

Thursday, 27 August 2015

Waihi Ward Reflections

This advertisement is authorised by the Hauraki District Council



Gold Discovery Centre making the headlines again

Waihi's Gold Discovery Centre will run out of display room for its trophies if it carries on the way it is.

Hot on the heels of scooping Museums Aotearoa '2015 Best Museum Visitor Experience,' in May, the Centre has been announced as a finalist in the 2015 New Zealand Best Design Awards, in the Spatial – Exhibition Installations and Temporary Structures category.

An initiative of The Designers Institute of New Zealand, the Best Design Awards is an annual showcase of excellence in graphic, spatial, product and interactive design. The awards were established in 1988 and are held in very high regard across New Zealand.

Designed by Locales of Wellington, the Discovery Centre exhibition is a highly interactive visitor experience based around Waihi's captivating gold story.

Locales owner and creative director Chris Hay is delighted the Centre is a finalist in the Best Design Awards.

Creating the Gold Discovery Centre was more than three years of work for the company and used almost every element of visitor experience design you can think of including: spatial design, graphic design, computer games, animations, big mechanical interactive, tiny mechanical interactives, and even the country's first ever full sized Ghost Theatre!

"To be a finalist in the Best Awards is always an honour, especially in this category, but this year in particular there is an extremely high calibre of finalists so the awards dinner will be a great occasion," says Chris.

Gold Discovery Centre General Manager Eddie Morrow says being named as a finalist in the Best Awards is an outstanding result for the Centre that again confirms the high quality delivery and experience that the Centre offers its visitors.

"It also validates the decision to appoint Locales as the experience designers and project managers. They were creative, responsive to our needs and a great team to work with during the project's development. The results are now speaking for themselves," says Eddie.

The category winners will be announced at the awards dinner in Auckland on Friday, 9 October.



Above: Replica of a stamper battery in the Discovery Centre

Jump in Waihi Visitor Numbers

Visitor numbers recorded at the town's i-Site which is in the same building as the Gold Discovery Centre have increased steadily over the last three years and jumped significantly with the addition of the Waihi Gold Discovery Centre this year.

Year (Jan to Dec)	2013	2014	2015 (year to date as at June)	2015 (estimated end of year)
i-Site visitor numbers	42,839	43,705	47,696	70,000+

Source: Waihi Gold Discovery Centre



Above: Displays at the Waihi i-Site
Photos supplied by the Gold Discovery Centre

Waihi rabbits live up to their reputation

After spending the winter holed up and breeding like, well, rabbits, rabbits have reached extreme numbers at Waihi's Morgan Park. Three emergency services workers have twisted their ankles in burrows while loading patients into helicopters in recent months.

"It (Morgan Park) is used as an emergency landing pad, but it's currently riddled with rabbit holes which makes it quite a hazard, especially when it's dark," says Hauraki District Council's Parks and Reserves Manager, Steve Clark.

The park is also used for football, junior rugby and other recreational activities, better suited to a flat surface than a slice of Swiss cheese.

In the past the Council has contracted the services of a well-trained local ferret to keep its rabbit population in check. Unfortunately the ferret is no longer available for hire and in the absence of any successors (or the Pied Piper) we've had to consider other options, the most effective being the use of bait stations.

"Poisoned bait with a special rabbit attractant will be professionally and safely laid in stations throughout Morgan Park towards the end of September," says Steve.

Other rabbit strongholds, including Waihi and Paeroa cemeteries, will also be targeted over the coming months.

Exact dates and locations will be advertised via public notices, along with the Council facebook page and website. Signs will also be erected on site.



Hauraki District House Values are up

The latest monthly QV House Price Index results are out and they show Hauraki District values have risen 4.6 percent in three months.

This is likely to be a result of Auckland buyers looking outside the city, according to a recent report by Corelogic NZ director of research, Jonno Ingerson.

Across the Auckland Region values are up 18 percent annually and 5.7 percent over the past three months. This is the fastest rate of growth since 2003 and reflects the current supply and demand imbalance in Auckland.

"In some sort of reaction to this (imbalance) the Government and the Reserve Bank announced back in May further restrictions on both Auckland and the wider market," writes Ingerson.

The proposed changes due to come into effect on October 1st 2015 are:

- Low deposit lending restrictions for owner occupiers have been loosened in the rest of the country but will stay as they are in Auckland
- Auckland property investors will require a 30 percent deposit
- Any property bought and sold within two years that isn't owner occupied will be subject to capital gains tax.
- Foreign investors will need a New Zealand bank account and IRD number

Hauraki District Council Economic Development Chairman Toby Adams is ecstatic to see Hauraki showing more prominently on Auckland's real estate radar, and commends the Council's foresight in

developing a new residential subdivision in Ngatea.

"We know Hauraki is a great place to live and do business, and we've been working hard to spread the word. It's fantastic to see that message hitting home. It's positive for Auckland in terms of easing housing pressure and it's a great boost for us. It's a win-win really," he says.

Local real estate sales consultants report sales enquiries and activity in Waihi has certainly increased,

"Some properties are selling as quickly as we can list them. A number of people are coming to the area from the cities, not just from Auckland but from Christchurch, Hamilton and Tauranga too. There's a positive feel about the town that is really fantastic after the long, hard road we've all been through in the last few years," says one sales consultant.

Professionals Waihi Branch Manager Peter Sherman agrees the market has turned a corner,

"People may have noticed more sold signs around Waihi and fewer properties available to buy and they are quite right. The average number of dwelling sales per month has increased dramatically in recent years from about five or six sales a month to about 15 sales per month," he says, "The number of dwellings on the market has also significantly reduced."

There were more than 300 dwellings for sale when the local market was at its toughest. That number is now less than 150.

"Our market has certainly turned the corner and is now very buoyant," says Peter, "It's a great time to buy and of course to sell property in Waihi."

These aren't the official rating values but are an indication of the direction that rating values are likely to change. Council's valuer (Quotable Value) has started their valuation process and ratepayers can expect to get notice of the new values in September 2015.