! Sunday March 13th 3-5pm, Newtown School Enjoy locally grown, preserved and foraged kai at this awesome community picnic! buy tickets: bit.ly/33VVldo

Neighbours Day, March 18th-27th

This Neighbours Day is on the theme of 'Kai Connections'! From a picnic, to a pot luck, to sharing a recipe, to giving excess herbs to your neighbour, there are so many ways to get involved. Head to www.neighboursday.org.nz or contact local Neighbours Day connector Sacha on 0210 444 294.

At Smart Newtown, 9-11 Constable Street

Staying Safe Online: Social Media. Thursday 3rd March, 3-6pm. This course will teach you how to keep your account and information safe while using social media. bit.ly/36o2rbu

Google Drive Basics. 2-part course: Thursday 10th March and Thursday 17th March 3-6pm. Aimed at giving you the knowledge to start using Google Drive and some of the other G Suite tools, like Gmail and Google Forms. bit.ly/33LbYbO

Digital CV Basics. Thursday 23rd March, 3-6pm. Intended to prepare you to write your own CV, share it with employers and apply for jobs online. bit.ly/35oNg1u

At Newtown Hall, 71 Daniell Street

Every Body Dance! \$2 exercise & dance class. Mondays, 5.30-6.30pm. Every Body Dance is all about making dance accessible to everyone - all levels welcome! Rotating through different dance styles each month, come along to have a sweat, a boogie, raise confidence, learn some dance skills and have fun! More info at bit.ly/3oQYani or call 04 389 4786.

NZFMA karate, Mondays 6.30-7.30pm

Your friendly local karate club. Beginners welcome. More info: ric.burrows@gmail.com

Ollin Yolitzli dance. Wednesdays 8.15 - 9.15pm. With group members from different countries, this group brings a bit of their homelands to Newtown hall by sharing dance & culture. ollin.yoliztli.lifeandmovement@gmail.com

Get in touch

www.newtowncommunity.org.nz
www.facebook.com/Newtown.Community.Centre
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