

Calling on local businesses to support our end of term event for local kids.

We're seeking support from local businesses to help us create a special end-of-term movie night for our incredible Year 1 and 2 Dreamers (tamariki) from the I Have a Dream Charitable Trust programme at Te Kura o Hau Karetu.

About I Have a Dream

The I Have a Dream programme supports Dreamers (tamariki) all the way through their school journey, providing mentoring, tutoring and life guidance through dedicated adult mentors called Navigators. The goal is to ensure every child has the support, opportunities and networks they need to succeed in education, careers and in life.

How your business can help:

- Sponsor movie night snacks and drinks
- Donate raffle prizes (any value)

In return, your business will:

- Be promoted across our social media pages
- Be acknowledged on event materials
- Be recognised on the night with your business name and logo displayed

Our Dreamers have been working incredibly hard at school, building their skills, confidence and aspirations. We're proud of their efforts and would love to celebrate them with a special free night for them and their whānau.

If your business can help, please contact Amber on 027 426 0447 or email Amber@4ABetterCity.nz. By 5pm, Friday 20 March.

Together we can make a real difference for these amazing kids and their futures.

Read more about I Have A Dream on our website: www.4abettercity.nz/i-have-a-dream-upper-hutt

A "thank you" to Justine Hall from For A Better City Hutt Valley for sending this article to The Upper Hutt Connection.

09/03/26

Covid boosters still available for those wanting them

Six month covid boosters are still available to those wanting them, aged 30 and over.

University of Otago professor of public health, Michael Baker, said that Covid 19 is still New Zealand's most impactful infectious disease, equating to about 1000 deaths a year, compared to influenza, the next most infectious which is about 500 deaths a year.

Source: Radio New Zealand

09/03/26

Ex HIBS staff member sentenced for sex offending

Ex HIBS staff member, Anthony (Tony) Francis, has been sentenced to twelve months home detention, having been reduced from the initial three years and seven months in prison due to his age, now 78, and suffering from a range of medical conditions including Parkinson's disease.

The sex offending happened multiple times between 1998 and 1999 to two students at the school. The police weren't able to proceed until the older victim came forth as there wasn't enough solid evidence to build a case.

Speaking outside the courtroom, the older victim said he had come to court not expecting a severe sentence, but it was still a "kick in the guts" that "a retired man gets to hang out at home as a sentence".

He said it was "difficult to believe it's all over", as the case had taken more than three years to resolve since he first laid the police complaint.

He was dubious that Francis showed true remorse, saying his letter of apology was "nondescript" and blamed Francis' upbringing for his offending.

The younger victim had mixed emotions about the outcome, but he was most upset about the fact that Francis was not being put on the sex offenders register, saying that his low risk of re-offending should have no bearing on the decision.

Source: Melissa Nightingale / NZ Herald

04/03/26

Grey Power: Needed Now - More than ever before!

Our mission statement is to be the appropriate voice for all New Zealanders. Grey Power New Zealand Federation Inc. (GPNZF) was started in February 1986 - today we continue to be a neutral but assertive voice of influence in the political arena with no party political affiliation.

Upper Hutt Grey Power, the local affiliate of GPNZF is mandated to:

- To promote the welfare and well-being of older persons and their families residing in Upper Hutt and further, to advocate similar provision for their welfare and well-being as residents of New Zealand.
- To support Grey Power New Zealand Federation or any organisation which has similar aims,
- to promote the establishment of kindred local organisations, and
- to educate and inform organisations, institutions, other bodies, and the public of the needs of older persons and their families residing in Upper Hutt, including their ability to contribute to society.

With our local community reeling under continuing inflation of living-costs, inadequate performance of public services and other networked infrastructure the fundamental social support required by our ageing population is being rapidly eroded.

Our organisation offers a well-trying platform for active community-minded individuals to advocate for the growing number of people around them at risk of impoverishment through the introduction of user-charges for water and, in alarmingly increasing numbers, isolated from participating in their community by homelessness or unacceptably long waiting lists for elective surgery and other acute health interventions.

Join us before you need us!

Authorised by:

Lew Rohloff
Vice President.

A "thank you" to Lew Rohloff for sending this article to The Upper Hutt Connection.

10/03/26

One week of night closures coming for State Highway 2 Remutaka Hill this month

The next set of night closures for maintenance on State Highway 2 Remutaka Hill is just 10 days away.

The route will have a week of night closures on from Sunday, 15 March, to Thursday, 19 March. The closures will run from 9 pm to 4 am each night, finishing at 4 am, Friday 20 March.

Contractors will do asphalt resurfacing, and carrying out routine maintenance such as drainage, shoulder maintenance, signage, graffiti removal, and vegetation control.

The planned maintenance is critically important in keeping a vital regional transport link resilient for road users.

They are also the most effective way of getting work done quickly and safely while minimising impact on the public.

Traffic volumes are much lower at night and fewer drivers are affected than if the work was done during the day under stop/go traffic management.

Full closures also allow contractors to complete their work faster and more efficiently. They also reduce traffic management costs.

Escorted crossings are available for people who need to travel while the night closure is in place. There will be one crossing in each direction that drivers can book for:

- 10.30 pm - Featherston to Hutt
- 11.30 pm - Hutt to Featherston

Bookings can be made online: [Remutaka Hill Closure Escort Booking Form](#)

Drivers should plan ahead and make a booking if they need to travel the route at night, as the only alternative detour is via the Pahiatua Track or SH3 Te Ahu a Turanga, which is a much longer route.

Work crews will always do their best to help people join escorted crossings, but people are strongly urged to book one in advance and ensure they are not caught out.

These crossings are available for light vehicles only. Heavy vehicles cannot travel the route during these closures and must use the detour via the Pahiatua Track or State Highway 3 Te Ahu a Turanga.

The closure schedule for 2026 is available (see below) to allow people to plan ahead.

Important information for Remutaka Hill closures:

- Escorted crossings are available during closure nights but must be booked in advance. We always communicate well before planned closures, so people have plenty of time to make bookings.

- Bookings can be made online on the Waka Kotahi website - Remutaka Hill Closure Escort Booking Form
- Bookings are essential - drivers who turn up without one risk being turned away. If you have a genuine emergency on the night, the hill manager will decide how best to help you.
- The escorted crossings are for light vehicles only. To keep our contractors safe, heavy vehicles cannot be accommodated.
- Drivers should arrive at least 15 minutes before their crossing time. This helps ensure escorted crossings depart on time and stay on schedule.
- Drivers must follow all instructions from contractors during crossings and remain behind the pilot vehicle until the crossing is finished. This is critical for the safety of drivers and roadworkers.
- Full access is always available for emergency services for incident responses.

State Highway 2, Remutaka Hill. Upcoming planned night closures 2026:

Nights Closed	Start 9 pm	Finish 4 am
5	15 March	20 March
1	19 April	20 April
5	3 May	8 May
5	10 May	15 May
1	14 June	15 June

More Information:

- [SH2 Remutaka Hill road night closures](#)
- [Maintenance closures](#)
- [State Highway Maintenance – FAQs](#)
- [Tips for driving through worksites \(video\)](#)

Plan ahead for a safe, enjoyable journey. Keep up to date with:

- Traffic updates: [journeys.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/wellington](https://www.journeys.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/wellington)
- Facebook: [facebook.com/NZTAWgtn](https://www.facebook.com/NZTAWgtn)
- Twitter/X: <https://x.com/nztawgtn>
- Journey planner: [journeys.nzta.govt.nz/wellington](https://www.journeys.nzta.govt.nz/wellington)
- Phone: 0800 4 HIGHWAYS (0800 44 44 49)

Source: NZTA / Waka Kotahi

04/03/26

Roadworks update for Lower Hutt commuters: 9th - 16th of March

Thanks so much for your continued patience as Wellington Electricity progresses its underground cable relocation work through the city.

We know these changes can be frustrating, and we truly appreciate everyone adjusting their routines while this important work continues.

The works have experienced some delays in progress due to the wet weather and conditions in the ground.

If you're travelling by car, please follow all directional signage and allow extra time for your journey. Remember, navigation apps like Waze or Google Maps can also help you plan the best route on the day.

If your road is impacted, Wellington Electricity contractors will work with you to ensure deliveries/pickups can be managed.

Unless stated otherwise, footpaths remain open so you can continue to move through the area and support your favourite local businesses.

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND LOWER HUTT NEXT WEEK: MARCH 9-16

- Andrews Avenue will remain closed to through traffic
- Dudley Street is closed to through traffic until the latter half of the week
- Queens Drive (northbound from the High Street roundabout, near City Fitness). At least one north-bound lane is expected to re-open midweek. The slip lane towards Laings Road will close in the latter half of the week. For Metlink detours to bus routes affected by the Queens Drive closure visit: [www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-../detours-and-closures](http://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-..../detours-and-closures)
- Laings Road (between Queens Drive and High Street) and High Street (north from Laings Road to Andrews Avenue) will close to through traffic towards the latter half of the week
- Melling Link Bridge (west from Rutherford Street to the Repco building) the footpath on the Repco side of the bridge is expected to close towards the latter half of the week
- Rutherford Street: traffic management continues as work progresses towards the Melling Road roundabout
- Connolly Street: single-lane traffic management continues as work progresses towards Melling Road roundabout

And don't forget!

Queens Drive / High Street roundabout (near McDonald's) remains closed until December 2026 as part of the SH2 Melling Transport Improvements project. You can find further information on this project and wider, regional disruption on [NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi](#) - Wellington's Facebook page.

Source: Te Awa Kairangi - Delivering RiverLink

07/03/26

Rongoā Māori traditional medicine could be available for inmates at Rimutaka prison in five years

Rongoā healing is currently being planned for 14 prisons within New Zealand, including Rimutaka Prison. Along with other healthcare services already employed at prison in New Zealand, Rongoā is traditional Māori medicine which includes herbal remedies, physical therapies and spiritual healing. These healing services are often necessary as a first step to support prisoners physical and mental health to make sure they can engage with offence focused and addiction-centred rehabilitation programmes.

Source: Mike Tweed / New Zealand Herald

09/03/26

SPORTS

Dave Rennie appointed as the 29th All Blacks coach.

Dave Rennie has been appointed as the new coach for the All Blacks. Born in Upper Hutt, he went to Heretaunga College. He played for the Upper Hutt rugby football club until a shoulder injury forced him to retire at 27. He then moved into a coaching role at the Upper Hutt rugby football club. He then trained as a teacher, and taught at Maidstone Intermediate in Upper Hutt.

Source: RNZ (Radio New Zealand)

05/03/26