

MT COOK! MOBILISED

Mt Cook Mobilised

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Inhabit
designstore

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Welcome to Mt Cook Mobilised, your resident community group, as we enter our second decade! Thank you to Inhabit of Adelaide Rd for their ongoing sponsorship. We invite your input (via the email above) on any Mt Cook issue - and to let us know of new ones. We urge all occupants to look out for your neighbours and care for your plot on the planet as if it were your own.

Peter Cooke

Housing NZ Redevelopment

Mt Cook Mobilised (MCM) is pleased that Housing New Zealand (HNZ) is redeveloping their apartments at 21 Rolleston St. Six decades old, the 54 current apartments are not fit for purpose.

On 18 June, HNZ provided scant information about their proposals. A complete rebuild could increase the number of tenants significantly. Eighty to 90 one- or two-bedroom units were suggested, possibly doubling the population.

Accommodation blocks up to three stories high are planned for street frontages, but up to five stories high for blocks behind them. There will be some on-site parking, mostly accessed off Rolleston St, but at a lower ratio per flat than currently.

A redeveloped complex would provide much better quality homes, particularly if HNZ follows through with its proposal for on-site support for tenants, some of whom may have complex needs. The drug-selling 'tinny house' would be shut down, hopefully permanently. A community facility is included in the plans, modelled on that in Centennial Flats, Berhampore.

Work could begin early in 2019. Construction would add to the disruption that central Mt Cook is already facing. Work on the new Mt Cook Reservoir above Prince of Wales Park (see p3) and pipework on Wallace and Hargreaves Streets is set to snarl traffic for two to three years.

A SUPPORTED LIVING UNIT (SLU)?

As part of the HNZ redevelopment the Wellington City Council (WCC) is pushing central government to include accommodation for about 20 people whose alcohol or drug addiction problems otherwise see them homeless. On Hargreaves St, this SLU would provide care and support. Tenants would be able to continue drinking alcohol but the position in respect of illicit drug-use is not clear.

On 10 June WCC told us that planning is well underway. A private organisation or consortium of several welfare agencies would be contracted to run the SLU, while funding might come from central government. The SLU would be staffed (five plus a guard were mentioned) providing 24-hour support, meals and pastoral care.

Mt Cook residents have already expressed a range of views about the unit, both supportive and opposed. For close neighbours, the SLU proposal is creating uncertainty and concern. But there is also support for measures that will help solve homelessness if they are effective and well managed, staffed on-site round the clock, and funding is assured. So far, details about how effectiveness and good management will be assured are lacking, as are any assurances about safety.



*a family
suburb?*

This proposed unit appears to be experimental in several ways. It differs from similar services overseas (often called 'wet houses' as they focus only on alcohol), in that it would deal with both alcohol and drug dependency and mental health. Other unique aspects are its proposed location in a residential suburb (not a central business district or semi-industrial area), and its co-location on the same site as other social housing tenants who themselves may have complex needs.

MORE INFORMATION PLEASE!

No studies, here or overseas, have been cited on the impact a SLU of this type might have on surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

So far, the obligation to consultation the community has not been met. A comprehensive picture is badly needed to provide a basis for effective consultation with the families and households who live, work and study in Mt Cook.

MCM is asking that:

- Independent and proper evaluations of the supported living unit are conducted, both now and after it has been operating for, say, 12 or 24 months; these must include effects on the community;
- Community representatives are included in the inter-agency planning for the HNZ site redevelopment and the SLU proposal;
- The consultation with the community includes meetings where all the agencies and service providers involved in both proposals are present at the same time, to ensure consistent and comprehensive information for Mt Cook residents.

ABSOLUTELY

LONG LIVES IN Mt COOK

Ted (*below, with his favourite rotary hoe*) was born in September 1936 at St Helen's hospital in Newtown and lives in the same house in Wright St where he and his three siblings were brought up. He went first to St Marks then to Mt Cook Primary for his early school years, then on to Wellington Tech where he studied commercial art. He later became a



MARY HUTCHINSON

production welder. As a young man Ted was known for cruising around in his large 1930s Cadillac hearse, bought for £160 from Wilson's Funeral Directors. He later received £100 back from the seller because the vehicle had been "depreciated" in the annual accounts! Wright St in Ted's youth was the home of stable working-class families and all the neighbours knew each other. Today there are many more people living around him and lots more coming and going as tenancies and ownerships change. But Ted and his cat are well in touch with their neighbours and he happily shares the fruits of his hard work in his bountiful garden.

Ray Wong (*below, right*) was born and grew up in Wallace and Tasman St. He now lives just further down the road with his family. His children attend the local primary school as he did. After that he attended Wellington College. Ray likes living in Mt Cook for its central location to just about everything. He has seen many changes over the years,



the most significant being building of the Memorial Park. Other big changes include the demolition of many free-standing shops and houses in Riddiford and John St, removal of the children's play area in the Basin Reserve grounds, demolition of St Pats college on Buckle St and Cambridge Tce, relocation of Marist Intermediate to Newtown, demolition of the brick Mt Cook Manual Training building, also the demolition of two whole blocks to make way for the Polytechnic which is now Massey University... and many more changes - the more he thinks about it.

Peggy (*Parvati, above, next to Ray*) Bhana-Thomson was born at the maternity hospital in Tasman St. She was taken home to the same house in Douglas St that she and her husband Jonathan still live in. She hopes to stay till her very last days. She has beautiful memories of growing up in Mt Cook area - attending Mt Cook School, Wellington High

School and the Indian school in Tasman St. She remembers many of the Indian families living and growing up around the area. The kids played after school on the streets and roads around Douglas St. They climbed the pohutukawa trees, slid down the hand rails and played hide and seek - always feeling safe. She loved going to the Basin Reserve park with her sister Neru, and watching the marching girls practice. The museum and

carillon were places for kids to play inside and outside. Many family photos were taken there over the years. Back then trams ran up and down Adelaide Rd. The Boys & Girls Institute in Tasman St was the place for swimming (as it was for many kids growing up in Wellington). Peggy can just about remember the inside of each of the houses on the street as most of the families had children who went to the same schools. Many of those houses have changed now and on one side of Douglas St the old houses were demolished to make way for small businesses. One of the great things about staying in the Mt Cook area is that some school friends are still in her life one way or another. Over the years Mt Cook has changed but not where she lives and she loves the area for that, and the memories that are still alive.

Were you or any neighbours born and raised in Mt Cook, and live here still? Let us know your stories.



BUS ROUTE CHANGES IN JULY

From Sunday 15 July there will be comprehensive changes to all bus routes in Wellington. Briefly, they aim to:

- Reduce buses going through CBD.
- Provide frequent, high capacity buses on major spine routes.
- Transfers to local buses at several hubs throughout the city at no extra cost within 30 minutes.

A summary of the Mt Cook routes:

Route 1 (from Island Bay to Johnsonville) will run through Adelaide Rd.

Route 3 (Railway station to Lyall Bay) will run through Wallace and Taranaki Sts.

Route 18e will run via Wallace and Taranaki streets from Miramar to Karori, linking Massey and Victoria campuses.

Our **nearest hub** is John St.

At the **hospital hub** we can change to routes to Houghton Bay (23) Southgate (29) and Kingston (23.)

Additional **peak-hour services** through Adelaide Rd to Houghton Bay (23e) and Island Bay (29e).

Further afield we can transfer:

- at Kilbirnie to Seatoun (2). This will take people a block away from the airport if you are used to using Bus 11 for this purpose.
- at Lambton Quay and railway station for most other local routes.

How will they impact on us?

Coming into town may be

very full at peak times by the time they get to our stops on Adelaide road and Wallace street – we are concerned buses may be full, and not stop for passengers in our suburb.

Better access to northern suburbs and through to Johnsonville on route 1.

There are bound to be hitches with such comprehensive changes, and the Regional Council have assured Mt Cook Mobilised that these changes will be closely monitored for at least a year – so it is important to give feedback.

There is a new journey planner available. Check out the changes at www.metlink.org.nz/on-our-way/wellington-city/brt.

MR AH GO OF TASMAN STREET

Mr Ah Go was an 1880s Chinese market gardener on Tasman St. Through the middle of his gardens ran a stream, an integral part of his livelihood to grow crops. Under pressure to source land for settlers, local council proposed culverting the stream and developing Ah Go's land for residential development. Instead, he proposed to divert the stream which would allow both his family and settlers to live and work side-by-side – a harmonious in-between.

Council disagreed, forcing Ah Go from his gardens for £3 compensation, and started culverting his stream for residential development. Within two years, his gardens were built upon and solely occupied by settlers. It is not known what happened to Mr Go.

Mr Go's Restaurant in Taranaki St is a nod to what Ah Go himself wanted – western settlers and Chinese market gardeners working side by side. Mr Go's is a restaurant take on this. "We're neither a Chinese restaurant, nor a western one at that – we are a harmonious in-between."



BLUE GLOVES AND LITTER

Every second month, for one hour on alternative Saturday and Sunday mornings, Mt Cook residents pick up litter. We meet outside the Mt Cook Café, get three or four plastic bags each, and some fab blue rubber gloves, and head out along different streets to pick up litter. Rubbish is mainly food and drink containers – often tossed from cars. WCC collects the full bags on the same day. Litter pickup is sociable and a way to be resourceful for our patch; and perhaps inspire others not to discard their rubbish. Passing pedestrians and drivers often call out in support! Litter Pickup information is on MCM website, and Neighbourly.

RESERVOIR DECISION

Unless there is an appeal to the Environment Court, the proposed reservoir above the Prince of Wales playing fields will now go ahead, with funding earmarked in the Council's draft long term plan.

The Omeroro reservoir will hold 35 million litres of water which makes it one of the biggest in the country. It is claimed to be safe - able to withstand a one-in-a-thousand-year earthquake.

Construction will take up to three years, and associated truck movements will disrupt Rolleston St throughout that period. No start date for construction has been announced but is likely to be later in 2019. Salisbury Tce will also see a lot of contractor staff vehicles.

Associated pipe-laying, prob-

ably starting in 2018, will have a major impact on parking and traffic access in Hargreaves and Wallace Sts for up to 15 months, with short sections in Wallace St being reduced to one stop/go lane for much of that period.

MCM, and individual residents, made submissions and appeared at the hearings about the reservoir proposal. Concerns expressed included the size and safety of the reservoir on a difficult and narrow site, impact on the surrounding ecology especially in Papawai Stream, proposals to raise the levels of both the playing fields both during construction and permanently, and the volume and hours of truck movements in Rolleston St.

Some gains were achieved. The playing fields will not now be raised permanently, but will still be used to hold fill during the construction period. Truck movements in Rolleston St will be limited to weekdays 9am to 6pm, except for deliveries essential outside those times, such as delivering large parts or when continuous concrete pours are in progress. But our efforts to get the size of the reservoir reduced, or to get more work done to ensure the safety of the site and associated activities, were not successful.

A liaison group with community participation will be established to keep residents in touch as construction proceeds and to deal with any emerging problems.

"IT'S A KOARO!"

These were the thrilled utterances of our friendly local native fish experts Frances Forsyth and Paula Warren as light fell one evening. They were gazing into a net astride Papawai Stream, when 'spot-lighting' to gauge the wellbeing of this unique urban stream remnant flowing through Mt Cook.

Their and the community's delight is due to the first ever sighting of this native freshwater fish species in our local waterway, which is a branch of central Wellington's original Waitangi Stream. This Koaro, or *Galaxias brevipinnis* was an adult, 105mm long, which is large enough to be able to breed. Frances said "this brings the [fish] species count for Papawai Stream up to three as I understand that elvers [baby eels] were observed during a survey for the new reservoir. This is only the second koaro I have observed in a suburban stream in Wellington."



Thanks to Kedron Parker for the photo of our newly discovered resident.

For more information see www.facebook.com/white-baitconnectionwellington/

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WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

The Sheyne Tuffery paintings on the wooden hoardings on Taranaki St, around the Arlington re-development, have been taken down. They are safely stored away until they can be re-used for Stage 2 of the development. The mural describes a history of Mt Cook, from ancient times to recent, and was completed in December 2016. The artworks and the hoardings belong to WCC and it is good they can be reused.

VARDO IN MOUNT COOK

You might have noticed a beautiful gypsy wagon parked in Rolleston St. It's the brainchild of Bryan Saul and his wife Roni, a Romani of Scottish descent (née Peacock). Along with their three children, they recently took the vardo on its maiden voyage to Helensville and Napier, attracting attention all the way.



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'HANKEY STREET CARES'

"Hankey Street Cares is a recently-formed neighbourhood group that is now known to WCC, thanks to the support of MCM. Hankey St regularly sees car side mirrors damaged and taxis and rubbish trucks refusing to enter. Resident Kate went door-to-door collecting over 50 signatures petitioning WCC to look at options to widen mid-Hankey St. MCM provide Kate with a slot at our public meeting which is attended by Lambton Ward Councillors. Cr Pannett was particularly encouraging saying "Often we are just handed a problem, but Hankey Cares has gone to the extra effort of brainstorming solutions. I will make sure this issue is brought to the attention of the roading engineers. The problem is now at least on Council's radar." The group is collecting questions to ask Council regarding Phase 2 of the Arlington Redevelopment. To join email hankey.street.cares@gmail.com.

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