



Close to Home



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Creating a sense of whānau for the whole neighbourhood



Wahine (left), Jacqui (middle) and Wiki (right) at the Glenavon Community Hub.

Tāmaki Makaurau customer Jacqui is legendary in her West Auckland community. As well as caring for her six – soon to be seven – children, she spends much of her time volunteering at the Glenavon Community Hub near her Kāinga Ora home.

Jacqui is a driving force at the Community Hub, with a passion for bringing people together to create a sense of connection. Located in the heart of a diverse and welcoming community, Jacqui and her team of volunteers at the Hub are committed to celebrating the range of cultures represented in the area through cultural events, classes and by simply sparking conversation.

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Season's greetings for a relaxing summer

Kia ora everyone,

With the days getting warmer, we are quickly coming to the end of another year of providing quality housing and support to our customers.

In 2023 we focused on responding to your needs, answering nearly 700,000 calls, completing over half a million maintenance jobs, and supporting some of you through January's Auckland floods and Cyclone Gabrielle in February. The important work to make all of our homes warmer and drier continues – in fact, we installed enough insulation to cover the Auckland Airport runway 11 times!

This year, we renovated 739 of our homes and built nearly 2,900 more. Plus, we have more than 6,500 in construction and under contract. I want to thank

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Creating a sense of whānau for the whole neighbourhood

“When people pass the Hub, they stop to look and chat, and right away they’re making connections – which is what it’s all about. Some go on to volunteer with us, and we love having that help and the chance to get to know each other.”

So, what exactly happens at the Glenavon Community Hub? As the beating heart of the community, the Hub is a base for all sorts of wonderful services and activities including Kai Connect, a local food parcel service; Making Ends Meet, a ‘free shop’ of donated clothing and household items; and free workshops in te reo Māori and tikanga.

And Jacqui plays a key role in all of it – including leading the te reo Māori classes each term.

“I grew up speaking te reo Māori and I want to give others the opportunity to learn, reconnect with their cultural identity and fill their kete with knowledge,” Jacqui says.

“Running these classes was an opportunity for me to give back to the parents in our community. Our tamariki learn te reo Māori at school, and this lets parents learn the same thing their tamariki are learning so they can continue to speak and learn te reo together at home.”

But Jacqui is clear that she is just one part of a network of amazing volunteers who help make the Glenavon Community Hub the lively meeting place it is. Two of these volunteers – and Jacqui’s friends – are Wahine and Wiki, also Kāinga Ora customers who live nearby. The pair volunteer to help with Kai Connect, saying it’s their way of giving back to the community that has welcomed and supported them.

They’re modest about their contributions, pointing out that to give is to receive.

“I know what it’s like to struggle and I do whatever I can to help out – we all do,” says Wahine.

“We have a great relationship and understand that working

together benefits everyone, and we always have a laugh!”

Wiki agrees, having been blown away by the support the community wrapped around her when she needed help herself.

“When we were in lockdown for COVID-19, Whaea Jacqui delivered a kai parcel to help get me and my family through,” Wiki explains.

“So when we got out of lockdown I came to the Hub and asked Jacqui how I could help out. I know the difference helping people when they’re in need makes, and I wanted to be part of it.”

And for Jacqui, stories like that are what it’s all about.

“We’re a family here and our priority is to focus on what we can improve for our people and to bring everyone together. This way we can make our community safer and stronger.”



Check out our video featuring Jacqui and the Glenavon Community Hub

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Season’s greetings for a relaxing summer

all our customers for your patience and understanding while we worked on upgrading or building your new homes. They are warm, dry, modern and far better for people’s health and wellbeing.

We have thousands more homes to build and renovate, working alongside our customers, with more work still to do. Our house building programme is improving in pace and reliability, allowing us

to be clearer about how it will impact people.

We have also worked hard to find new ways of doing more for our customers. Some of our customers are participating in our Winter Energy study to help us understand how capped electricity bills may ease the cost of heating a home and helping keep whānau healthier. Others are taking community to

another level by sharing power generated by solar panels.

I hope you enjoy this final edition of Close to Home for 2023 and I want to wish everyone a safe and restful summer with plenty of time spent connecting with whānau, friends and the local community.

Mā te wā,

Andrew McKenzie
Chief Executive

New homes create a community of more than just neighbours

A Kāinga Ora home can mean so much more than just a roof over someone’s head.

For the residents of a quiet cul-de-sac in Invercargill, their Kāinga Ora homes have provided safety, improved wellbeing and, most importantly, the bond of friendship.

Eight accessible two-bedroom homes line the street with their manicured gardens, and the people living in the homes all have their own reasons for cherishing the community they’ve built together.

Although the residents only moved into the homes just over a year ago, they have become the best of friends.

One of the residents, Tracy, explains that there’s a special sense of community they have created

through the support they offer each other.

“It’s a close community – you look out your kitchen window and someone is waving at you. We give each other space but if you need help, someone is always there for you.”

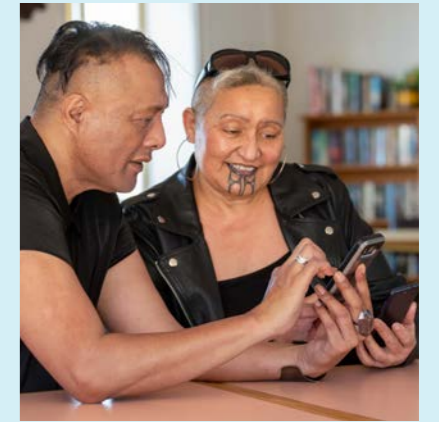


Scan here to read more, and check out the video featuring the neighbours in our Invercargill neighbourhood story here



Ava the dog, Joyanne, Michael and Tracy share a tightknit friendship with the neighbours in their cul-de-sac.

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 MyKāingaOra

New home just the cat's whiskers



Peter and Tasha the cat at their Blenheim home.

Peter and Tasha the cat are purrfectly happy living in their Blenheim home.

The Kāinga Ora customer moved into his new one-bedroom unit earlier this year, with cat Tasha, because his previous home in another part of Blenheim was being redeveloped.

"I didn't want to leave my old home at first because I do a paper delivery in the area. But my old house was going, and this house came up," Peter says.

"The flat is nice and cosy and I don't need the heating on because of the double-glazed windows," Peter explains. "Now I'm close to

Countdown and town... everything is close by. I have arthritis, which slows me down – and this home helps with the arthritis."

Peter says Tasha the cat has also adjusted well to her new surroundings, especially because Peter's neighbour from his previous home has moved into the same complex. When Peter, a Speedway enthusiast, travels to other parts of the South Island, his neighbour is happy to lend a helping hand.

"My neighbour knows Tasha too and when I go away she feeds Tasha for me. My cat Tasha loves the new flat and has just got used to going out and visiting my neighbour, but stays inside at night."

How to enjoy Christmas on a budget

1. Plan, set a budget and stick to it

2. Set a limit on gifts, as well as a budget (say \$10, \$15, \$20). Perhaps limit the gifts you give to one person through either a Secret Santa or white elephant and open them as a group as a fun game during your Christmas gathering

3. Try crafting your gifts. Store-bought mason jars are great, but upcycled jars are just as good! Make a salt, sugar or coffee-grounds body scrub by mixing with coconut oil and a few drops of essential oil. Make jams, pickles or relishes with fruit and veggies from your garden. Pack home baking in little parcels, or layer the dry ingredients into

a glass jar with attached recipe card so the receiver can bake it fresh themselves! Search online for more ideas

4. Make Christmas dinner a potluck. If you're hosting, ask your guests to bring their favourite, go-to dish. Your guests will likely want to help, and it also saves you time by sharing the cooking

5. Look out for specials on non-perishable goods and stock up on these before the Christmas week supermarket rush to avoid the last-minute panic (and mark-up!)

6. Remember to focus on friends and family – aroha from friends and whānau is always the highlight of any

holiday. Get outdoors and plan to go to the beach or park, set up a game of backyard cricket, or footie, have a picnic or use your council-owned shared barbecue. If the weather turns wet, have board games, cards or Lego handy



Tinna's whimsical garden filling hearts – and tummies



By age 15, Tinna had lost both her parents and she has endured more than her fair share of struggles in life. She lives with her 19-year-old son, who is severely autistic and will never be able to live independently. It's challenging, but the garden brings Tinna respite.

She's got some chickens in a coop that she made herself and she barter the eggs they lay for gluten-free bread for her son, who has food allergies.

Tinna loves bartering her fresh produce for things she needs and wishes more people did that.

She doesn't like to see things go to waste so when people toss things out that could be put to good use, she is quick to claim them. She puts her own creative twist on them before putting them to good use in either her garden or her home.

Step inside Tinna's home and you are greeted by a patchwork of colour – it is full of things she has picked up over the years and given a quirky make-over.

Tinna says she draws strength and happiness from helping others. It's all about being emotionally rich.

"The most important thing is to practise being grateful, to practise being happy, and don't strive for what other people have. Appreciate the tiny little things and reach for emotional riches, not financial riches."

Everyone needs a sanctuary – a place to retreat to when life gets tough. For Christchurch mum Tinna, her sanctuary is the garden she has lovingly created at her Kāinga Ora home, Bush Cottage.

It's a garden like no other. A labour of love for the last 20 years, it is filled with the unexpected. Toy dinosaurs nestle among ferns; there's a fairy garden, brightly coloured fences, bird feeders made out of repurposed soup ladles, a makeshift glasshouse with a chandelier in it, and trinkets everywhere.

Neighbourhood kids love exploring the whimsical wonderland that Tinna's created, but the garden also serves a more serious purpose. It's filled with fruit trees and vegetables

which Tinna uses to make meals for her elderly neighbours each week.

She also uses the produce from her garden to help feed the homeless. Tinna's work with the homeless has earned her civic awards – and a royal encounter with Princess Anne. Tinna says she spends hours each day tending to the garden and can almost live off the land. To keep costs down she grows most of the plants from seeds or cuttings and makes her own compost. "You have to layer it, wet and dry, like lasagne," she tells us.

"It's hard work, and you just have to keep at it and at it, but my garden has saved me."

Announcing this year's Great Gardens of Kāinga Ora award winners

We had some fantastic entries in this year's Great Gardens of Kāinga Ora competition. With an impressive line-up of entries and nominations, our judges were delighted to choose the following award winners:



1 Supreme Garden: David, Greenlane, Auckland

We were thoroughly impressed with how David managed to create such a beautiful and lush oasis of wonderful trees, shrubs and plants. Fellow Kāinga Ora customer Darryn says David's garden is a stand-out in their neighbourhood.



2 Best Small Space: Mark, Grey Lynn, Auckland

We were completely blown away by how Mark transformed a small outdoor area at his apartment complex into a lush paradise. Mark sits proudly in his garden of shrubs, succulents and other plants; we would too if we'd achieved such a feat!



3 Best Edible Garden: Gaylene, Christchurch

Gaylene was nominated by her son Zane as he wanted to recognise the hard work she's put into her garden. Having only lived in her current home for three years, she's turned a minimal yard into a lush market garden full of summer stone fruits, berries, seasonal vegetables and gorgeous florals.



4 Best Junior Gardener: Taylor, Taupō

Young Taylor is just 10 years old and managed to create this impressive edible garden, which has been supplying a stream of vegetables for the family table.



5 Best Community Gardener: Leana, Palmerston North

We featured Leana's story in our Spring issue of Close to Home, and with good reason – we've awarded her the best community gardener award. Not only is she passionate about growing and gathering kai, but she also contributes her knowledge to help others. Among those she's helped are fellow Kāinga Ora customers at the Palmerston North community centre, where she educates about planting, growing and harvesting.



Water Saving Tips – don't get caught out during a drought

With the El Niño weather pattern likely to intensify over summer, it will bring with it hotter days and prolonged dry spells across much of the country. To help make sure you and your whānau are well prepared, here are some tips to help you conserve water at home.



OFF

Turn off the tap – when brushing your teeth, and shaving. Use a plug in your kitchen tub when washing or rinsing dishes and vegetables.

UP TO
4 MINS

Take short showers – avoid taking baths during the dry season. Set a timer during shower time for say up to 4 minutes – this is also handy for making sure there's enough hot water to go around in larger households.

Shorter showers can also help you save money on your electricity bill. Check out the helpful link to see more about how to use hot water more efficiently.



Keep a bucket in the shower to collect the shower water while you wait for the water to be warm enough to step in. You can then use the reserved water to water your plants, and for cleaning.



Use grey water on your plants and garden – 'grey' water is the leftover water used from cleaning such as from the tub after you've finished washing the dishes, the laundry or shower. Plants won't mind some grease, soap or washing up detergent in the mix; they'll thrive the same.



Water your garden at the right time – check your council's guidelines if you're on water restriction – they'll usually outline what days you can water your garden from the hose (if you're using the town water supply). It's also best to water your garden early in the morning or at dusk so that the heat from the sun doesn't evaporate your watering and dry out your garden.

FULL
LOAD

Save your laundry up until you have enough for a full load. Most washing machines will run a full wash load regardless of whether it's full, half full or only contains one item. Save your laundry until there's enough for a full load so you're maximising the efficiency of the water in your washing machine.



See if your clothes can go another round of wear before washing. It's often tricky in summer, but if your clothes aren't dirty or smelly, wear them another day before washing. Not only will it save water, but also wear and tear on your clothing, as each wash and spin cycle wears clothing down. Washing your clothes less often can also help reduce the amount of microplastics from synthetic fibres washing out into the sewer.



12L

Keep a reserve of clean, drinkable water at home in case of an emergency. Aim to have enough water per person for about three days. Each person needs about 4 litres of water per day (which includes drinking, cooking and sanitation). This means you need about 12 litres of water per person in your household.



If the kids want to cool off on the hot days, consider filling up a small paddling pool instead of running the sprinkler. And once they've finished in the paddling pool, you could reuse the water on your garden.



Finally, check your taps for drips or leaks and call us on 0800 801 601 if they need fixing. A dripping tap can waste a bathtub full of water each week.

For more water saving tips, check out waterforlife.org.nz/water-saving-tips



Your privacy matters

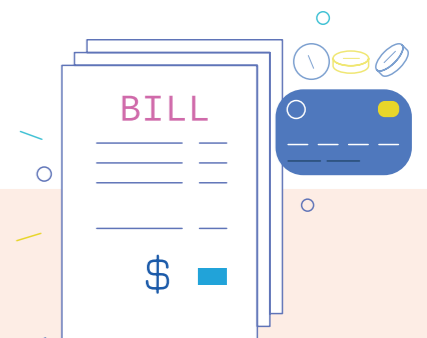
We recently updated our Privacy Statement to help you know your privacy rights under the Privacy Act 2020.

For instance, did you know you have the right to:

- Access the personal information Kāinga Ora collects and holds about you
- Make a request to see and/or have a copy of that information. Under the Privacy Act Kāinga Ora must respond to your request as quickly as possible, and within 20 working days of the date we received it. We must provide the information unless we don't hold it or there's a good reason to refuse the request

- Ask us to correct the personal information we hold about you if you believe it is inaccurate (this is called a correction request)

If you wish to make an information access request, or to correct your information, please contact the Customer Support Centre on 0800 801 601 or your Housing Support Manager or email the privacyofficer@kaingaora.govt.nz



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Available 8am–8pm Monday to Friday, 9am–4pm Saturday, 10am–2pm Sunday

FOR KIDS, ABOUT KIDS

TREEHOUSE

'Tis the season missing letters game

Fill in the missing letters to solve the Christmas/Holiday clues below.

- Merry Christmas in te reo Māori _er_ K_r_ _ _ _ me_e
- Meringue style cake often topped with fruit p_v_o_a
- Sporting for kai moana fi_h_n_
- Outdoor grill or style b_ _ b_c_u_
- Aotearoa Christmas tree _ō_h_u_u_a_w_
- Noisy insect or sport of defending or attacking wickets c_i_k_t
- Outdoor meal often taken on a blanket p_c_i_
- Swimming costume _o_g_
- Frozen dairy-based dessert i_e_r_a_
- White waves or board sport s_r_
- A vacation or time off h_l_a_
- Commuter boat f_e_r_

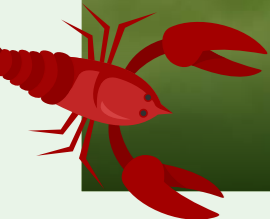


Find the summer holiday objects hidden in this issue!

Clues:

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Cricket ball | 5. Ice cream | 9. Kayak |
| 2. Orange | 6. Surfboard | 10. Christmas tree |
| 3. Crayfish/kōura | 7. Cat | 11. Carrot |
| 4. Jandals | 8. Silver fern/ponga | 12. Sandcastle |

Hiding spots - 1. Page 12 2. Page 06 3. Page 10 4. Page 12 5. Page 08 6. Page 10 7. Page 08 & 09 8. Cover page 9. Page 12 10. Page 12 11. Page 04 12. Page 12



Seriously Good 'Slab Pie' with Flaky, Crispy Crust

READY IN: 90 MINUTES
SERVES: 10

Sturdy enough for a picnic and elegant enough for dessert, this is the kind of pie that makes you fall in love with baking all over again.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 400g plain flour – not high grade
- 300g cold butter, diced
- 1½ tbsp brown sugar
- 250g cream cheese, cubed
- 1 tsp cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp iced water

For the filling

- 2x 800g cans Black Doris plums (or other fruit), drained
- ¼-½ cup sugar, use brown if you have it
- a squeeze of lemon juice
- 2 tbsp arrowroot or 1 tbsp cornflour

1. Make the pastry: Place flour, butter sugar and cream cheese in a food processor and pulse to form a coarse crumb. (If you don't have a processor, grate the



butter and cream cheese into the mixture and rub to crumbs with your fingertips.) Add the vinegar and water and pulse to mix. The dough will be crumbly at this point. Turn onto the bench and press, turning and folding until it holds together. Cut in uneven halves, flatten into thick discs with your palm, wrap and chill in fridge for 30 minutes.

2. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Make the filling: Place the plums or whatever fruit you are using in a bowl with brown sugar, lemon juice and arrowroot, and mix lightly.

3. Roll the larger piece of dough so it lines a slice tin approx 23cm x 33cm with an overhang all the way around. Pour plums into tin.
4. Roll out the second piece of pastry to slightly larger than your pan and cut into wide ribbons. Lattice the dough ribbons over the top of the pie. Neaten the overhang and fold inwards all the way around so it rests on the rim of the tray. Crimp with your fingers.
5. Brush pastry with beaten egg, sprinkle with sugar if desired and bake in the preheated oven for 35-45 minutes until deep golden.

TIP:

Some supermarket brands of cream cheese are only 225g, in which case you can make up the difference with extra butter.

VARIATIONS:

Make a peach and blackberry pie – use approx 750g of peaches (around 5 peaches), peeled and sliced, and 1 cup of fresh or frozen berries, or an equivalent quantity of other fruit; even canned apple

pie filling and rhubarb or feijoa work well. If using a firm fruit like persimmons (very good with cranberries), microwave for around 3 minutes to soften slightly first.



No data? No problem.

Zero.govt.nz has you covered.



Driveway safety reminder



Safekids Aotearoa suggests three things you can do to make driveways and other places safer for children:


- **Check** for children before driving off
- **Supervise** children around vehicles – always
- **Separate** play areas from driveways.


Email option If you would prefer to receive this publication via email, send your email address to editor@close2home.co.nz




Our opening hours over the holiday period

Our Customer Support Centre will be open for urgent calls only from 23 to 28 December 2023 and from 30 December 2023 to 2 January 2024.

 **Emergency calls only** –
Saturday 23 December 2023
– 26 December 2023 and
Saturday 30 December 2023
– 2 January 2024

 **Non-urgent calls** –
Normal hours resume from
Wednesday 3 January 2024,
8am to 6pm, weekdays.

 Some local offices will
be open for drop-ins
between 10am and 2pm
or by appointment on
weekdays only.

To confirm if your local
office is open, contact the
Customer Support Centre
on 0800 801 601.

Please note – you will not be able to lodge General Work Orders in MyKāingaOra from Friday 8 December 2023 until Wednesday 3 January 2024, but all other functions will be available. This is for the usual Christmas shutdown and system maintenance over this time.

Date	Day	0800 801 601
Saturday 23 Dec	Holiday weekend day	Emergency calls only
Sunday 24 Dec	Holiday weekend day	Emergency calls only
Monday 25 Dec	Christmas Day	Emergency calls only
Tuesday 26 Dec	Boxing Day	Emergency calls only
Wednesday 27 Dec	Normal day	All queues open 8am–6pm
Thursday 28 Dec	Normal day	All queues open 8am–6pm
Friday 29 Dec	Normal day	All queues open 8am–6pm
Saturday 30 Dec	Holiday weekend day	Emergency calls only
Sunday 31 Jan	Holiday weekend day	Emergency calls only
Monday 1 Jan	New Year's Day	Emergency calls only
Tuesday 2 Jan	Day after New Year's Day	Emergency calls only
Wednesday 3 Jan	Normal day	All queues open 8am–6pm
Thursday 4 Jan	Normal day	All queues open 8am–6pm
Friday 5 Jan	Normal day	All queues open 8am–6pm
Saturday 6 Jan	Normal weekend day	All queues open 8am–2pm
Sunday 7 Jan	Normal weekend day	All queues open 8am–2pm
Monday 8 Jan	Busiest day of the year	All queues open 8am–6pm



Contact Publication enquiries should be made to:
editor@close2home.co.nz

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