

# CAPITAL CHRONICLE TWO



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# WELCOME

There is very little we can be certain of in our surroundings, which are constantly in flux and largely out of our control; this could not be more true with regard to our future. However, we can rely upon our undying human character of endless curiosity - forever exploring and expanding ourselves and the world in which we dwell, or simulate. With what lies ahead wholly unknown, the Capital Chronicle warmly welcomes you to one fork in the road ahead.

*Special thanks to the 2011 DLF Capital Chronicle group for the idea behind the paper.*

Article inspired by DLF group Capital Chronicle.

## NEW TECHNOLOGY KEEPS LOCAL RUNNERS AFLOAT

*David Lincoln*



The fluid support of the 'Jesus Trestle' is demonstrated during the first hydroathletics event held in New Zealand. Photo: **Perry Graham**



Oriental Bay (Dot): Start Finish (Clockwise)  
**Black:** Fun Run  
**White:** Half Marathon

4000 Eager competitors braved the fresh Wellington wind yesterday morning to take part in the inaugural New Zealand National Hydrothon. As the first major Hydroathletics gathering to be held in the country, public interest in the event was clear with around 16 000 viewers streaming live coverage of the event, according to statistics obtained from the NBC Network.

The sport has only been made possible in the last two years, since the development of the Jesus Trestle by Rain Tec. The Trestle is a porous microorganism that mimics the surface form of bodies of water. While lighter than the water itself, it is engineered to react to the impact of a solid object, such as a human foot, by momentarily turning rigid before dissipating. Although utilised for a number of years by the Navy, yesterday's event was the first time in New Zealand that it had been used for a public sporting event.

The track for yesterday's event started from Oriental Parade, passing Eastbourne and Petone, before circling back to Oriental Parade. The trestle was dispersed along the route, creating a one kilometre wide band that gradually dissipated to water. In line with Hydroathletics Council NZ (HyCNZ) regulations, competitors were subject to a bio-scan prior to the race for synchronisation of their body mass with the Trestle. This process allowed the track to respond equally in proportion to each competitor in the moment of contact with their feet.

The day's main drawcard was the mixed half marathon, which was won by professional bionic runner, Gemma Huntington, who set a high standard for the freshly christened track with a blistering time of 44 minutes. "Nothing beats taking the first blood on a fresh track," Huntington said, "Next time, I'm going to break the 40 minute mark. Trust me on this one." Huntington narrowly beat local favourite, Harry Beleski, who was frustrated by the conditions. "The track had too much bounce in it; I wasn't able to work up a consistent rhythm," he said, "It is always nice to compete in your home city though."

The event was not an entirely serious affair however. The fun-run, held alongside the half-marathon, saw Wellingtonions of all ages take to the water. Finn Milligan (8) told the Chronicle,

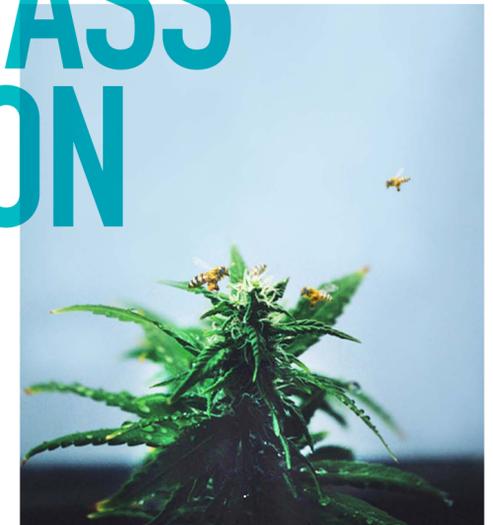
"It was a bit cold but it was fun because I got to run right across the water and do lots of cool jumps and things." Fleur Manhire (92) was the fastest competitor in the mature category, "The new stuff on the water is easy on the joints so it's good for people like me. It's lovely to be able to run without shoes on too." "[The fun-run] was very popular," said event organiser, Jordan Fairley, "It was great to see so many of the kids out there on the waves trying their hand at something new. I'm sure that amongst them are the champion hydroathletes of the years to come."

The Wellington City Council faced criticism earlier this month for funding the event as part of its five year plan to utilise new spaces for public recreation. Opponents claimed this was an inappropriate allocation of public funding due to fears that the Trestle would be unable to withstand the required 400 kg per square metre. Fairley, however, was pleased with the performance of the track. The only incidents on the day arose through participant error, rather than failure of the track itself. Three competitors were unable to handle the counter-intuitive nature of the surface, sustaining minor falls. Only one contestant, veteran athlete Joseph Shaw, strayed from the designated track while attempting to find a shorter route, running beyond the Trestle and falling into water. He was rescued shortly after by the Coast Guard. Later that evening he was issued with a temporary ban by the HyCNZ for breaching regulation.

Following the success of this year's event, Fairley promises to continue it next year. "We've got big plans," he says, "There's definitely the possibility of making more intensive and more extreme events. We're thinking of modifying the Trestle to create differing levels of depth support, so the serious competitors really have to work hard. That would be a fun race to watch."

Coverage of the event is available at NBC Online.

# HONEY PRODUCER BUSTED FOR MASS DRUG OPERATION



Police in the Coromandel have seized four tonnes of genetically modified cannabis that had been pollinated by bees.

*Matthew Rothwell*

A popular honey manufacturer has been busted for mass cannabis cultivation on a private island off the Coromandel Peninsula. Four tonnes of a previously unknown genetically modified cannabis were seized, along with several dozen bee hives, in a covert police operation conducted last night. A further seven hectares of the crop were found still in cultivation. The name and location of the island has yet to be released, although the Chronicle understands that it is owned by popular honey manufacturer, Buzzed, who have recently been experiencing record profits. Information obtained by the Chronicle suggests that the company has close ties with the criminal organisation known as the 'Killer Bees', and was being used as a legal front for the enterprise. Five men, including the owner of Buzzed, were arrested as part of the raid.

In an official statement this morning, Police Commissioner Dennis Heatherbell said that Police are "highly disturbed" by the discovery. "While we are pleased to have brought down such a large scale operation, the fact that this group was manufacturing with such sophistication for a significant period of time, seemingly unnoticed, is worrying," he said.

Commissioner Heatherbell confirmed that the cannabis had been genetically modified as part of a highly specialised cultivation system. Preliminary laboratory tests indicate that the crops had been enhanced through a genetic synthesis of cannabis with an undetermined native flower, in order to produce pollen. It is believed that the bees being stored in the seized bee hives were being used to assist in the cultivation of the cannabis, apparently by pollinating the plant, extracting the cannabis pollen, and spreading it across the surrounding area. These techniques enabled the enterprise to cultivate the drug en masse. Commissioner Heatherbell told press, "This group was producing a lot of weed, very quickly. Considering the vast quantities of cannabis seized, it's remarkable frankly how little manpower was on the island."

In an shocking development, it has emerged that the honey being produced by the enterprise, the honey sold by Buzzed, contained abnormal quantities of THC, the main psychoactive substance found in cannabis. This honey has been sold in supermarkets throughout New Zealand for the last six months. Timothy Fairley, the CEO of FoodStuffs NZ, said this morning that he is deeply concerned about the discovery. He vowed that the company would be conducting an investigation into how the cannabis honey made it onto the shelves of supermarkets. In recent months, sales of the product had surged in a trend unpredicted by business systems. The Chronicle spoke to a local shopper who said that he was a regular consumer of the honey. "I'm surprised it's taken Police so long to figure this one out," he said, "I've been buying the Nectar regularly for about a month or so. So have all my mates. It's kinda sad that I can't buy it anymore, to be honest. It made for a pretty sweet breakfast."

The detained owner of Buzzed told press this morning that he knew nothing of the cannabis production. "We are just humble bee keepers," he said, "We greatly regret that THC has been found in our products. It's the bees who are responsible." When asked about the hectares of cannabis found in cultivation on the island, he refused to comment, telling reporters to contact the business' gardner. Victoria University Law Professor, Dr. Hannah Piri, told the Chronicle that, although the claims of ignorance are dubious, it raises interesting questions about the criminal liability of the company's owners. "No matter how absurd it may seem, if they insist they are ignorant, it may be difficult to prosecute them. And generally the Courts are reticent to prosecute non-sentient insects," she said.

This morning, the Food Safety Authority mandated a complete recall of the product. At this stage though, it is unclear how much remains unconsumed in the market place. The government has responded quickly, declaring the honey to be a prohibited substance like other cannabinoids.

The events have sparked an outcry from pro-cannabis reformers who have declared that this is further evidence that cannabis be legalised immediately. "It's evident that cannabis production is beyond the control of the law," prominent cannabis campaigner, Xena Piermont, told the Chronicle, "The news emerging today is just further evidence that gangs are reaping huge benefits at the expense of users, who are your average New Zealanders. It's time it was legalised so that it can be regulated. That's when we can deal with the gangs." The raid was the sixth major drug bust nationwide so far this year.

Genetic modification opponents have also spoken out in response to the events. "What we are seeing are the clear consequences of genetic modification," Conservative Party MP, and head of the Opposition, Sandra Worthington said, "This is what happens when these technologies are so accessible. It's ridiculous for the government to say that they strictly regulate these technologies; it's inevitable that this kind of thing will get into the hands of criminals." Commissioner Heatherbell told the press that it is unlikely that those arrested performed the genetic modification themselves: "It's the kind of engineering that's well beyond the skill set of your average genetic hobbyist; it would have required highly developed expertise." At this stage, it is unclear who is responsible for the modification. Police claim to be pursuing a number of leads.

Those arrested will appear before the Coromandel District Court tomorrow.

If you are in possession of any Buzzed Honey products, Police advise that you contact them immediately. Anyone found with Buzzed Honey in their possession from Wednesday 25th of April will be liable for possession of a Class D substance.

# SWEDEN LIVES ON

## SWEDISH KING PUBLICLY DECLARES SWEDEN'S RECOVERY FROM THE GREEN DEATH EPIDEMIC KING ELOF GUSTAF'S ADDRESS (TRANSLATED)

Living in a world that is changing faster than ever, it can be difficult to remember that it was but a decade ago that we were struck by the Green Death Epidemic. It is only by living through such tragedy that it is possible to understand the horror that was experienced by our country and her people, through the waves of famine and disease. I talk now of those days not to dwell unnecessarily on darkness, but to stop and reflect on how far we have come; to realise what great opportunities stand before us.

We are now the world leaders in immersive technologies. We are at the forefront of the ever-expanding virtual community. In spite of disaster, people travel from all corners of the globe to participate in this innovative and creative culture. I am astounded and proud to belong to such a talented nation. Stop, look around, and appreciate the beauty of this environment. It is a place not one of you had ever seen in its entirety until today. It is the lost city of Atlantis as imagined by the collective consciousness of the Cirrus Community. The creation of beauty in the face of darkness embodies the courage, and the humanity, that the people of Sweden have shown in these last years.

May you all enjoy this precious day of celebration. And may I commend all of us for our solidarity and bravery over the past decade. Thank you.

### POPULATION DISTRIBUTION



## THE CIRRUS COMMUNITY

The Cirrus pods were initially designed to provide a stable environment for patients stricken by the epidemic to recover on a long-term basis. Suspended above the spore-infected airways in the upper troposphere (15-20 km above sea level), patients were able to be safely treated for the infectious and fatal Green Death epidemic within the pods.

As infections rose to 700 000 individuals within two years, a mentally stimulating virtual environment was developed for Cirrus to provide psychological stability for patients as they gradually recovered. Due to a UN enforced quarantine, all Swedish citizens, uninfected or infected, were prohibited from emigrating. As a result, many healthy Swedes began to voluntarily enter the Cirrus community by 2033. Over three million Swedish citizens had entered the Cirrus community by August 2033, either voluntarily or due to infection. By this point, the community had begun to develop complex internal interaction and users were collectively developing software within the virtual environment. Cirrus had become self sustainable. It had become the global hub of virtual interaction out of necessity. Users rapidly developed a database of countless sensory experiences utilising all five senses. Further conceptual sensory experiences were developed, challenging the bounds of the virtual environment. Seven years after the onset of infection, Cirrus users have proclaimed it to be the saviour of the Swedish nation. The five Cirrus Community founders have received the country's highest honours in a virtual ceremony held in a fabricated Atlantis as a tribute to Sweden as the 'lost world'.

## GREEN DEATH

The virus was first detected amongst a mutated strain of grass in southwest Sweden in early 2030. Although a quarantine was enforced in an attempt to stop the virus spreading amongst local plant life, national authorities struggled to control its spread through underground root networks and mineral deposits. Within a month, the first signs of the disease amongst humans were becoming clear. Patients initially exhibited symptoms of darkening around the eyes and extremities. The health of those infected deteriorated rapidly and, unless treated, patients would die within 3-14 days. Due to the volatile nature of the virus, patients were required to enter an induced long-term coma and be treated intravenously in a stable environment.

## HISTORY OF VIRTUAL REALITY

**1860**  
The concept of virtual reality originates in panoramic mural paintings, such as Baldassare Peruzzi's piece titled, *Sala delle Prospettive*.

**1926**  
John Logie Baird transmits the first television signal.

**1989**  
The prototype of the World Wide Web is established.

**2006**  
Major social networking and media sharing websites, Facebook and Youtube, are founded.

**2017**  
Scent emitting computers are introduced, extending the immersive virtual experience to a third sense.

**2026**  
The QB5 prototype for virtual interaction is released. The device transmits sensory experience directly to the brain triggering a chemical release, bypassing external sensory input.

**2027**  
Immerse is founded in the Netherlands, a virtual forum where users are stimulated through chemical triggers in their brain.

**2029**  
Usage of Immerse surges worldwide. Google shocks the globe by discontinuing development of their internet services to focus on creating a virtual sensory database on the Immerse network.

**2030**  
The Green Death Epidemic hits Sweden.

**2032**  
The Cirrus Community is founded in Sweden as a way to psychologically stimulate physically stagnant individuals.

**2033**  
The Cirrus Community gains international interest. Within Sweden, three million Swedish citizens participate in the community, either full-time or part-time.

**2040**  
There are 700 million people interacting virtually in the Cirrus Community either full or part time.

# CONCEPTUAL SPACES OF THE YEAR (2039)

Article inspired by DLF group Cirrus.

**Pictured:** A Cirrus user spends a day on solid ground.

## Kade Sheely

The release of data on the most visited virtual spaces of the year by the Cirrus Community Administration provides a chance to celebrate the breadth of creativity in contemporary virtual-space design. With an established real-world database of sensory experience within Cirrus, designers have begun to push the frontiers of virtual-space over the past few years. The tangent spaces that are being coded by designers offer surreal experiences that are not, and cannot be, available in the real world. Taking advantage of the creative freedom that virtual reality offers, contemporary virtual-space designers are limited only by the bounds of human imagination.

The top ten virtual spaces are comprised of entries from corporations, collaborations and individuals alike, each pushing virtual space design and sensory experience in directions of their own. Here are the top ten most visited virtual spaces, listed with their designers.

## THE INFINITE SLIDE

Created by the staff and students at Flahagen Play Centre, The Infinite Slide has become the most visited Cirrus Community virtual space of 2039. According to Gary Bendkt, the designer of the project, the idea for the space arose from seeing the amount of time that the children of the play centre spent on slide sets each day. "Considering children can get so much enjoyment from a simple slide every day, I began to think of ways I could bring this kind of basic human experience back to the rest of us," Brendkt says. With the creative input of the children at the Play Centre, Brendkt set about designing a virtual slide that would provide, literally, infinite fun. Following the popularity of a prototype amongst the children at the Play Centre, the infinite slide was released for free use on the Cirrus network. Immediately popular with both children and adult alike, it was accessed over 57 million times throughout 2039.

Entering the space, you hit the slide at speed and do not stop sliding until you exit. Wide enough to fit three adults abreast, it is easy to pass one other and engage in fierce battles while speeding down the closed-loop figure eight slide. Expecting the slide to reach some kind of conclusion at every moment, the infinite slide defies your intuitions about the nature of gravity. Depending, of course, on how much you like sliding, the infinite slide offers great entertainment for minutes, or even hours, on end.

## INTERRUPT HISTORY

Created collectively by users of the Cirrus Community, Interrupt History allows you to experience particular famous events from history. While moderators have removed a number of poorly coded spaces, there are currently eleven events available on the database. It is, however, open-source, so anyone with sufficient skill can upload an Interrupt History space, provided the coding meets regulation. The current pivotal events include: the Battle of Hastings 1066; the construction of the Great Wall of China (time lapse); Jesus' Sermon on the Mount; Moses parting the Red Sea; the fall of the Berlin Wall; and Jimi Hendrix live at Woodstock, 1969.

## TOP TEN SPACES

Cheese Moon, Charles Wingburn	10
Jam Textured Room, Asrid Nolo	09
Aroma & Flavour Pockets, Glade	08
Prehistoric Earth, Google	07
Undersea Life, Oceanic Collective	06
Above the Clouds, Sarah Pring	05
Space, Jamie Smith	04
Interrupt History, Cirrus Community	03
The Coca-Cola Fizz, Coca-Cola	02
The Infinite Slide, Hagen Play Centre	01

## THE COCA-COLA FIZZ

Entering the space, you drop from the ceiling into a giant expanse filled with fizzing Coca-Cola. Despite being submerged, you are still able to breathe, talk and hear. After a few minutes swimming, you begin to realise that you are not entirely safe. Something seems odd. Then, all of a sudden, large scoops of ice cream fall from the ceiling, causing an explosion of Coca-Cola bubbles. If you get too close to the bubbling mass, its radiating bubbles will violently pull you in and drag you to the surface. Developed by the Coca-Cola Company, the Fizz Room is a fun space to spend time with friends. On the wall to the left of the entrance point, there is a list of games to try. My personal recommendation would be to give 'Ice Cream in the Middle' a go with a small group of friends.



# GRAFFITI DISRUPTS IRIS TECHNOLOGY

Article inspired by DLF group Iris.

## Ollie Neas

Three Wellington teens believed that they were acting on “behalf of the real world” and “in defence of beauty”, when painting physical imagery onto public property, the High Court in Wellington has heard today. Petra Gardner (19), Thomas Marinkovic (19) and David Greggs (18) admitted one charge of defacing public property, but pleaded not guilty to a charge of cyber-jacking. The three were arrested in late July after painting a five metre high image of a bird directly onto a physical wall outside the Te Papa Museum in central Wellington. They are also believed to have implemented a transmitting device at the scene that interfered with the optical range of the Iris’ of those in the direct vicinity. Several passers-by who looked in the direction of the painting advised police that their Iris’ information feeds were deactivated, and the physical image was brought directly into their line of vision.

The case has gathered significant public and judicial interest over the last month for the controversial issues it has raised regarding Wellington City’s widespread adoption of the Iris technology. Wellington City Council (WCC) made headlines internationally for being the first urban area to implement the technology on a city wide basis. Undertaken incrementally between 2025 and 2034, the initiative was part of the Council’s broader objectives to minimise environmental degradation, increase economic efficiency and decrease visual clutter. Alongside a series of by-laws that prohibited physical advertising, the WCC, in conjunction with Iris Technologies, distributed Iris optical implants to those who chose to participate. The blank physical spaces that had previously been occupied by signage and advertising were replaced by transmitters that send information between the space and each individual’s Iris implant. The Iris then fills the particular blank physical space with personalised information through a projection on the individual’s eye.

The widespread appeal of the technology has been attributed to its sophisticated filtering system that allows users to see only that which is relevant to them at that particular point according to previously set preferences. Six years on from the initiative’s completion, the technology has been adopted by nearly the entire Wellington population, and has been embraced more widely throughout other New Zealand cities.

Today, the three defendants told Justice Matzenier that their acts were a protest against the Iris technology. The group’s lawyer, Michael Davison, said the group do not deny painting the picture. “They wish for their actions to be seen in context, as an act of protest”, he told the Court, “They are motivated by a desire to highlight what they perceive to be the harmful effects of these technologies.” In a written statement issued to



Manners Street as it was in 2011.



A view of Manners Street as seen through Iris technology.

press, Marinkovic affirmed this, “People these days never step away from the virtual world. Everyone forgets there’s this immense world around them full of diverse sensations and experiences that you can’t get virtually. We wanted to show people something real.”

The teens have received significant support from undergraduate colleagues at Massey University, and more widely amongst Wellington youth. Marinkovic, who has quickly become the group’s default leader, posted online yesterday, “Of course we don’t deny that it [the Iris] is useful. Of course we don’t deny that the technological advancements of this century have made life easier [...] but it just seems tragic that we’ve forgotten the value of the physical, of the sensual. Have we forgotten the value of real life?” Victoria University sociologist Dr. Peter McCabe has said that the actions of the three can be seen in context of a wider sensualist movement, “What we’re seeing, especially amongst the younger generation, is a reaction against the established order of things. They are responding to the increasing virtualisation of the modern world by demanding a return to something more physical and tangible.” Dr. McCabe said also that the extent of the movement’s philosophy is hard to determine. Some commentators believe that the movement is opposed to, not only the impact that these technologies have had on day-to-day life, but to the fact of virtual technology itself.

Response from the broader public has been mixed, however. WCC Councillor, Sean Kaye, told the Chronicle, “What these kids are saying is nonsense. What the Iris shows to us is no less real than what they’ve painted on these walls. When I’m wearing the Iris, I can see writing on the wall, can I not? Really, what difference does it make if the writing is, in fact, on the wall?” Mr. Kaye stated yesterday that the three should be made to pay the cleaning costs for removing the painting.

“Aside from the fact that this defacing is garish, it’s an abuse of public property. It’s illegal quite frankly. And it’s illegal for a reason,” he said.

The group’s lawyer told the Court today that the painting is an artistic expression and should be protected as freedom of expression under the Bill of Rights Act 2025. Kaye attacked this claim publicly, stating that the acts of the three amount to a violation of other citizens’ right to freely receive information. “We’ve abandoned the days when individuals could enforce their own views so bluntly on others,” he said, “We’re living in times of individuality, where every individual has the freedom to choose what they want their city to look like to them. Do these kids really want to fight progress?”

Prior to the implementation of the Iris technology, Wellington’s city scape was vastly different than it is today. It is estimated that there were several thousand physical signs on Lambton Quay alone. It was necessary for signage to be sufficiently generic to apply to all who viewed it, rather than being tailored to the particular viewer. The near universal adoption of the Iris technology is indicative of its wide public support. Many small business owners believe that customers are consuming more efficiently, spending less time browsing products that they will never purchase.

Judge Matzenier took time at the end of today’s hearing to offer some advice to the defendants. “We live in a world today with an immense quantity of perpetually multiplying information,” he said, “Maybe you are too young to remember the days when this city was awash with swathes of superfluous information and images. If you can imagine Wellington in, say, 2010, it was a very visually noisy place. I ask you today to have a hard think about what it was like then. I hope then that you will see the dangerous precedent that leaving your actions unpunished would create.”

The trial will continue in the High Court tomorrow.



**Pictured:** The biobuild in early 2037, partway through its growth. Since then, the structure has drifted markedly across the harbour. It now encroaches upon the Te Papa Museum, seen here in the left of the image. **Image:** Richard Borrett.

Article inspired by DLF co-ordinator Ross Stevens.

# SHELL HOUSE MYSTERY TO BE UNCODED

## Ollie Neas

The fate of the controversial waterfront Biobuild project, commonly known as the ‘Shell House’, is expected to be revealed by the City Council tomorrow. Any such announcement will bring an end to a dispute that has polarised public opinion throughout the project’s decade-long construction.

Since the secretive development began, speculation has been rife as to its purpose. Many sources, including opposition MP Rajesh Quinn, have claimed it to be intended as an eventual replacement for New Zealand’s national museum, Te Papa. The recent encroachment of the structure onto well frequented waterfront spaces—including the periphery of Te Papa—by means of its organic growth process, have offered support to these claims. Inside sources have told The Chronicle that confirmation of this suspicion is likely tomorrow.

The project is the first globally to utilise transnational manufacturing company Ponoko’s Biobuild technology on a civic scale. Mimicking the biomineralisation process that occurs naturally in microorganisms, the technology produces mineralised tissues such as shells or bones. In practice, through the extraction of microorganisms from the seafloor, a shell like structure is grown for human construction purposes. While an extremely slow process, the Biobuild technology allows for constructions of scale to be undertaken with minimal human labour.

In an interview with The Chronicle earlier this year, the project’s architect, Reweti Mill, emphasised the unpredictable nature of the method. “The current framework of the Biobuild is a quite radical departure from the initial plan,” he said, “Primarily, we can attribute this to an unprecedented algae bloom a couple of years back, which completely threw the course of growth. Changed the whole colour scheme too.”

Despite the initial protests from environmental groups over the purported exploitation of seafloor resources, the project quickly became a source of intrigue for local residents. Tomorrow’s announcement may at last provide some answers.

# WILLIS STREET WINERY THE BEST IN THE WORLD

Article inspired by DLF group Urban Jungle Gym.

## Callum Barnett

Local viticulture entrepreneur Crian Cahusac has claimed the award for Best Boutique Wine at the International Wine Challenge for a merlot described by judges as “bold, brilliant and groundbreaking.” The event, held in Bordeaux, France, is widely regarded the most prestigious wine competition worldwide, with over 300000 people attending the event last year over nine days. A further 40 million watched the awards online.

The renowned judging panel said that Cahusac’s merlot possessed a distinctly violet colouring and earthy tart flavour, properties that are usually achievable only in French and Argentinian wines. It was innovation in the harvesting process that set Cahusac apart, the panel said, allowing him to achieve the rare results. Re-purposing a vacant earthquake strengthening bubble canopy on Willis Street in down-town Wellington, Cahusac was able to create a microclimate in which to grow his prize-winning grapes. In the canopy, Cahusac was able to moderate temperature and humidity in order to ensure a consistently successful crop. However, it was the radical pre-harvest process used by Cahusac that created the flavours so sought after by wine connoisseurs.

Cahusac told the panel that, prior to harvesting his crop, he would increase the temperature of the bubble canopy to 86 degrees Celsius for seven minutes. “The canopy becomes rich with a pungent, sweet aroma”, he said, “At that point, you know they’re ready. I then rapidly cool the bubble, and there you have it, a vineyard of grapes harvested in under three hours.”

The merlot was a unanimous favourite amongst the judging panel, all awarding it the first place ranking. The prize is \$10 000, which Cahusac says he will reinvest into funding his winemaking. He is also gifted a large brass cup, which he vows to place on top of the bubble.

Willis Street Winery’s award winning 2038 Merlot and other popular varieties are available at wine stores nationwide.



**Crian Cahusac’s** repurposed vineyard has gathered international recognition for its innovative winemaking process. **Image:** Richard Borrett.



# PHILIP BEESLEY'S EPIDEMIC



A couple experience one of **Philip Beesley's** installations.

## Ollie Neas

The self-replicating construction material that has sparked controversy this month following the appearance of a string of seemingly random installations throughout the city has surfaced again, this time having cannibalised a Newtown home. The owner of the property, Toby Riley, was forced to come forward to authorities after secretly harbouring the rogue material in his living room for two weeks. The confession marks the first significant development in the case since the material, the work of renowned experimental Canadian architect Philip Beesley, was first discovered outside of its designated Amino Gallery exhibit space two weeks ago.

The Chronicle understands that the material had been stored in the Newtown property for around ten days. It is believed that it had multiplied rapidly, covering the internal walls, and was beginning to substitute the housing materials with itself. The man was forced to seek assistance from police due to fears that the structural integrity of the building had been compromised.

The material, which was brought to Wellington as part of an exhibition for Mr. Beesley's work, has surfaced in a series of rogue installations throughout the city over the last two weeks. While the material was quickly identified as that designed by Mr. Beesley, mystery remains as to how it escaped from the exhibition. Earlier this week Mr. Beesley denied accusations that the rogue installations were implemented by him as a publicity stunt. The material's rapid spread throughout the waterfront and CBD has fuelled public debate since.

While early NBC online news reports have been quick to place blame the transfer of the material out of the gallery on Mr. Riley, the Newtown man has denied ever attending the exhibition. In a statement this morning, he stated that he found the material by chance next to the Basin Reserve flyover. "I haven't been to the exhibition. I don't even like art," he said. "The stuff I found just looked real interesting so I took some home to check out. I didn't know what it was or where it was from. I didn't steal anything." Mr. Riley does admit giving some clippings to friends, which may account partially for the rapid spread of the material.

Mr. Beesley asserted today that he is unsure of how the material left the exhibition. "I am overwhelmed with astonishment," the architect said, speaking to The Chronicle. "While it can self-replicate and is semi cognisant of its immediate environment, the spatial layout of the exhibition was such as to ensure the materials remained within a strictly defined space." As part of the exhibit at the Amino Gallery, the material has been replicating itself around four wooden posts, then using the wood to create a small roofed structure in the room. The first rogue installation of the material surfaced on the waterfront four days after the exhibition opened.

The new material continues the exploration of Mr. Beesley's work into how physical materials can mimic growth processes in the organic world. The architect's work was first exhibited in Wellington in 2012 at the Amino Gallery—then known as the City Gallery—as part of the widely popular DeSForM conference. The installation then exhibited, Vesica, has since been adopted as a staple material in the cutting edge of contemporary architecture design. Most notably, it was used as the core material in the construction of the Burj Nayan in Qatar in 2019. While the Vesica used microprocessors, sensors and actuator systems to create a responsive kinetic system, Beesley's new materials go a step further, utilising surrounding materials to replicate itself and create new structures. A recent contract with NASA may see the adaptation of Beesley's materials into geotextiles capable of supporting the long-term terraforming of Mars, by means of self-sustained biomass production.

Despite Mr. Riley's fears that the growth of the material had made his house unsafe, a structural engineer's report indicates that it is, in fact, more sound than previously. "I've never seen a house like this," engineer Dan Prior told the Chronicle, "the walls move in response to the outdoor environment but continually retain their structural integrity." Mr. Beesley is excited about this news. "Patently, this material is alive. Whether by some spontaneous transposon or through the exploitation of some non-carcinogenic mutagen in the surrounding atmosphere, these structures exhibit the characteristics of a material that not only moves, thinks and feels—but creates and maintains itself too," he told the Chronicle. "The

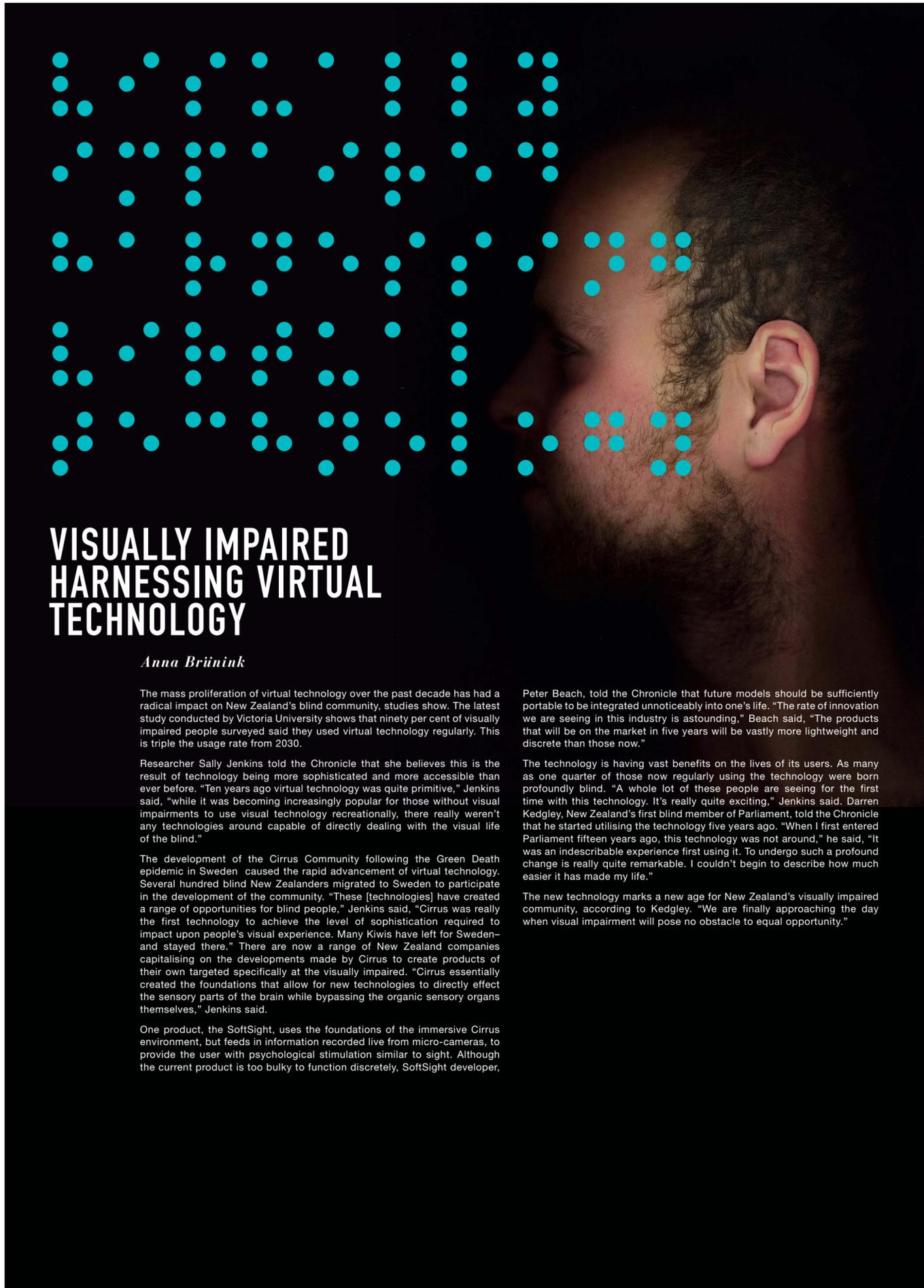
hijinks wrought by this material has become an exciting opportunity to observe the material functioning in practice."

The Wellington City Council has responded to the rogue installations indecisively. In a statement issued from Mayor Foulkes' office earlier this week, the Council stated they would not be removing the installations. However, several days later, a number of the installations in the CBD have been removed. City Councillor Sean Kaye told the Chronicle that there have been concerns that the materials may be hazardous. "It's quite clear that these installations are replicating themselves quite quickly, and we're just not sure where they'll go and what they'll do if we give them time", he said. "They've got to be removed and taken back to the Gallery where they belong." However, the appearance of new installations has exceeded those removed. Latest Council figures put the number of rogue installations at 23, although the Chronicle understands it is somewhat higher, considering their rate of spread to this date.

Public reaction to the installations has been largely positive. Paul Sallinger, a waterfront cafe owner, told the Chronicle that the installations have added vibrancy to the area. "They're pretty interesting," he said, "every day it's shape has changed and it's gotten bigger. People are stopping for a coffee just to watch it." One man the Chronicle talked to, who refused to be identified, claimed that one installation was following him. "I was sleeping down on Left Bank and when I woke up I was surrounded by one of these things," he said, "I had to fight my way out. These beasts are trying to get me."

Mr. Beesley remains unperturbed by the events. "For many years now, I have been endeavouring to bring to light the harmonious relationship between us human beings and the natural world we see all around us," he said, "Whether by accident or good fortune, it seems that I have finally achieved this."

Police advise anyone with information on the material's initial transfer out of the Amino Gallery to contact them promptly.



# VISUALLY IMPAIRED HARNESSING VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGY

Anna Brünink

The mass proliferation of virtual technology over the past decade has had a radical impact on New Zealand's blind community, studies show. The latest study conducted by Victoria University shows that ninety per cent of visually impaired people surveyed said they used virtual technology regularly. This is triple the usage rate from 2030.

Researcher Sally Jenkins told the Chronicle that she believes this is the result of technology being more sophisticated and more accessible than ever before. "Ten years ago virtual technology was quite primitive," Jenkins said, "while it was becoming increasingly popular for those without visual impairments to use visual technology recreationally, there really weren't any technologies around capable of directly dealing with the visual life of the blind."

The development of the Cirrus Community following the Green Death epidemic in Sweden caused the rapid advancement of virtual technology. Several hundred blind New Zealanders migrated to Sweden to participate in the development of the community. "These [technologies] have created a range of opportunities for blind people," Jenkins said, "Cirrus was really the first technology to achieve the level of sophistication required to impact upon people's visual experience. Many Kiwis have left for Sweden—and stayed there." There are now a range of New Zealand companies capitalising on the developments made by Cirrus to create products of their own targeted specifically at the visually impaired. "Cirrus essentially created the foundations that allow for new technologies to directly effect the sensory parts of the brain while bypassing the organic sensory organs themselves," Jenkins said.

One product, the SoftSight, uses the foundations of the immersive Cirrus environment, but feeds in information recorded live from micro-cameras, to provide the user with psychological stimulation similar to sight. Although the current product is too bulky to function discretely, SoftSight developer,

Peter Beach, told the Chronicle that future models should be sufficiently portable to be integrated unnoticeably into one's life. "The rate of innovation we are seeing in this industry is astounding," Beach said, "The products that will be on the market in five years will be vastly more lightweight and discrete than those now."

The technology is having vast benefits on the lives of its users. As many as one quarter of those now regularly using the technology were born profoundly blind. "A whole lot of these people are seeing for the first time with this technology. It's really quite exciting," Jenkins said. Darren Kedgley, New Zealand's first blind member of Parliament, told the Chronicle that he started utilising the technology five years ago. "When I first entered Parliament fifteen years ago, this technology was not around," he said, "It was an indescribable experience first using it. To undergo such a profound change is really quite remarkable. I couldn't begin to describe how much easier it has made my life."

The new technology marks a new age for New Zealand's visually impaired community, according to Kedgley. "We are finally approaching the day when visual impairment will pose no obstacle to equal opportunity."

# OPINION: STEPHEN CORNHILL VIRTUAL SEX

I enjoy sex. It's a great way to fill the hours. However I have not slept with my wife in over six months. This is because I now get my sex online. I prefer it that way and I am not ashamed to admit it. It's opposition to this hobby of mine that has got me riled this week. This year a range of virtual sex technologies have emerged online as part of the second great .xxx boom, with LustLink emerging as the most popular immersive sexual experience. Quite unsurprisingly, these technologies have sparked a range of vitriolic reactions from both sides of the political spectrum. Most of these responses have exhibited both irrationality and stupidity. And these are two things I hate.

If you are new to the .xxx world, LustLink is a relatively straightforward—and inevitable—continuation of the already widespread immersive technology. Users plug into the system with the standard equipment used for any other immersive application. Users are then able to engage in nearly limitless virtual sexual activity using self-designed personal avatars. They can interact with entirely simulated avatars, or can consensually interact with those of other users. The sophistication of contemporary immersive technology means that the virtual sensations experienced psychologically by the user are on par with sexual interaction in real-life. It goes beyond pornography in that users are able to feel the experience. In that sense, it is real.

Of course, the conservatives have been swift to decry LustLink for all the usual concerns over sexual perversion. Their argument goes like this. The barriers that prevent unrestrained sexual expression offline are not present in the online world, so people will log on and engage in all kinds of depraved acts. Yes, this is true. That's the point. That's why I love it. The thing is, it does not matter how perverted the activities that a user chooses to engage in may seem to the conservatives down at parliament. It's virtual reality; nobody is harmed. But enough of that. The conservatives' argument is tired and useless.

It has been the liberals who have raised the more bizarre—and dangerous—complaint. A number of individuals calling themselves 'sensualists' have claimed that this technology bastardises the intrinsic quality of real-world interaction. They claim that sexual interaction is special. Yes, I agree with that. They then claim that mass acceptance of 'pretend' sex derogates sex in the real world—and that this is bad. It is here that I must disagree. This distinction between

sexual sensation in the real world and sexual sensation online is a false one. Let's be honest about this: there is no intrinsic quality to experiences offline. Online experiences are just as real as offline ones—they are just simulated electronically from circuitry.

But maybe you'll say that this is just a minor philosophical disagreement and that it doesn't really matter. This is not so. I apologise if it seems that I am departing from the issue at hand at this point, but what these radicals are really suggesting, when their arguments are taken to their logical conclusion, is something with profound consequences. Essentially, what they are suggesting is the abandonment of the virtual structures that we have built up over the last half-century in exchange for a return to something more 'human'. This is what the sensualist movement is all about. But what does any of that really mean? A return to nature? What does that even mean? What these suggestions reflect, at their heart, is a divide that is deepening in our society. It is the ideological conflict between those who value the technological progress that our society has laboured hard to achieve, and those who want to reject it. This conflict is not new. In fact, it is as old as human history. The question is a simple one too: do we value progress?

Unbridled sexual expression is the ultimate fulfilment of human recreation. It is the most base expression of personal identity. It is progress. And progress, my friends, is a one-way street. Imagine suggesting at the dawn of the 20th Century that we should abandon the telephone because it prevented 'real' conversation. Or imagine standing in the fields of Mesopotamia and suggesting that we abandon agriculture to go hunting and gathering because agriculture is not 'natural'. It's clear that you would have to be either irrational or stupid to suggest such things. And I hope I've made it clear that those are not qualities I like. The issue is no different with virtual sex.

The sensualists have one thing right though; sensation does matter. But sensation is all that matters—whether it be online or offline. So be wary of the sensualists. Beneath all their whimsical talk of abstract ideals is an ignorance that poses society's most serious threat to progress. You want 'pure' sex? Well that's fine. But let me indulge myself online.

Dear Stephen,

I agree with Stephen Cornhill, virtual sex has its advantages. Freedom from worries over STDs, unwanted pregnancies, contraceptives and, from a female perspective, no more sleeping in the wet spot. However I cannot agree when Mr. Cornhill insists there is no "distinction between sexual sensation in the real world and sexual sensation online." Poppycock! It's like comparing fine champagne with bath water. Just because both are bubbly and liquid doesn't mean the taste is the same. Sex with a person, particularly someone you love and dream of, is about desire, passion and intimacy. These are the ingredients of great love making. Personally I don't give a damn how Mr. Cornhill entertains himself, it's his decision, but to claim this technologically-enhanced-masturbation equals the fire works of the real thing is a blatant lie. Given the choice, I'll take the wet spot any day.

Mirinda Newman

Dear Stephen,

I don't know who you are, or what you do, but reading your opinion piece this week was enough for me to fill in the gaps. You, thing, are a disturbed and oddly raised child to think that virtual sex is in any way comparable to the majesty of sexual intimacy. Yeah great I can get my news, weather and even education virtually if I like, but this can in no way replicate the intricacies of love making. Lovemaking is wet and warm, it can be loving or violent. and at times awkward and unnerving. These are feelings and emotions; something that no amount of coding can even begin to resemble. I sincerely hope you come to your senses soon and pull your dick out of the circuit boards and enter your wife. God knows she's probably spent the family fortune on vibrators by now.

Regards  
Vagina over Virtual

Dear Stephen,

If youse think he's a pervert for having a cuddle with someone on the Internet then why didn't youse speak up when your beloved NZAction Party were being total perverts with their government computers and the like way back in 2024? Not everyone's opinions is the same, I for example believe that a gay person should be allowed to marry a different gay person, a lot of people think that's weird but I've always been a very liberal, 'going against the grain' sort of person and I can see that eventually people will come around to the internet sex industry. If you think that expressing your sexual urges online is a crime why don't you think about other things that are way more a crime than this, like when politicians steal hard-earned money from the poor? Like the 2037 National government led by Chim Ritchely when all they did was use money to focus on economy and make them and their buddies richer? I choose to support sexual liberation and gay marriage and coffee over money grubbing criminals.

Matt "An Educated Liberal" Curling

Dear Stephen,

We would like to congratulate Stephen on clearly articulating the various ideological arguments surround the contentious issue of virtual sex. Too often, people let their libidos run riot when considering this issue; and while we do not agree with Mr William's conclusions, this does not detract from the importance of discussing the profligacy of sexual activity in a more public domain. Be it with a beautiful woman, a handsome man, or a digital avatar, the more pressing issue that we wish had been mentioned here is the promiscuous mood that has taken hold in society. Let us stop, take a deep breath, and consider the wider emotional and societal effects that sexual activity can have (i.e. relationship pressure, unwanted pregnancies etc). Remember - every sperm is sacred.

SAFE - (Students Against Fornicating Erratically)

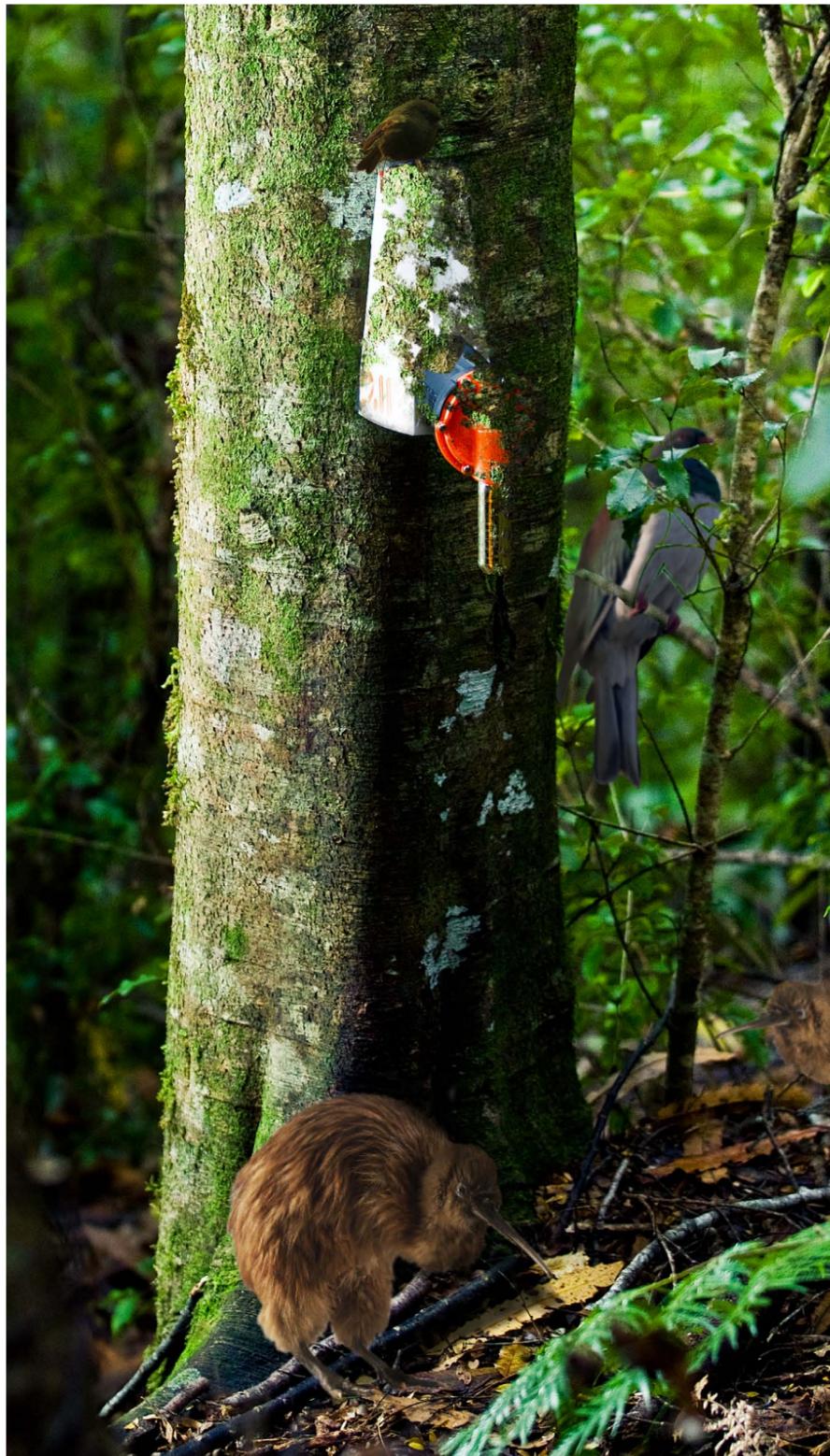
## WRITE TO US

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Email: capitalchronicleeditor@gmail.com

Letters must include the writer's full name and email address and should not exceed 200 words.

# goodnature®



## GOODNATURE BRINGS LIFE TO THE WILD

Wellington company Good Nature have long been regarded as the puppet-masters to New Zealand's animal population. The company's range of pest control products were the weaponry behind the successful campaign to suppress possum, stoat and rat numbers in native forest over the last thirty years. Now, Good Nature are set to readjust the scales, with a groundbreaking government contract to mass manufacture a new bird deterrent device for the purpose of managing native bird populations.

New Zealand's natural areas have benefitted from Good Nature's products before. Thirty years ago, Good Nature's *Automatic Humane Possum Trap* set the standard for humane pest control in New Zealand. The self-setting trap was distributed widely by the Department of Conservation (DOC) and, consequently, possum numbers decreased by half over fifteen years. By 2030, native bird populations, including that of the Kakapo, a species which had previously been on the brink of extinction, were booming.

"We reached a point, back in the early '30s, when the demand for our products started to decrease rapidly," one of Good Nature's founders, Robert Greig, told the Chronicle, "This was because the traps were so successful. The traditional pests were no longer an issue."

DOC ranger Tim Davies has observed the changes first hand. "Back in the day you would be lucky to ever see a kiwi in the wild," he told the Chronicle, "now all you need to do is take one step into native forest and you're practically kicking them with every step."

While conservation groups are pleased at the great success of the pest control initiatives, some New Zealanders are finding the vast bird numbers troublesome. Mother of three, LeeAnne David, told the Chronicle that nowadays she is cautious to take her children to the local playground. "It's just too dangerous," she said, "once my youngest was nearly swamped by a pack of grey warblers. It was terrifying."

"Something that nobody had really ever imagined has happened," Mr. Greig said, "native bird populations have become so vast that they've become a pest. Kiwis are being found in inner city parks and wekas are being struck by cars every day. There's just so many of them." In response to these changing circumstances, Good Nature has been forced to move into new territory. In January this year, they unveiled a new product, the Avian Deterrent. Designed to keep native birds

away from residential and urban areas, the Avian Deterrent emits scents known to be unpleasant to the particular species. The scent, however, is undetectable to the Human nose so serves as a discrete and inoffensive pest control tool.

Since its release, sales of the product have been strong. The new contract secured with DOC ensures the product will soon be found nationwide in DOC huts and on the peripheries of national parks. While the presence of the Kiwi in unusual places is a cherished part of the modern New Zealand lifestyle, Mr. Greig says that Good Nature's new product ensures that New Zealanders will now get the chance to find some space. "Sometimes," he says, "kiwis are just a nuisance."

## KIWI AND MUSHROOM PIE SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS

- 250g button mushrooms
- 2 medium sized leeks
- 1 medium sized zucchini
- 3 cups roasted, shredded kiwi
- 225 puff or flaky pastry
- 1/2 cup of sour cream
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 4 garlic cloves, diced
- 3 tbsp parsley
- 1/4 tsp salt
- ground pepper to taste

### METHOD

Pre-heat oven to 180°. Melt the butter in a saucepan and cook the mushrooms, leeks and zucchini until just tender. Add the garlic and cook a further minute.

Remove from the heat and stir in the kiwi, sour cream, chicken stock and parsley. Add salt and pepper.

Place the mixture into an 8-cup-capacity ovenproof dish. Roll-out the pastry until it is large enough to comfortably cover the top of the dish. Place at least a dozen fork holes in the pastry.

Bake at 180°C for 40 minutes.

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve with a glass of Willis Street Winery's award-winning 2038 merlot, and a side of fresh garden salad.

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