

BAY VIEW



Issue 82

November 2023

Official Bulletin of:

**THE ORIENTAL BAY
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION Inc.**

Wellington

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President's Report

November 2023

Since we last reported to you in the May 2023 edition of Bay View, much has happened to potentially alter the shape of our city. I'm referring to the outcome of the October 2023 elections where the two major developments for us are losing a Lambton Ward councillor and the election of a National-led Government of a shape yet to be defined. There has been a clear shift to the Green Party in Wellington, which appears to represent disaffected Labour voters moving to the Green Party, which is now the left party of choice.

So first, congratulations to Tamatha Paul on your emphatic victory in Wellington Central. Our loss is New Zealand's gain; however, we have noted your commitment to be an active MP for Wellington Central and we and our members look forward to continuing our association with you. At some point there will be a Lambton Ward by-election to replace Tamatha, and as OBRA we will do what we can to bring the different choices to your attention.

Second, there has been a clear commitment from the incoming government to proceed with the second Mt Victoria tunnel and to halt Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM). What shape this action will take and indeed what commitments the council has already entered into, in advance of the swearing in of the new government, is yet to be understood. We hope common sense will prevail; it would be unwise in my view for the council to enter into commitments that are unfunded while the incoming government has clearly signalled it will not fund LGWM. All that would mean is Wellington City Council (WCC) ratepayers would be potentially underwriting the share that was previously allocated to central government.

Continuing on the macro Wellington theme, I sense there is a high degree of discomfort over cost blowouts on the many and various WCC projects currently underway. The release of the WCC financial projections in mid-November, associated with the long-term plan, will make interesting reading and will, for the first time, provide evidence on how worried as residents and ratepayers we need to be regarding the state of

our finances. If they are as dire as many have suggested, then OBRA and the individual OBRA members will need to make their views clearly heard as it will be the only opportunity to call for prudence before they are in effect 'locked in'.

In terms of Oriental Bay specific issues, they have been numerous and varied.

Dogs and dog issues have taken up a considerable amount of time, particularly in respect of extended access to the beach. We are opposed to any extended season and have submitted accordingly. We have also circulated the link to allow members to individually submit, as with WCC it is unfortunately about the number of submissions, not the quality of the argument of each one.

Forty-tonne truck and trailer units full of spoil thundering around Oriental Bay from 6am to 5pm en route to Silverstream, have caused outrage to you, our members. I have received more messaging from OBRA members on this issue than any other. Apart from being loud and unsightly, they are clearly dangerous needing to navigate five pedestrian crossings at speeds which almost always exceeded the 40km/hour limit. Fortunately, we found an ally in WCC's senior management and in numerous councillors, and the trucks were ordered to use SH1. The odd driver still attempts to use Oriental Parade; however, our council friend is proving suitably diligent.

An unintended (or maybe intended) consequence of the Kent Terrace cycleway which removes one car lane, is that morning traffic backs up into the start of Oriental Bay, thereby blocking traffic attempting to head north along Cable Street. We are intending to work with an engineer OBRA member to understand how this can be overcome and engage with WCC to remove this 10–15 minute wait time.

We have engaged with the Police community liaison officer to again highlight our concerns about pedestrian safety in the Courtenay precinct, and have asked the Police to assist us put together a list of do's and don'ts if confronted by any threat. While it is tempting to assist people in need, it is becoming clear that personal safety can be compromised very easily. We will circulate a simple note in due course.

We continue to monitor and be concerned at the speed of bikes and scooters on the shared Parade path. We will be asking WCC to place signs at each end of the Parade asking cyclists/scooters to restrict their speeds.

Any more drastic measure will undoubtedly seek to separate cyclists and pedestrians and that is not always a good outcome for Oriental Parade.

Finally, we are planning to have an informal festive get together at the Copthorne Hotel on Wednesday, 6 December at 5.30pm. Please save the date and further details will be advised closer to the event.

— *Andrew Meehan ONZM, President*

Wellington, the wokest of woke* !

Ok boomers', we've transitioned from a Labour voting electorate to a Green one with Tamatha Paul's decisive win in Wellington Central (and Julie Anne Genter's in Rongotai). Those two Green Party electorate MPs join the Green political landscape of Mayor Tory Whanau, Deputy Mayor Laurie Foon, Māori Ward Councillor Nikau Wi Neera and two ex- Greens (Crs Pannett and Free) on the council. It's a slam dunk for a political ideology that aims for an ecologically sustainable society rooted in social justice, non-violence, grassroots democracy and 'de-colonisation'.

Labour list MP Ibrahim Omer suffered a crushing defeat, burning Grant Robertson's huge 2020 majority of 19,000 (Robertson received over 27,000 votes in 2020). A nice guy with a quiet profile outside his union base, Omer spent \$4,359, twice as much as Tamatha Paul's \$2,337 on social media advertising (presumably as internal party polling showed Labour at risk). Even his imaginative rhetoric (about Labour having 'built 200,000 houses') didn't insulate him from the widespread alienation of voters from Labour.

There was curiously a number of voters who gave Tamatha Paul their candidate vote but National their party vote. These candidate votes may have been votes to elevate her out of council affairs. But there's no question she's a highly effective professional left-wing politician who earned her stripes as VUSA president then as two-term councillor. She adeptly outflanked James Shaw to get the Wellington Central nomination.

* Woke is used to describe someone who is very aware of social and political injustice.

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Valence voting *, neither right nor left, played a role in voters sweeping aside Labour by choosing to address their concern about the effective delivery of services on competency grounds. But in this city it was largely about identity.

Wellington is no longer home to Labour voting 'workers' but to students, public servants, technological and hospitality employees, 'urbanists' and all but a handful of older voters.

Wellington Central has a regular population of 66,600 (of whom 57,663 are aged 18 and older). It's disproportionately higher in all age groups between 15 and 34 years old. In Wellington Central, 16.5% of the population is aged between 20 and 24, and 13.2% is aged between 25 and 29. In all age groups older than 40, it has far below the national averages.

It has relatively fewer Māori and Pasifika populations (7.4% and 3% respectively) with 78.4% of the population being European and 16.8% Asian.

It's a highly mobile/rootless population. Forty-six percent of Wellington Central's population has been at their usual residence for less than 10 years (and 34% for less than a year). They mostly rent.

The demographics and culture of the city are different from that of 'suburbanites' in Ohariu or the Hutt electorates. The 'identity' of voters in Wellington Central (and Rongotai) is also with us to stay. It's an identity older voters need to embrace and work with, rather than grumble about.

The National Party recognised that by offering a quality candidate Scott Sheeran (described as at the 'woker end' of National). He's bright, young, energetic and was an all-round superb candidate with a background in law and diplomacy, on top of a warm and engaging manner.

But Tamatha Paul's groundwork in building an insurgent force of young volunteers was impenetrable. She reportedly had the help of Australian political organisers from the Australian Greens. She gathered a large group of volunteers around her with food, fun and phoning. The group grew to dozens of committed volunteers scouring the streets and steps of the city.

They recorded knocking on 40,000 doors and gathering direct contact details, asking residents questions about their issues of concern, personal allegiances and voting histories and intentions. A pleasant young person

* Also known as competence voting, valence voting is a model of voting behaviour that emphasises that individuals vote based on their judgement of the overall competence of the rival political parties.

with a clipboard climbed my 30 plus steps one Sunday to politely engage about my voting habits. Getting access to security-closed central city apartments is a real challenge in the CBD, ably met by the people-powered machine that was unmatched by other candidates.

The Greens also have long standing ‘allies’ like Greenpeace, Renters United and Action Stations, grassroots organisations that regularly communicate directly with large mailing lists to shape the preferred menu of identity preferences. In recent weeks the ability of those political networks to issue ‘calls to action’, and mobilise hundreds to protest in support of transgender or pro-Palestinian causes, has been demonstrated.

Among older demographics, emails circulate about co-governance, low taxation or free speech, but there’s been no local voice for the achievements of open, trading economies, liberal, tolerant democracy or the benefits of capitalism.

Wellington city has turned against those ideas, replacing them with concerns about hurtful speech, scepticism about the inequality of capitalism and widespread sympathy for oppressed groups. The Greens’ mantra of ‘everyone having what they need to thrive’ appeals to young voters.

Added to that is the relentlessly amplified but largely impotent call for ‘climate action’. It’s conveyed in a contextual vacuum of nil understanding about the Emissions Trading Scheme, and rests on simplistic and hypocritical ideas like car bad, cycle good. I’ve yet to see either Tamatha Paul or the Mayor on a bicycle. It’s not their vibe.

So dear oldies – get ready for more cycleways, opposition consensus for capital and wealth taxes, and stridency about housing ‘rights’, free public transport and transgender issues.

Like it or not (and move to Greytown or Waikanae if you don’t), our identity is ‘Wellington, the wokest of woke’.

And the biggest battle test will be Chris Bishop’s promise to push through the tunnel with Julie Anne Genter and Laurie Foon protesting at its eastern end and Tamatha Paul and Mayor Whanau at its western end. That will need some heavy-duty diplomacy!

— *Felicity Wong*

Our new coffee shop, Aye

An exciting addition to the amenities of Oriental Bay over the last two years has been the arrival of the Argentinian coffee shop Aye. The idea of changing the very small and very well liked Kaffee Eis into a coffee shop where you can sit down, either indoors or outside, to enjoy your coffee was the brainchild of Sebastian Ferrario and his partner Ayelen Baron.

Sebastian and Ayelen came to New Zealand in August 2014 from Buenos Aires, a city of 15 million people. They had read about New Zealand, knew that our countryside had similarities to Argentina and wanted to experience a different lifestyle for themselves. They took to New Zealand from the moment they arrived. Both had studied hotel and restaurant management in Argentina where they met, so were able to find jobs quite easily here. For five years they spent an idyllic life in Punga Cove, where they had management roles in the local hotel. Punga Cove is in Endeavour Inlet on the Marlborough Sounds. There was no phone connection, no wifi, none of the gadgets we associate with life in the twenty-first century, and they loved it.

After five years of this idyllic life, however, they decided to move on, having gained work visas and sponsorship for New Zealand residency thanks to the hotel management. During those five years Sebastian had been Food and Beverage Manager and Operations Manager and held other responsible positions in the hotel. They now wished to live in a larger city and start a family.

Sebastian and Ayelen are fairly lucky people. They are also hard workers. That combination is an ideal mix for a successful business.

In 2020 they decided to start a café in Kilbirnie. Ayelen and her team would make the empanadas and do the baking, and Sebastian would look after the customers. The customers liked what they were doing to the extent that in early 2021 they started the Buenos Aires café in Wellington City, and in December 2021 they opened Aye in Oriental Bay. All this happened during the Covid crisis. They had planned to go home to Buenos Aires in 2020, and to live in Nelson on their return. But Covid came along and this could not happen. Our good fortune is that they found their premises in Wellington and were quickly able to renovate them. Their hard



work in Oriental Bay paid off and the Covid lockdown didn't affect their business at all. It may possibly have helped it.

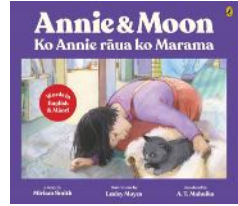
It is good to report that they love Oriental Bay – their position by the sea, their customers and the general ambience. Sebastian says that it is an exceptional community – its residents are nice, helpful people and quite different from elsewhere. While the café's first summer in the Bay was rather tricky financially, this last week (early Spring) is Aye's best week ever.

Well done, Sebastian and Ayelen, for setting up a friendly, welcoming coffee shop in the heart of Oriental Bay. We hope you have a long, fruitful life amongst us.

— **Ann Mallinson**

Annie & Moon

A children's picture book, *Annie & Moon* by Miriam Smith, the mother of well-known writer and film director Briar Grace Smith, and illustrated by Lesley Moyes, was published by Mallinson Rendel Publishers in 1988 from their Grass Street office. The book is about a Māori girl and her mother looking for a home, and won the Picture Book of the Year award in 1989.



On first publication the book came out in two editions – English and Te Reo. For this edition, published by Penguin Random House New Zealand, both the English and Te Reo texts are on the same page, which has been welcomed. On 24 September, *Annie & Moon* was no.2 on the Spinoff Unity Books Best Seller list. The caption says: 'It is a true rarity for a children's book to launch its way up the best seller list so quickly.'

It is sad to realise that a children's picture book on homelessness, first published in 1988, should still be relevant in New Zealand 35 years later.

— *Ann Mallinson*

Six months of double-trailer lorries on Oriental Parade

Many Wellingtonians don't appreciate Oriental Parade's importance as an arterial route for heavy traffic, which conflicts with recreational users visiting the beach – one of our city's most-loved recreational areas.

A particular concern is the volume of double-trailer lorries removing landfill from the airport where a hillock is being excavated. This is a joint project between WCC and the Airport, and will create much-needed space for airside operations – as our airport is squeezed onto a site a seventh the size of Christchurch Airport. There are approximately 500 truck movements every week, starting around 6.30am. These will continue until early next year. Most of the material will be re-used at other locations, including a residential development in Silverstream.

OBRA chair, Andrew Meehan, has been working to find a solution as contractors were told to use SH1 through the Mount Victoria tunnel. It's not just about the inconvenience; the heavy trucks are damaging the road surface. The Council's compliance officer has now advised that further breaches to the approved route will trigger formal enforcement action.

WCC's financial woes:

Last year I said councillors were having an orgy of spending, so it's probably no surprise my concerns about Council's finances continue to grow, particularly as it's become increasingly obvious we cannot afford the number of projects that have been added over the past few years.

Our council is due to spend over \$1.27 billion this year (\$818M OpEx, \$453M CapEx) – mostly from rates and other charges, with borrowing to make up the shortfall. That simply isn't sustainable. Ratepayers are reeling from this year's average 12.3% rates increase, while commercial ratepayers pay the highest differential in New Zealand, at 3.25 times the residential rate. This puts the very businesses we rely on to create jobs and vibrancy for our city under real pressure and we are increasingly uncompetitive with Auckland and other cities.

After last year's elections, the city's financial challenges were brought to the attention of councillors. A group of independent councillors suggested cuts, but these were rejected by the Labour/Green majority. This continues the trend I've seen since I was first elected in October 2013. It's been a decade of spending, with debt doubling in six years to \$1.5 billion.

Unfortunately, there are some huge additional liabilities in the coming decade that have not yet been included in our financial forecasting, including:

- \$500 million – Additional spend on water infrastructure (fixing the leaks, additional storage and meters),
- \$400 million – Social housing upgrades,
- Strengthening more of WCC's buildings (including the Michael Fowler Centre and the Bond Store / Wellington Museum), and cost blow-outs on existing projects – as we found out last month for the Town Hall.
- The new sludge treatment plant at Moa Point – this will be funded through a separate levy.

Like most Wellingtonians, the Council is exposed to rising insurance costs and interest rate payments on our debt. By the time you read this the future of the troubled Let's Get Wellington Moving programme may be clearer – but regardless, we will need to invest in transport to support a growing population.

In the past month, officers have warned councillors that 'tens of millions of dollars, if not hundreds of millions' must be cut from capital expenditure. At the time of writing, we don't know the specifics, but some

tough decisions must be made. Officers will soon present us with options to make major cost reductions – as your elected representatives, our job must be to keep the city affordable and on a sound financial footing.

Helping residents is a core part of my role. If you have any Council-related queries, please don't hesitate to contact me on 021 654 844 or at nicola.young@wcc.govt.nz

— **Nicola Young**

Infrastructure: the first priority

The recently held central government elections gave clear results (at the time of writing) at a local and national level. I congratulate all the successful candidates including Cr Tamatha Paul and look forward to working together in partnership with central government to get wins for our city. Priorities for me include a workable solution to investment in the Three Waters which Wellingtonians have given a clear signal about, a sensible approach to earthquake strengthening buildings, the construction of more homes and the construction of a resilient and sustainable transport system.

From a Council's perspective, these issues are top of mind as we prepare our long-term budget 2024-2034. Infrastructure provision is taking centre stage. Our first Citizens Assembly gave us useful feedback on what residents' priorities are but we are requesting more feedback as we go through the planning process. I look forward to talking to the Association about what you think is important.

On a local note, our Dog Policy has been attracting a lot of comment. We will soon have oral hearings on the matter, but one of the biggest issues has been allowing dogs on Oriental Bay Beach before 10am and after 7pm in the summer months. I am considering this issue carefully as even though I own two dogs, I see the beach as being a priority area for people. I do know though how much dogs and their owners appreciate this off-lead space so we will do our best to balance all interests.

Have a wonderful and safe break come December and I look forward to seeing you around the neighbourhood and at formal meetings in 2024.

For more information, contact me at iona.pannett@wcc.govt.nz or on 021 227 8509.

— **Iona Pannett**



Oriental Bay Residents Association

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We welcome all households and businesses in the Oriental Bay area.

Annual membership: \$25 per individual member, \$35 double (annual subscription period ends 31 March).

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