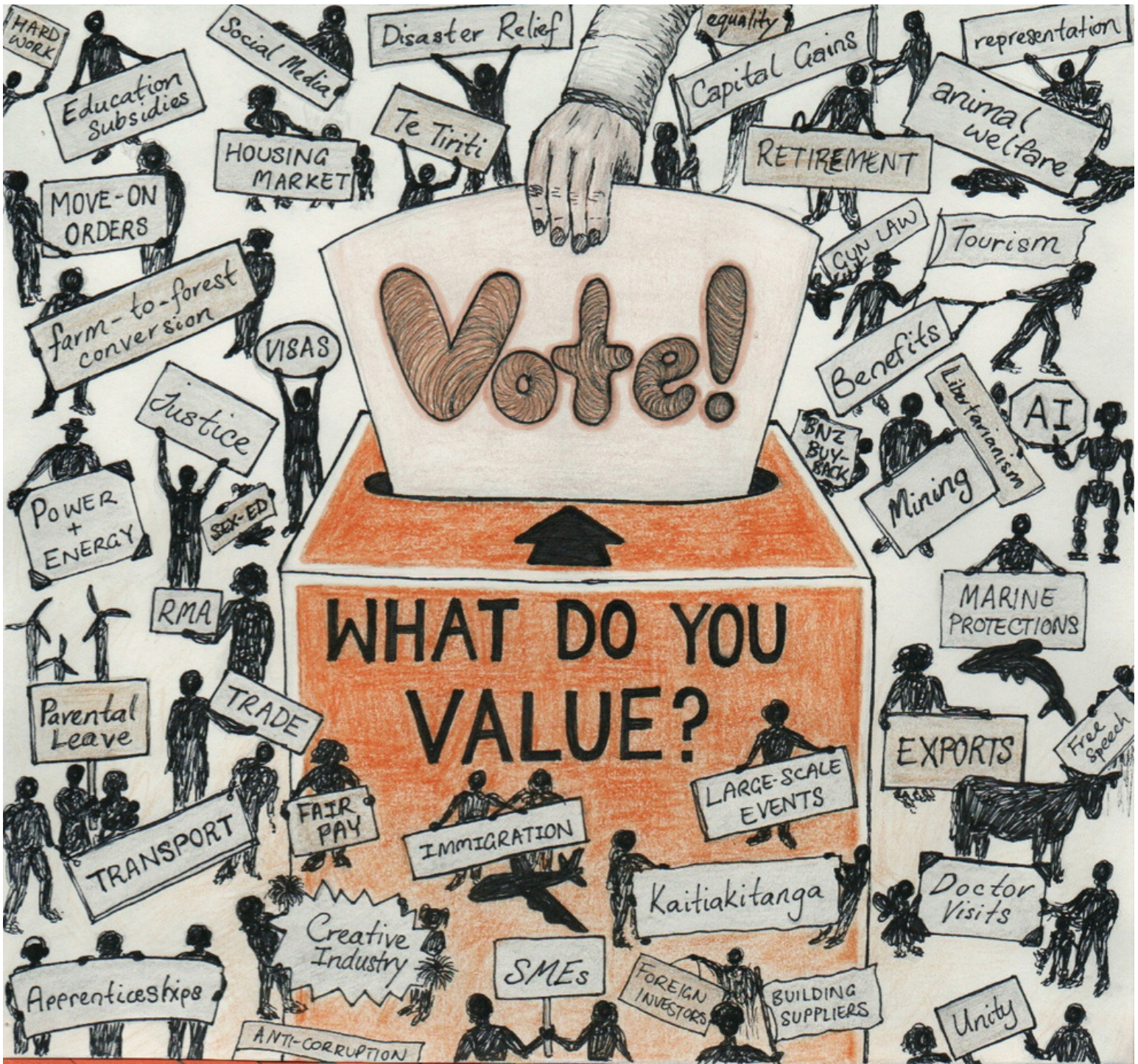


Hepetema / September & Oketopa / October 2026

NEWTOWN NEWS

Tō koutou makahini hapori: mō Newtown, nā ngā tāngata o Newtown

Your community zine: for Newtown, by Newtowners



**Nā Te Whare Hapori o ngā Puna Waiora
Brought to you by the Newtown Community Centre**

KIA ORA NEWTOWN

Happy Spring, everyone! We made it through winter! It was a particularly rough one aye? We had lots of hail and even some snow around town! And there's been lots of colds and flus floating around. I hope everyone has been able to keep well and stay as warm and cosy as possible. Fingers crossed we have a gentle springtime ahead, but another big thing ahead of us is the General Election. It's been looming all year, but it's finally at our doorstep. November 7th is Election Day, so we've decided that this issue of the Newtown News will be dedicated to everything election.

We've invited 5 community activist groups to write articles on the different issues that they believe should be at the forefront of voters minds this election. Inside you can read the kōrero from: Free Fares NZ, Vote For Kai, Queer Endurance in Defiance, Tiriti Action Group - Pōneke and United Community Action Network. These groups are all separate and independent from Newtown Community Centre, and their words are their own. We've included these articles to inspire our community to consider a range of different important issues that impact the people of Aotearoa.

You'll also find a bunch of handy election resources too. Kevin from Smart Newtown has created a guide on how to enrol to vote in under 10 minutes. We've got a list of upcoming election events and key dates to keep in mind. And on the back page you'll find our Election Prep bingo to help you tick off key activities ahead of Election Day.

Plus I got to have a lovely chat with our Notorious Newtowner, Merio Marsters, President of the Newtown Residents Association. And as usual, you can find our list of events here at Newtown Community Centre, around Newtown and beyond in our *What's the Happs?* event calendar.

Wishing everyone a lovely springtime. Do what you can to help those close to you enrol to vote. Have your voice heard and help make Aotearoa a place where everyone is able to not only survive, but thrive!

Noho ora mai rā,

Edie Freeman

Thank you to our sponsors! Please go support 'em back!



SUPERGOOD

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 Centre, sponsors of the Newtown News or other contributors.

Front cover illustration by Briony Fanslow

You can find more of Briony's art on Instagram: [@ermitage_art](#)

Notorious NEWTowner

Edie has a kōrero with Merio Marsters about everything Newtown

It's a warm afternoon and sunlight is trickling through the window of the community centre as Merio and I chat over a coffee. *"I've had a dabble in just about everything!"* She shares about the many different hats she wears in our local community.

Proud New Zealand born, Cook Island Māori/Tahitian, Merio has lived in Wellington for 30+ years. She has 7 children, raised 5 whāngai foster children and a proud sugar honey of 5 sugar babies and has 2 dogs.



"I am a proud Newtown resident, I'm a community advocate for individuals in our community, I'm a parent of a child at Newtown school, I'm a parent, learning about neurodivergence, I'm a caregiver, and the current President of the Newtown Residents Association." On top of all that, she also works casually on call at various bars. *"So, I do get around!"*

When she gets downtime, Merio hangs out with her children and dogs. "Because I'm always involved in everything I don't have time to try and let my hair out but I live in the moment."

She's always been an active member of the Residents' Association and stepped into the role of President last year. "It's about maintaining the vibrancy of what Newtown is. It's just a great suburb, one of the best suburbs in Wellington." The Newtown Residents' Association has been going strong for 63 years. "The majority of the members are still active in their more mature age and they obviously have a passion for Newtown themselves... All of the executives, past, present and future, are knowledgeable pou (pillars) for me. Their skills, their experience and the history of Newtown. It's a beautiful connection to have."

For Merio, it's about safety, connection and being inclusive of all. "Homelessness is not a crime." she shares. "People experiencing homelessness deserve dignity, support, pathways to housing and better social services support. While residents, workers and visitors have the right to safety and freedom from intimidation, violence and damaged property. Newtown is such a beautiful community, so we can come up with our best solutions... Just be kind to each other, look after each other, get to know your neighbours, say hi to some of our street community."

Her thoughts on the upcoming elections are: "People hold the power by voting... This government, the next government, whatever government it is, it is the people's choice. Get out there and vote. Vote for who you believe is best to represent you."

The Newtown Residents' Association's AGM will be held on Monday 21st of September at 7.30pm. Their gold coin membership allows individuals to vote and be nominated for any of the executive roles of the leadership team. Get involved!



THE CASE FOR FREE FARES

By Patrick O'Connor, key organiser for the Free Fares coalition

The cost of living crisis has been upon us for years at this point, and isn't something that will simply disappear by being ignored. Not to mention how crises such as the war in Iran help to exacerbate economic woes for the majority of people.

These people still need to cover rent and groceries, go to work, school, and participate in their communities among other facets of daily life. For these things to happen, travel is often required, which is becoming increasingly difficult with the oil crisis created as a result of the aforementioned Strait of Hormuz. These elements add up to a squeeze that is being felt by the bulk of the population.

Our reliance on fossil fuels isn't justifiable, not only economically but of course ecologically. That is why it is crucial to support subsidised public transport fares for both people and the planet.

Financial constraint is already proving a challenge for the vast majority of people in Aotearoa who aren't already economically well off. But our most vulnerable communities such as the disabled, elderly and student populations, and others on low incomes, are faced with a potential economic death sentence. As a disabled individual myself, the affordability of public transport is something I depend on to navigate Wellington and participate in my community.

These reasons and more are why Free Fares calls for free public transport for under 25s, tertiary students, Total Mobility cardholders and Community Service cardholders.

WHY WE'RE VOTING FOR KAI

We're food producing champions, so we should be able to feed our own people. Yet one in three of us can't afford to put food on the table. We believe that hunger isn't inevitable, it's the result of political decisions.

Vote for Kai is a call for political courage on food this election. It's led by a collective of six organisations; Eat New Zealand, VAWA (Veterinarians for Animal Welfare Aotearoa), Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance, Kore Hiakai Zero Hunger Collective, Health Coalition Aotearoa and The Salvation Army, but is supported by over 100 more organisations and businesses. Together we share the belief that everyone in Aotearoa deserves to have access to healthy, culturally appropriate kai.

**VOTE
FOR
KAI!**

We've written an open letter that asks every political party for a commitment before the election to tell us what they'll do for food. What we're asking for: A long-term plan. Affordable, healthy kai for all. Farming, fishing and food that looks after animals, the land and ocean. A fair go for local producers, manufacturers and food businesses. Good food environments for our children. A food system grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Communities having a decision-making role in their kai/food system.

To learn more and add your name to the open letter, visit voteforkai.nz

QUEER ENDURANCE IN DEFIANCE



It's been a rough three years. Wave after wave of discriminatory legislation has led to higher unemployment, poverty, & environmental turmoil. It's tempting to say that if we just get the right party into power, everything will be fixed. While some political parties offer better policies than others, it all fits into a system that prioritizes economic gain over human and environmental welfare.

Any party wanting to lead the country should, bare minimum, denounce and discard the Legislation (Definitions of Woman and Man) Amendment Bill, end the ban on puberty blockers for trans kids, and make hormone replacement therapy, alongside all other life-saving medications, available on demand. A party that wants to lead should start by building up the tino rangatiratanga of tangata Māori, reinstating pay equity and raising the minimum wage to meet living wage.

As the dust settles after election day, look around for familiar faces. Our communities have incredible mana. We can get involved and support each other: volunteer with the City Mission, pick up some shifts at an op shop, follow action groups on social media ([@queer_endurance_defiance](https://www.instagram.com/queer_endurance_defiance) for us) to keep up with what's happening in the city.

With direction, organization, and a lot of care, we can generate new forms of power.

INTRODUCING: TE WERO PŌTI

By Tiriti Action Group - Pōneke

Newtown was an awesome supporter of our 2025 local government Keep Māori Wards campaign. Ngā mihi ki a koutou for showing you care and standing beside us in kotahitanga.

Every election lots of people who could vote, don't. This year it is even harder for people to vote, due to new legislation limiting when people can enrol. This election is the most important of our lives. We need a government that works for all of us. **That's why it is important to help others vote!**

This election, Tiriti Action Group Pōneke has come up with a fun way for you to support your community to vote.

Te Wero Pōti is a free digital app and printed star/sticker chart supporting people to encourage and track members of their whānau, community/hapori and wider network to get enrolled and to vote. The free digital app and print sticker/star chart allow you to add in contacts, track your actions to awhi/support your networks and get easy-to-share messages of encouragement.

There are ongoing attacks on Māori rights and Te Tiriti commitments along with numerous other harmful actions.

Many of us are deeply concerned about the impacts of these actions. This is our time to be heard. So please pick up the wero, grab your friends, whānau, teammates, workmates - everyone, and support them to contribute to a better Aotearoa/NZ by voting! Ki te hoe!

Visit teweropotit.nz from our launch date, 7th of September.

Information security: Te Wero Pōti does not collect any data. There are no accounts and no cookies. All information remains on the device.



Who are we?

Tiriti Action Group – Pōneke, a community group who supports actions for rangatiratanga, kotahitanga and justice in Te Upoko o te Ika (Wellington city and Hutt Valley).

We operate under the korowai of mana whenua (Te Kotahitanga o Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika) so that we can live into the relationship that Te Tiriti o Waitangi promised us. All our work is voluntary.



HANDS AROUND THE BEEHIVE

By United Community Action Network



UCAN FOR HEALTH (United Community Action Network) is holding an event, Hands Around the Beehive, on **21 October at 1.15pm**. It is part of a National Day of Remembrance for Health.

People are invited to gather at Parliament from **1.15pm**, with people speaking from **1.30pm**, including PSA, Dental for All and Free Fares.

At **2pm**, people across the motu including healthcare workers, will stop for a minute's silence to remember whānau, family and friends who are unable to access healthcare when they need it, as well as doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers who are struggling under a health service that is not fit for purpose. People can meet outside their hospitals, in parks, with friends, whānau, or simply stop wherever they are for the minute of silence.

This is not a protest. It is an opportunity for people to come together peacefully to remember those who have been affected by difficulties accessing healthcare and to show that health matters to all of us. We believe this will send a clear message to all political parties and decision-makers that healthcare matters. Churches will ring their bells at 2pm to show solidarity and hope.

UCAN was started in Newtown in response to huge funding cuts to NUHS. Since then, our network has grown nationally. From those beginnings, UCAN has grown into a national network of people and organisations who believe that everyone should have access to the healthcare they need.

We are inviting organisations, community groups, unions and faith-based groups to endorse the Charter for Health. By endorsing the Charter, organisations can help send a message with the growing number of organisations who agree that healthcare matters and that we need policies that will build healthy communities in Aotearoa NZ.

The UCAN for Health Charter is a six-point charter where everyone has the right to the healthcare they need, a Living Wage, a home, to take part in society, a safe environment and education.

We hope people across Aotearoa will take part in whatever way they can. You can join others at Parliament, gather with your community, meet outside your local hospital, or simply stop wherever you are at 2pm for the minute's silence.

We are not affiliated with any political party.

WHAT'S THE HAPPS?

HEPETEMA / SEPTEMBER & OKETOPA / OCTOBER



HAPPENING AT

TE WHARE HAPORI O NGĀ PUNA WAIORA
NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE CNR OF COLOMBO & RINTOUL STREETS

Orange Sky at Free Soup Fridays - every Friday from 11.45am - 2.15pm

Orange Sky is offering their free laundry services, showers & kōrero for anyone who needs it, outside the community centre every Friday! Then, at **1pm** everyone is welcome to join for our free soup community meal in our Whare Kanikani / Dancehall. Spread the Word!

Ko Au Tēnei - back from 1st Sept!

Every Tues & Thursday, 1pm - 3pm

Free 6 week programme. Intro to Te Ao Māori. All ages & nationalities. Learn, participate & share in a safe space. Rongoa, whakapapa, mauri, tikanga & harakeke.

Know Your Stuff

Sat 5 Sept, 3 & 31 Oct, 11am - 2pm

Monthly drug checking clinic. Drug checking is free, confidential, non-judgmental, and 100% legal. Bring your gear & settle in for high quality drug harm reduction yarns.

Playground Live Music

Sun 6 Sept, Doors: 4pm, Music: 4.30pm

An all ages, no drugs, no alcohol gig with Soul Brew, Deux Blue, & Soulrana.

Online tickets \$10. Door sales \$15.

Tickets at: playgroundlivemusic.co.nz

Twin Peaks Club

Sun 13 Sept & 11 Oct, 10.45am - 2.20pm

Come join at the Twin Peaks Townhall. Bring some damn good joe, sit back, and watch "The Return" together! Cost: \$7

Buy your tickets here: bit.ly/444OoSP

Grandma's Life Hacks Workshop

Sat 26 Sept, 2pm - 4.30pm

Explore ideas & actions that your grandmother would have taken for granted. \$18 or 2TC for Wellington Timebank members. Tickets: bit.ly/3THllmp

Mahi Toi - Open Art Group

Tue 1 Sept & 6 Oct, 1.30pm - 3pm

All welcome to join for free Mahi Toi! For artists of all abilities who like meeting up, doing, trying new art techniques, & chatting. On the first Tuesday of every month!

Pesta Babi Film Screening

Sat 5 Sept, 6.30pm

Screening of Pesta Babi, a doco on colonialism in West Papua. Tickets: \$20 waged / \$5 unwaged. Email to book:

antifascistPoneke@gmail.com

Advance Care Planning Workshop

Thu 10 Sept, 12.30pm - 1.30pm

This Dying Matters workshop explores aspects of care if you were to become seriously ill, incapacitated, or approaching the end of life. More info: bit.ly/4wjoAxQ

Smart Newtown Computer Classes

16 Sept to 20 Oct, 5pm or 2pm sessions

Smart Newtown's free computer classes are back! Across 8 classes, covering a range of Microsoft tools. Sign up at: bit.ly/479vr2C

Or email: info@smartnewtown.org.nz

Closed for Labour Day

Monday 26 October

The community centre will be closed for Labour Day Public Holiday. All regular services and hires won't be happening that day. Back from Tues 27 Oct, 9am.

WHAT'S THE HAPPS!

HEPETEMA / SEPTEMBER & OKETOPA / OCTOBER

AROUND NEWTOWN

The Night Before (Great Sounds Great)

Moon, Office Bar & NCC!

Fri 4 Sept, Doors Open: 7pm

Mini-festival: 12 artists, 3 Newtown venues!

Tickets: eyegum.co.nz/night-before-gsg

Make a Move: Gig Series

Moon Bar, 167 Riddiford Street

Fri 11 Sept, Doors open: 8.30pm

Fundraiser gig for Wellington City Mission & DCM. Follow [@brilouisehilton](https://www.instagram.com/brilouisehilton) on Instagram.

The Music of Siouxsie & The Banshees

Moon Bar, 167 Riddiford Street

Sat 10 Oct, Doors open: 8pm

Siouxsie & The Banshees performed by Other Voices. Tickets: bit.ly/3SvtlXm

Kaicycle Community Open Day

Kaicycle Urban Farm, 5 Hospital Road

Sat 5 Sept, 9.30am - 3pm

Visit Kaicycle for their open day! Workshop on Growing from Cuttings. bit.ly/4qzhZ19

Spring for Kaibosh

Moon Bar, 167 Riddiford Street

Sat 12 Sept, 7pm - 2am

Dancing & doing good! Help Kaibosh feed those who need it most! bit.ly/4bTFWdx

InDuna - Single Release Show

Moon Bar, 167 Riddiford Street

Fri 30 Oct, 8pm

Afro-pop, R&B & folk. New Single 'Favourite Colours'. Tickets: madcapmusic.co.nz

Let's Clean Newtown!

Meet outside Newtown Community Centre, Sun 18 Oct, 10.30am to 12pm

Together we can make our streets, parks and shared spaces welcoming for everyone!

Join for this community Newtown clean-up! Contact: keepwellingtonbeautiful@gmail.com

Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori 2026

From 14 to 20 Hepetema / September

Celebrate te reo from wherever you are! Sign up at reomaori.co.nz Kia kaha te reo Māori!

Mischief Makers Market

Thistle Hall, 293 Cuba Steet, Sat 13 Sept, 12.30pm - 5.30pm

A market most mischievous with a range of talented local artists & artisans peddling the finest wares. Find more info on Instagram: [@mischief.makers.market](https://www.instagram.com/mischief.makers.market)

South Indian Canteen

Vogelmorn Bowling Club, 93 Mornington Rd, Sun 27 September, 10am - 12.30pm

A Wellington Timebank workshop with Shelali teaching how to make delicious South Indian kai and then eating together. \$35 or \$25 + 5TC for members. Tickets: bit.ly/4wmEOqe

The Fabulous Carmen Rupe: Tea, Toasties and Trade

Level 2, Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nui Central Library, 65 Victoria St, Te Aro, Sun 25 Oct, 1pm

Entrepreneur, entertainer, madam & mayoral candidate Carmen Rupe left rich legacy.

A free presentation of storytelling, historic images, archival audio and personal memories.

AND BEYOND!

ELECTION EVENTS



Together for the Vote - Enrolment Festival

All around the motu + online, from 7 to 20 September

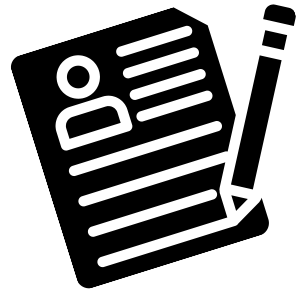
Help ensure everyone's voice is heard this election! Find events near you to attend or add events you're hosting to the festival calendar: our.actionstation.org.nz/calendars/together-for-the-vote

Enrol to Vote @ Newtown Community Centre

Corner of Colombo & Rintoul Streets, Newtown

From Monday 21 to Friday 25 September, 12pm - 2pm

Wellington Timebank & Smart Newtown volunteers will be available in the community centre drop-in space to help anyone enrol to vote or check their details. We can help with both the online or paper forms.



Meet the Candidates - Wellington Bays Electorate

Salvation Army, 4 Normanby Street, Newtown

Tuesday 13 October, 7pm - 9pm

Come down to meet your local candidates for the Wellington Bays Electorate. Ask pātai, listen to their kōrero and get to know their stances on different issues.

KEY DATES



Last day to enrol to vote, Sunday 25 October

Anyone who enrolls after the **4th of October** must cast a special vote & the very last day to enrol to vote in this election is the **25th of October!**

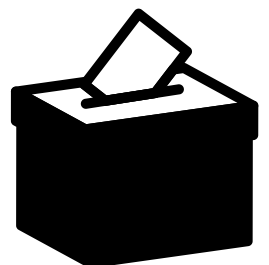


Advance Voting Starts, Monday 26 October

Advance voting opens up 12 days before election day. A list of Voting Places will be published 3 weeks before Election Day on vote.nz

ELECTION DAY! Sunday 7 November

Voting places open 9am to 7pm on election day. Bring your EasyVote card when you vote. Haven't got a card or forgot it? You can still vote!



ENROL TO VOTE IN JUST 10 MINUTES



smart•newtown



04 380 0143



info@smartnewtown.org.nz



www.smartnewtown.org.nz



Weekdays 10:30am to 4:30pm

I'M VOTING FOR
THE FIRST TIME

I'VE VOTED IN
PREVIOUS YEARS

Visit **vote.nz** on your computer or mobile device and click
"ENROL OR UPDATE YOUR DETAILS"



vote.nz

Click **"CHECK ONLINE"** and enter your name, date of birth, and address, OR log into your RealMe account. If your enrolment details are up-to-date, **you're all done!**

If your name or address need to be updated, return to vote.nz and click **"ENROL OR UPDATE YOUR DETAILS"**

Click **"ENROL ONLINE"** and answer the four questions to check your eligibility to vote. If you are eligible, click **"ENROL NOW"**. You'll then need to read the Privacy Policy and click **"NEXT"**

Click **"New Zealand Driver Licence"** or **"New Zealand Passport"** and fill out the details found on your ID, OR click **"RealMe Verified Identity"** and log into your RealMe account.

Enter your name and contact details, then click **"NEXT"**. Enter your current residential address (and your postal address if it differs from your residential address) then click **"NEXT"**.

On this review page, read over and confirm that your name, contact details, and address are all correct. Tick the box to declare your eligibility to vote and that you haven't provided any incorrect information.

YOU ARE NOW READY TO VOTE!

YOUR ELECTION PREP BINGO

See if you can do at least 5 in a row between now and election day!

Talk to someone with a different perspective	Watch a leader debate 	Learn the different parties positions on Te Tiriti	 Remind a relative to vote	Reflect on biases that you may hold 
 Volunteer for a party who's values align with yours	Learn about the policy impacts for Māori	Attend a Meet the Candidates event 	Encourage your friends to vote 	 Learn about the policy impacts for seniors
Research the impact of policy on people with disabilities	 Help your whānau to enrol to vote	ENROL TO VOTE!	Research different party policies 	 Research the impact of policy on the rainbow community
 Learn how our MMP system works	Learn about the parties positions on climate change	Find out where your local voting place is. 	 Learn about your local MP candidates	Organise an election watch party with friends
 Mark election day in your calendar	Research the impact of policy on refugees & migrants	Learn about the policy impacts on cost of living 	Research the impact of policy on the native wildlife	Get involved in your local community 

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 Donate here!

GET IN TOUCH!



Te Whare Hapori o ngā Puna Waiora
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