

# MT COOK! MOBILISED

Mt Cook Mobilised  
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## MICRO MUD SNAIL - WORLD FAMOUS

Rarer than caviar, the 'urban' mud snail (*Potamopyrgus Ovipidanus*) was thought only to be found under Te Ahumairangi (the former Tinakori Hill) behind Premier House. DOC's threat classification system ranks it as 'Nationally Critical', partly because it had only one home. This wee chappie caused great excitement when traces of its environmental DNA (eDNA) were found in the stream at Gum Gully (below Brooklyn Road). Traces of eDNA (which is very sensitive) do not automatically mean the snail is present at Gum Gully, but could have come via a mobile friend which had had earlier contact with the mud snail. We thank Liz Gibson of Mountains to Sea for testing the stream sample and WilderLab for presenting the eDNA findings in a way that non-experts can relate to them. We aim to confirm the presence of our rare nano neighbour at Gum Gully.



An adult snail is 3mm long (half the length of a grain of long rice).  
 TE AHUMAIRANGI HILL ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION/ TE PAPA

Read more at <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2019/07/25/save-wellingtons-unique-snail-from-extinction/finger-snail/>

No 32 - October 2022

Welcome to Mt Cook Mobilised, your resident community group. We thank Inhabit of 23 Adelaide Road for their incredibly generous sponsorship. We invite your input (via the email above) on any Mt Cook issue - old or new. Please look out for your neighbours and sort your recycling. Or help Keep Mt Cook Clean at our next litter-pickup on 3 December, 10.30am at 75 Wallace St. Peter Cooke

Sunday 6 November  
 Papawai Reserve 11am - 2pm

# Mt Cook Spring Fling Teddy Bears Picnic



Novelty races for kids \* Coffee & Cake by Koha pls bring keep-cup & change for koha \* collect a predator trap \* no glass

Rain venue: 11:15  
 Mt Cook School Hall



Absolutely Positively  
 Wellington City Council  
 Me Heke Ki Pōneke





## BID-WALL-ST

The story on the lower Bidwill Street wall in the last newsletter prompted residents to find out more about its history. In July 1895, WCC approached two property owners there about building a 100-foot timber retaining wall (rising to a height of 19 feet) at a total cost to the owners of £75. Mrs Caroline Warren (whose property apparently comprised today's 7 and 9 Bidwill Street) replied that she could not contribute to it as she was a "widow and entirely dependent on her family for subsistence". She preferred a concrete wall of which WCC had already built several in the vicinity. The other owner, Mr Alex Sample (whose property appears to have included today's 1 and 5 Bidwill St), also was only willing to contribute to a concrete wall.

Two months later, the city surveyor estimated a concrete retaining wall in front of these properties would cost £104, divided between Mrs Warren (£72) and Mr Sample (£32). Mrs Warren still felt council should pay for the wall – but offered £25. Mr Sample was willing to contribute £10 if it left an opening to access his property.

With this the council's Public Works Committee voted to build the wall (*NZ Times*, 22 Oct 1895 p2), charging the two owners less than half its cost. It suggests that the wall was on private property and WCC was merely doing the work on behalf of the land owners.

When street art next appears on that wall – which it will – it is on private property!



## EX-STREAM-LY

Papawai Stream runs through the reserve that has been transformed over the last 13 years by regular working bees. The reserve is now a lovely bushy and grassed area with a walking track and the site for our annual Spring Fling (next on 6 November 2022).

Local residents are concerned about the health of the stream along the reserve area, beside the lower Prince of Wales Park sports field and its catchment further upstream. The catchment can easily be explored from near the Scottish Harriers club or from Brooklyn.

Our work in the area has identified populations of native fish, eels and kōura in this stream, and we have been keen to maintain and improve the stream's health.

Before 2009 it had been largely an ignored waterway, with problems of contamination from rubbish dumping, silting and flooding. Unauthorised sewage and pollutants regularly create a foul smell or bad appearance. Flooding of the stream can create serious problems in the area and the exceptional intensity of rainfall this year (extremes becoming the norm under climate change) increase the concern.

Created 99 years ago, this sports field has a temporary stockpile of earth, but the reservoir project is required to reinstate the field under the current consent. Recently locals, WCC, Wellington Water, the Regional Council and reservoir engineers visited the area, both the immediate stream and the catchment area, to explore short- and

## RENTING IN MT COOK



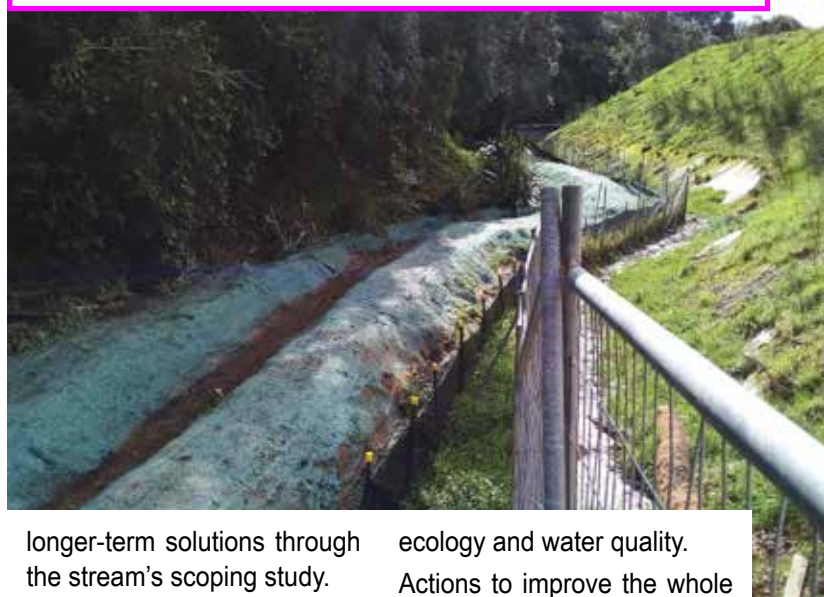
Over the past few months, house prices in Wellington have been trending downward. This is welcome news for those who are looking to buy a home, and shouldn't harm property owners who don't need to sell.

However, Wellington is still suffering from a shortage of rental housing. This shortage has made rents unaffordable. The Wellington rental market is relatively seasonal, with many fixed-term annual leases ending over summer. While Wellington rents decreased slightly over the winter, every summer rents are driven up by a fierce musical-chairs-like competition for scarce rental homes.

This is badly affecting students who rely on student allowances, low-paid jobs and, in many cases, their savings to pay rent. The government has tried to make things better for renters by increasing benefits and student allowances, but because there isn't enough housing this has led to an increase in rents.

A recent assessment of housing supply in Wellington shows there will be a massive shortage of medium-density homes such as terrace houses, townhouses and low-rise apartments. It is this type of housing that we need to find space for in Wellington if we are to fix the housing shortage.

**MCM invites renters and landlords to let us know about problems faced in Mt Cook - or their solutions.**



longer-term solutions through the stream's scoping study.

Since the bund (embankment) was added in 2013, the stream has silted up to above the level of the field, and the bund leaks. Wellington Water decided to deepen and strengthen part of the stream behind the playing field, using a digger and matting (**above, to stop it flooding the field**). This feels like a short-term and probably ineffective fix, and raises major concerns that the natural habitat and plants along that section of the stream bed have been unnecessarily damaged. Some locals would like the formation of a wetland on part of the lower field to help reduce flooding, and improve aquatic

ecology and water quality.

Actions to improve the whole catchment area are still under discussion. Based on experience of the process to this point, locals are frustrated that the issues are not taken seriously and that co-operation between the authorities is poor.

This is a complex issue which will not be resolved with a quick fix. It is, however, a useful example of the difficulties managing waterways in our communities. We believe they need careful management over time, using local knowledge and experience, and keeping all stakeholders much better involved. We see little evidence that there is commitment to doing this.







## TELL 'EM MARLEY!

Marley Lambourn-Ning has lived in Mt Cook all his 14 years. He went to a recent Mt Cook Mobilised meeting and found it very interesting. He told us he was particularly annoyed at the ugly tagging all over the place and the unsafe conditions at some bus stops like the one in Wallace Street opposite his high school. He thinks some of the buses go too fast there. He reckons more young people should go to the meetings and say what they think about stuff in Mt Cook. He says it's, like, a great place to live and we all need to help keep it safe and tidy.

## STREET CARPING

As the result of MCM carping, the City Council raised the priority of traffic solutions for Wright Street, Mt Cook. It is a wide through road on which some vehicles travel dangerously fast. A dog was recently killed there and a child hit. Residents have been saying for decades that it needs fixing, so thank you WCC for giving it the attention it needs.

## 24 HOURS A GOER

Residents of Mt Cook have talked long with Kāinga Ora about the social housing development on Rolleston/ Hargreaves St – and have welcomed it at every step. One of our requests was the need for staff on-site 24-hours a day to keep the place calm and cool down any over-heated behaviour. Of the 80 apartments 20 will be for high-needs tenants and the site will also house people with other issues, so MCM was heartened to hear that Kāinga Ora is piloting a 24-hour 'Security Concierge' at the site. This will be an employed staff role (filled in shifts) and will work closely with the third-party welfare service provider which is yet to be appointed.



## PHD ON MCM RESILIENCE

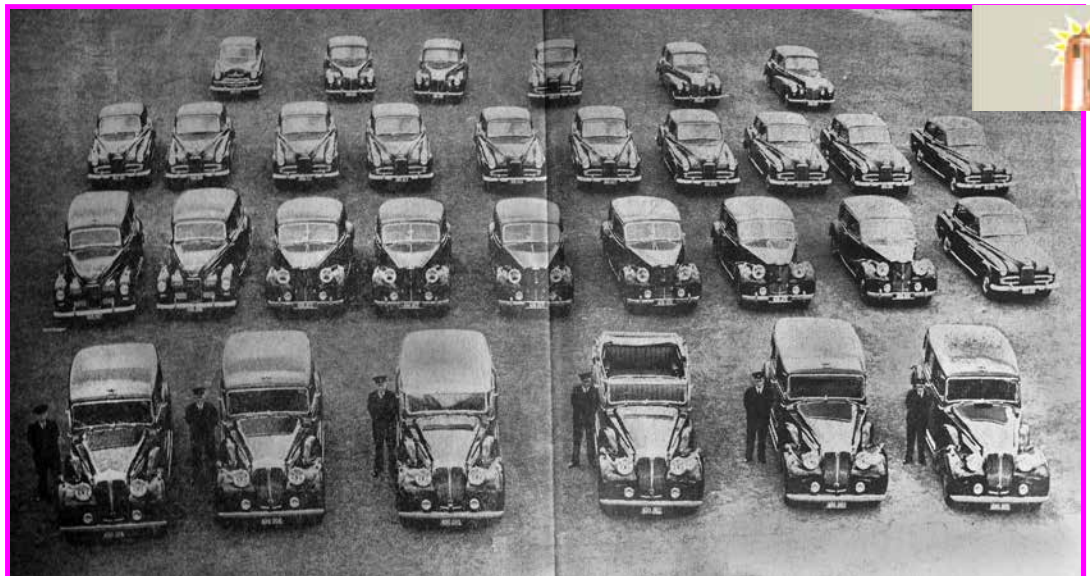
Manomita Das from the Joint Centre for Disaster Research at Massey University is engaging with MCM for her PhD research. Manomita is studying how community groups develop emergency preparedness across New Zealand. MCM is the community group she has decided to study in Wellington. She is currently in the initial stage of her research and is conducting interviews. The findings of her research will help improve the current practice of emergency management. If you want to know more or would like to participate in the study, please feel free to reach out to her at [das.manomita@gmail.com](mailto:das.manomita@gmail.com)

ALICIA CUI



## HAVING A CHAT

MCM has been meeting now for about 15 years, every six weeks. We have a great discussion about issues relevant to the suburb and city and usually come to a consensus on things we want changed. All speakers get a fair and civil hearing and one thing that has elevated our meeting has been the attendance by our city ward councillors, sometimes regional councillors too. MCM congratulates the re-elected incumbent councillors (and thanks Roger Blakeley for his attentiveness) and looks forward to continuing this important tradition of dialogue.



When our head of state changed recently, thought turned to the Queen's many happy visits to NZ. For her first, in 1953, 31 of the 36 limousines of the royal tour fleet were photographed on the Prince of Wales Park upper field. In front are the luxury Daimlers, with Humbers and Austins behind. All cars travelled the 3000 miles covered by the royal party from Auckland to Bluff, when the couple was not on Her Majesty's Yacht Gothic. Some of the cars had just arrived from England. One even had a see-through plastic roof. [Evening Post, Dec 1953. Thanks Ross Dickie.]





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MOBILISED**

# community

## ARROW WALL

Damage to the Tasman Street heritage wall caused by tree growth and age is to be fixed in a manner consistent with its valued character status (Category 1 historic place with Heritage NZ and on the WCC District Plan). The wall was made with bricks from the Mt Cook prison brick works.

*The Omāroro team has kept us well informed of their good progress, and invited us to see inside the reservoir. This was after the first half roof pour and we saw the forest of scaffolding and piping. Then the second half of the roof went on, and now the bigbird crane has gone. The project is on schedule to finish late in 2023, the final jobs being reinstating the two playing fields.*



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