

# Kōrero

News and stories from Pukerua Bay

Vol 5, Issue 1  
February 2025



*Signing up for adventure! L to R - Dave Garrett, Colin McClean, Ewan McClean, and Matt Melidoniss*

## Kia ora

Adventure is the theme for this issue. As our stories illustrate, adventure means different things to different people. But, as expressed in our whakataukī, it's always about persevering in search of a goal and not letting obstacles get in your way.

We begin with a moving story from Judith Frost-Evans recalling a youthful experience and how it exemplifies the way kindness can ripple between people, something we see so often here in Pukerua Bay (p. 3).

If you wondered about the cover image, that's Ewan McClean and friends signing up for the Big Bang, an adventure in madness (pp.4–5). Does it appeal to you? Nothing to stop you signing up this November!

Isaac du Toit and friends have found adventure in our backyard. In the adventure described in this issue, they undertook a nighttime journey on foot from Te Whanganui-a-Tara to Pukerua Bay (p. 6).

Two of our contributors describe adventures overseas. Conor Twyford recalls a tricky situation on a mountain somewhere in Italy (pp. 8–9), and Marge Hurst shares the relationship she and her whānau have developed with Niue over the course of 40 years (p. 12).

Overseas travel is great, but there's nothing like being at home. Nathan Gray is back from the United States and happy to soak up the many pleasures that are intrinsic to life in Pukerua Bay (pp. 14–15).

Our focus for the next issue will be on careers, how to develop them, and what it's like right now in this tumultuous time. We'd like our young people to know that there are all sorts of interesting options out there for them, be it working for another person or working for themselves.

### A note about dogs

We've been asked to include the occasional reminder of some of the guidelines that help us all get along with each other. An area that can create some tension is around our canine friends. A reminder, dog lovers, about the restrictions that mean that through summer, dogs are not allowed on the beach from 10am to 7pm.

Dogs must always be kept on leash when walking through the Pukerua Bay Scientific Reserve. Many people don't realise this, so if you see them with dogs off leash, please let them know that precious creatures live there, and the ban is in place to protect them.

If you're ever unsure about where you can or cannot take your dog, the general guidelines for Porirua are here: [porirua.city.govt.nz/services/animals/dog-owners-porirua/walking-your-dog/](http://porirua.city.govt.nz/services/animals/dog-owners-porirua/walking-your-dog/)

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*Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa.*

Let us keep close together, not wide apart.

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We acknowledge mana whenua of Pukerua Bay, Ngāti Toa Rangatira. For Ngāti Toa news, see [ngatitoa.iwi.nz](http://ngatitoa.iwi.nz)

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## An adventure in kindness

It was my 13th birthday. “Your present is in the garage,” said my brother. There I found a red skiff and a red paddle. “Wow!” Rob proudly said he had made it. That summer, I enjoyed many skiff outings.

One Friday in late summer, I came home from college and no one else was home. It was a day like today in Pukerua Bay – sunny and calm – the sea looked so inviting. I put my togs on, got my skiff and paddle under an arm, and headed for the beach.

I launched into the sea beside Seatoun Wharf and went exploring. At Worser Bay, I kept paddling. At Scorching Bay, I noticed the sun going down. I hauled the skiff up and ran into the dairy. 7pm! Time to be home. But as I set off, the moon was rising. The moonlight shimmered across the harbour to me. I hid behind rocks and each time I reappeared, there it was.

At Karaka Bay, it was dark. I heard a voice, “Is that you, Judy?” “Yes,”

I replied. “You'll be smashed to matchsticks out there!” I looked at the calm water, mystified. “I'll meet you at Worser Bay,” Rob called. We put the skiff on our Anglia and drove home in silence.

Years later, I learned what had frightened Rob. Our father had died a year earlier, Rob made a skiff for me, I went missing.

It was through the kindness of Mr Kershaw that Rob had made the skiff. He took Rob under his wing when our father died. We wrote to let him know how much his kindness had meant to us both. He replied that his father had died when he was young, and he was only doing for Rob what was done for him. My brother went on to do the same for a local lad. And so, I call this story, “Ripples of Kindness”. As the ripples of moonlight followed me that evening, so ripples of kindness follow each of us who cares for another.

Nā Judith Frost-Evans

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*Whaia e koe ki te iti kahurangi;  
ki te tuohu koe, me maunga teitei.*

*Seek the treasure you value most dearly:  
if you bow your head, let it be to  
a lofty mountain.*

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This whakataukī encourages us to aim high, be persistent, and work to the best of our abilities, pushing through obstacles to strive for our goals.

# The Big Bang Adventure Race

The Big Bang is an adventure race that takes place in November each year. Held over one intense day, it combined wayfinding with running, hiking, and mountain biking across a mystery course. You never knew what's coming next. As I discovered in November last year!

Before I dive in, I'll admit I'm no seasoned competitor. Ten years ago, I ran a half marathon and swore I'd never do it again. But here I was, facing a race far more complex than anything I'd done before.

## The team

Our team of four guys had minimal experience and even less training. What could possibly go wrong?

The night before the race, we received word from our team captain, Dave, that the starting line was located in the hills behind Shannon. So, we set off early to make the 9 a.m. start.

## Stage 1: On foot

The first leg was on foot, weaving through a mix of felled pine trees and dense bush lawyer. It had started raining, and it was clear it would only get worse. We could see the more experienced teams pass us, but we were still in good spirits, carefully planning our next route – though we did get a little off track a few times.

## Stage 2: Mountain biking

Next, we hopped on our bikes for a 20 km stretch, mostly downhill along forestry roads. By this point, I was

starting to regret not putting in more training. My muscles were complaining, and the challenge was only beginning.



*Those hills...*

## Stage 3: The surprise water stage

Halfway through, we reached an unexpected water stage – white water rafting! It was a guided experience and untimed, which was a welcome break. The rafting was a fun diversion and gave our tired legs a chance to cool down.



*All together now! Or is it 'every man to himself'?*

## Stage 4: Brutal mud and rain

The second foot-stage was where things really got tough. The rain had turned what should have been a short run into a slippery, mud-filled obstacle course. We found ourselves sliding down banks and tripping over roots. By this point, we were moving slower, and our muscles were struggling to warm up after the raft ride. We had to take a break to recover from cramp.

## Stage 5: The final push

The last stage put us on the bike again, up a steep hill through the bush and then down towards the finish line. The rain had made the track slippery, and the bike wheels were spinning, struggling to grip. Up and then over ... the finish line was in sight.

Finally, we crossed the finish line. Exhausted, soaked, but elated.



*They're in there somewhere.*

## Shout-outs

Huge thanks to my teammates – Dave, Matt, and Colin – and to our support crew, Peter. And, of course, to the volunteers and organisers who made the event happen. We couldn't have done it without you!

Nā Ewan McClean

## Exceptional spaces in balance with nature



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Based in Pukerua Bay

## Into the dark

Over the past wee while, a group of us – Isaac du Toit, Paddy Rockell, and occasionally Joey Rockell – have been walking together around our community, exploring new facets of this wonderful place. Isaac and Paddy had previously walked from Pukerua Bay to Wellington during the day, but we thought it would be fun to do so again, with some amendments: Joey would come along, we would walk in the other direction, and we would do it at night!

So, on the afternoon of 21 April 2024, we three intrepid adventurers set off on perhaps our most ambitious journey yet. Arriving in Wellington via the train, we left the station and made our way down Hutt Road to Old Porirua Road. By the time darkness was setting in, we were crossing the hills to Ngaio. On those hills we reached our highest elevation of the walk, where we looked down upon the brilliantly sparkling city of Te Whanganui-a-Tara.



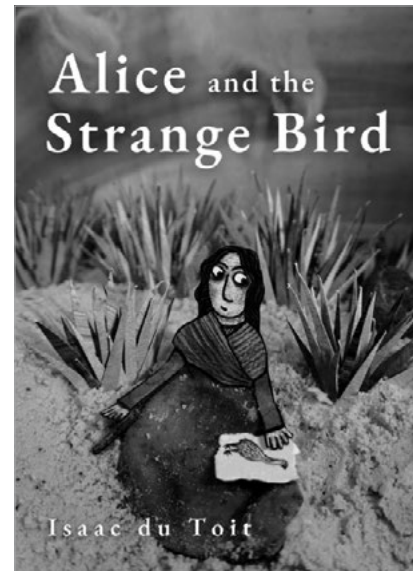
In Johnsonville, as we were about to cross a pedestrian crossing, we faced our first perilous experience of the expedition: a dark green car with a pink-haired driver zoomed through the crossing without regard for us. If we hadn't been vigilant in crossing the road, we almost certainly would have been struck down.

Following the Porirua Stream by way of Glenside, we entered the Tawa Valley. For a bit of fun, we cheated for a small section of the walk (from Redwood Station to Linden Park) by riding e-scooters we happened upon. In Mana, while walking next to the highway at about 11pm, a passing car randomly threw a smoke bomb a bit too close for comfort.

On the home stretch, past Whenua Tapu on Te Ara Harakeke, hearing the call of a ruru, we looked up to see, flying through the sky, a bright streak. Astrophysicists will tell us whether it was a comet, meteor, or something else. We would like to think that a small stone landed in the hills nearby.

By the time we neared Pukerua Bay, our legs were stiff and aching, it was rather late, and we were exceedingly footsore. Nonetheless, we made it, and the journey was worth whatever difficulties we faced.

Nā Paddy Rockell,  
rātou ko Isaac du Toit, ko Joey Rockell



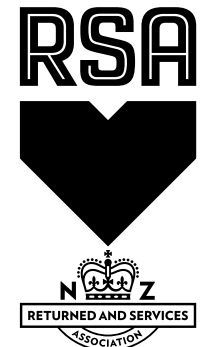
*Alice and the Strange Bird* by Pukerua Bay author and illustrator Isaac du Toit is a children's nonfiction picture book that tells the story of seven-year-old Alice McKenzie. In 1880, Alice encountered a strange bird on the beach at Martins Bay, an isolated part of the South Island.

\$20 - free delivery in Pukerua Bay

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## Our Italian adventure

In September, my 19-year-old twin sons and I went on a long-planned trip to Italy and Greece. The Italian part included a week's stay in Pietraroja, a small village 85 km east of Naples.

We were delighted to be able to stay on the top two floors of our new friend Lina's grandmother's house – something we organised via Home Exchange. The bottom floor is a pasta-making factory and one of my proudest days was watching my sons (one of whom is training to be a chef) learn to make Caratti, the pasta that's unique to that village.

Towards the end of our stay, we decided to drive into the mountains to explore. Pietraroja is snuggled into a large massif, quite high in the mountains, famous for the discovery of the world's smallest dinosaur. After driving for 20 minutes, there were no more villages to be seen, so we parked our car and decided to walk down a gravel road. We soon encountered a herd of sheep and a boisterous sheepdog, so decided to turn back. But oh, no! The electronic car key battery was dead. We could get in the car but couldn't start it. The rental company

would take hours to reach us, and we were due to fly to Athens the next day. It felt about 5 degrees and the wind was howling. We imagined a cold night on the mountain.

Thank God for a faint signal, Google, and two 19-year-olds. We found that even if the fob battery is dead, you can hold it against the car's 'on' button to start the car. You can imagine our relief as we drove home to Pietraroja.

One day my sons want to go back and walk those mountains. We'll never forget the manaakitanga that was shown to us – or what to do if your car won't start on the side of a mountain.

Nā Conor Twyford



## Want to play football?



Registration for **PUKERUA BAY SOCCER CLUB** for players aged 4 to 14 open now!

- Registration open now and closes 31 March! Register today!
- Super low fees: \$55 for 4 - 6 year olds, \$110 for 7 – 14 year olds!
- Family discounts available!
- Practices in Pukerua Bay and/or Plimmerton (or wherever most suits the team).
- **First game** 3 May (start of term 2). **Last game** 30 August (end of term 3).

To register visit [www.pkbsoccer.nz](http://www.pkbsoccer.nz) or email [pkb@pkbsoccer.nz](mailto:pkb@pkbsoccer.nz) - let's get you playing football in 2025!

## Adventures in the Subantarctics: whakahao conservation in action



*The view from Enderby Island during the Around the Island walk' (photo: Megan Melidonis).*

In January 2020, I led a sea lion research expedition to Enderby Island, part of New Zealand's remote Subantarctic Island cluster. Our mission was to tag and count whakahao (New Zealand sea lions) and their pups, contributing to an annual population study to inform the protection efforts for this vulnerable species. Little did we know that this trip would become an unforgettable adventure, filled with unexpected challenges.

The journey across the Cook Strait (Te Moana-o-Raukawa) and into the 'roaring forties' and the 'furious fifties' was wild, with gale force winds and waves battering our research vessel until we reached the Auckland Islands (Motu Maha). There, we landed safely on Sandy Bay via tender, sodden but in high spirits.

We awoke on Enderby to the unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime view of endangered, hoiho (yellow-eyed penguins) carefully picking their path to the sea to launch their morning fishing trip. After a strong coffee, we got stuck

into our mission for the week, navigating harems of whakahao on the beach, hidden on the tussock-covered slopes, and amongst the fields of megaherbs. There we meticulously tagged and recorded sea lion pups under the watchful eyes of their protective mothers and while narrowly avoiding erratic charges from their territorial fathers. All the time, the winds carried the cries of nesting toroa (Southern royal albatross) their three-metre wingspan and ostrich-sized eggs leaving us in awe.



*Adult sea lions in the sward above Sandy Bay, Enderby Island (photo: Megan Melidonis).*

One evening, we ventured to nearby Dundas Island for additional surveys, only to find ourselves stranded when heavy rain made return impossible. Soaked and shivering, we squeezed into a small survival hut, huddling together for warmth as rain battered the walls throughout the night.

We also sailed to Figure-of-Eight Island, a tiny chunk of volcanic rock sheltered in Carnley Harbour. The surrounding Adam's Island revealed its wild beauty, but also its challenges – thick mud

sucked off our boots as we worked, and we were ravaged by sandflies.

Midway through the trip, disaster struck – most of our food supplies succumbed to mould in the damp conditions. Forced to ration, we relied on creativity and teamwork to survive.

Just days before the global pandemic began reshaping the world, we returned to mainland New Zealand, exhausted

but triumphant. The trip's trials forged bonds among the team, and our data provided critical insights for sea lion conservation.

The Subantarctic's raw, untamed beauty, and its relentless unpredictability, offered a powerful reminder of nature's power and the resilience required to protect it.

Nā Megan Melidonis

## Pukerua Bay School Gala – save the date – 15 March!

*From the Pukerua Bay School  
Fundraising Trust:*

The much-loved Pukerua Bay School Gala returns in March with all your favourites! Get ready for an exciting day filled with live stage entertainment, second-hand shopping, plants, crafts, delicious food, a café, and tons of fun activities for the kids. Mark your calendars now – you won't want to miss out on our school's biggest fundraiser of the year!

### Calling all local businesses!

Are you a local business looking to connect with the Pukerua Bay community? Or do you have products to donate for our silent auction or raffle? We offer great sponsorship and advertising opportunities to help you get the word out! We also welcome donations from families – everything goes toward covering gala expenses, so we can maximise funds raised for our school.

To learn more, contact us at [secretary.pkbft@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.pkbft@gmail.com). We'd love to work with you!

### Community collections – time to clear out!

Our gala is famous for its fantastic second-hand shopping, and we're looking for quality items to sell. If you have any of the following to donate, we'd love to take them off your hands:

Bric-a-brac | Working appliances | Furniture | Sporting equipment | Garden/outdoor supplies | Household tools and machinery (must be in working order) | Toys | Clothing (please no underwear or soiled items)

Please ensure your donations are in good, usable condition, as we pride ourselves on offering top-quality goods.

### Collection dates:

**Sunday, 2 March: 9–11am**

**Sunday, 9 March: 9–11am**

Please place your items on the berm by 9am on the collection day. If not collected by midday, please retrieve your items.

We can't wait to see you at the 2025 Pukerua Bay School Gala! Thank you for your continued support.

## Niue visits



When our family of five stepped off the plane in Alofi, Niue for the first time in August 1983, only two other tourists arrived with us.

The main accommodation was The Hotel, but we were staying at The Hinemata Motel, a basic, three-bedroom house, now sadly washed into the sea in the 2004 hurricane. It was perfectly placed, within metres of the Pacific Ocean. It had three bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a huge verandah, where we would watch the geckos fighting amongst the beams in the evening.

Our days were spent snorkeling and exploring the island on a borrowed flatbed truck on the dusty, unsealed roads. We looked forward to the weekly Island Nights at the hotel, within walking distance, with wonderful food! The boys all learned to SCUBA. A fabulous two-and-half weeks.

We returned as a family each year for four years, then the boys had other things to do. My husband Paul and I returned four more times, with our

last trip together in 2000. The island changed very little in that time. Rental cars became available by our second visit, but they were never quite like the truck!

Fast forward to 2014, when my eldest son's children were good enough swimmers for a trip to Niue. The beaches are tiny pockets of sand, and access to the sea is by clambering down the cliffs. Three generations now, and the grandchildren love it as much as their father and grandparents did. Sadly, their grandfather never saw Rose and Oliver enjoying it as much as he had.

We all went again in 2017 (the grandchildren learned SCUBA, too) and in 2024, the last time with the partners of the grandchildren in tow. Now there are restaurants (The WashAway Café is a favourite), a resort, various private accommodations all over the island, diving, fishing and snorkelling trips, caving, and just seeing the sights. But the vibes are still the same and the people are just as friendly. You have to cycle one-handed, as one hand is busy waving.

I took my last snorkel there in 2017, but I just can't clamber down those cliffs anymore. Actually, I can get down, but getting back out of the water is another story!

Nā Marge Hurst



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# What is it about Pukerua Bay?



Two of the world's greatest movie directors have graced the Hobbiton-like realm of Pukerua Bay. Everyone's aware that it was Sir Peter Jackson's stomping ground back in the day. Perhaps a little less known is that it's also home to the brilliant Jane Campion.

What is it that attracts such great talent to the Bay?

Is it the surrounding hills that illuminate with golden brilliance as the rising sun cascades over the land? Is it the ability to look out across the ocean, letting the imagination seek beyond the horizon – a haven of inspiration for many a creative person? Or is it the birdsong that resonates through the valley, conjuring an automatic smile and compelling us to take care of our environment?

From the stillness of the sheep lining the farmer's land to the gracefully flapping wings of the stingray nestling in the shallows of our protected reserve, there's a calm and wild duality to living amongst our special two hills. For example, our relaxing sandy shorelines are perfect for a dip, snorkel, or kayak on

those mirror-calm days, and yet provide undeniable vitality when body surfing the waves during stormier weather.

Perhaps people are drawn by the serenity of watching a whale migrating through the channel to its eventual feeding grounds in Antarctica? Or observing a kererū engorge on kawakawa fruits and karaka berries from outside our windows? Many are captivated by the mesmerising colour of our blooming pōhutukawa, and searching for the abundant life amongst the rock pools is always popular. Especially, the joy when seeing our eels!



For me, it's the ability to switch off after work, letting my thoughts drift carelessly during a hikoi under the steep, lush cliffs towards Wairaka Rock. Indeed, it's hard to beat watching an explosive sunset standing alongside Ngāti Toa's specially carved pou.

Few would also deny that it is the Raroa Road bush track up past the fairy garden and onwards to the inspiring cliff-top views that enable glimpses of Mount Taranaki and Mount Ruapehu on crystal clear days.

Or perhaps it is just the immutable presence of Kapiti Island sitting in all her ancient glory. A calming daily presence for many, especially as the light seeps in and reveals its many folds and valleys.

Nā Nathan Hoturoa Gray (recently returned to the Bay after covering the US Elections)

Photos nā Nathan Hoturoa Gray



## Your local councillor

Josh Trlin, councillor for the Pāuatahanui General Ward



Kia ora! My name is Josh Trlin. I'm one of your local Pāuatahanui General Ward councillors and I want to hear from you.

- Have an idea to improve our city?
- Concerned about an issue within our community?
- Want to know more about the work your council is doing?
- Got a problem you need council help to solve?

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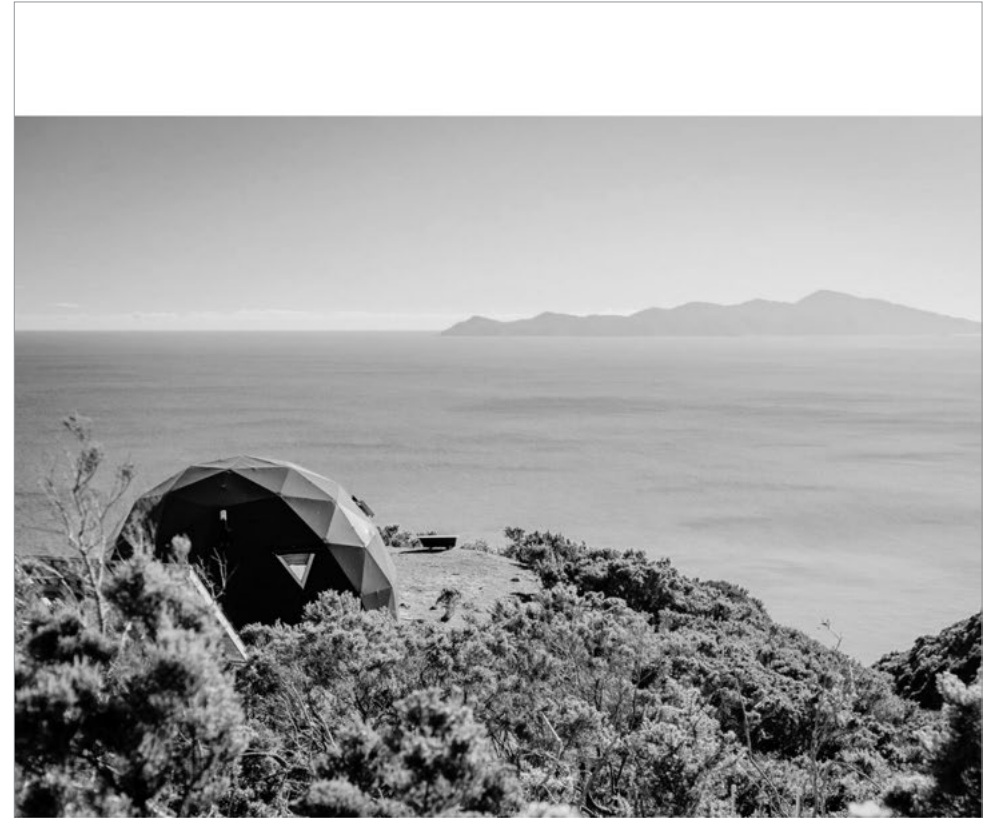
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# Aroha mai, aroha atu – caring for one another

## Next issue

The theme for the next issue is “careers and career development.”

*Kōrero* relies upon its advertisers and sponsors to keep going. Please get in touch if you're interested.

The copy deadline for the next issue is **12 March**. Our email address is [newsletter@pukeruabay.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@pukeruabay.org.nz)

## Our team

*Kōrero* is brought to you by Kate Dreaver, Gill England, Carla Guy, Jonathan Harker, Anne Johnston, Moira Lawler, Iain MacLean, Kelly McClean, and Nikky Winchester.

It is supported by the Pukerua Bay Residents' Association and by all our valued contributors, sponsors, and advertisers.



See you at this year's gala!

## Advertising and sponsorship

*Kōrero* comes out approximately every eight weeks. We need your support to keep it going. Please consider donating or placing paid advertising.

Advertising rates for **five issues** start at just \$50 for a local listing (see opposite); \$80 for a card-sized ad; \$160 for a half-page ad; and \$220 for a full-page ad.

Advertising rates for **one issue** are \$20 for a card-sized ad, \$40 for a half-page ad, and \$60 for a full-page ad.

You can **sponsor** an entire issue for \$300.

**Community notices** are very welcome, but please consider a koha.



*OUR SKINK: The image of the Whitaker's Skink on our banner, and in the Residents' Association logo, was created by local artist, Pauline Morse.*



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## Pukerua Bay Community website and directory

The Pukerua Bay community website [pukeruabay.org.nz](http://pukeruabay.org.nz) holds lots of useful information, including a local business directory.

You can download a PDF of *Kōrero* from the website at: [pkb.nz/korero](http://pkb.nz/korero) or via this QR code.



If you would prefer not to receive a newsletter in your letterbox, please let us know. And, if you have suggestions for the website, please email: [newsletter@pukeruabay.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@pukeruabay.org.nz)

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## Events calendar

- 2 March Gala community collection, 9–11am
- 9 March Gala community collection, 9–11am
- 11 March Residents' Association meeting, 7.30–9pm, RSA, Wairaka Rd
- 15 March Pukerua Bay School Gala, 11am–2pm, Pukerua Bay School, Rāwhiti Rd
- 31 March Soccer club registrations close
- 8 April Residents' Association meeting, 7.30–9pm, RSA, Wairaka Rd

To list an event in the April issue, please email by **12 March**: [newsletter@pukeruabay.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@pukeruabay.org.nz)



**15 MARCH** 2025

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