

Wahine disaster tribute

A wreath-laying ceremony off Steeple Rock at the entrance to Wellington Harbour has paid tribute to the 51 people who died when the Wahine sank 45 years ago.

Accused denies murder

A man has admitted the burglary and arson of a house in a Christchurch suburb but denies the murder of 13-year-old Jade Bayliss who was found dead inside.

Blenheim Lotto win

An East Coast family has won the latest \$6 million Powerball jackpot, while a Blenheim family has claimed its \$10.8m prize from three weeks ago.

Drought economic impact

Treasury says if the drought doesn't intensify it will slice 0.7 per cent off economic growth in 2013.

Appeal for monastery

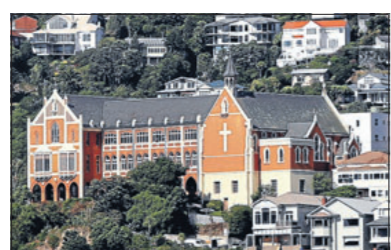
A public appeal may be launched this year to raise money to strengthen one of Wellington's best-known landmarks: St Gerard's monastery and church.

Leadership 'blackmail'

The war of words over the Maori Party leadership has broken out again with Pita Sharples accusing challenger Te Ururoa Flavell of "a kind of blackmail" for threatening to leave if he is not co-leader before the 2014 election.



Te Ururoa Flavell



Fated: St Gerard's in Wellington must be quake strengthened or demolished within 15 years.

Pizza funds book on Italian immigrants

Sasha Borissenko

Italian enthusiasts can look forward to authentic Italian pizza this Sunday in celebration of Nelson City Council's Heritage Week.

Club Italia is hosting a fundraiser for a forthcoming book by local historians Karen Price and Karen Stade that showcases the early Italian settlement.

"We are very excited about the event because it is the very first book about the Nelson Italian community," said Club Italia committee member Pauline Esposito.

Author and president of the Nelson Historical Society, Mrs Stade said the event would be an opportunity to tell members of the Italian community, and the wider Nelson community, about the book they had worked on for nearly two years.



which told the story of the Italian immigrants who came to Nelson, dating back to the 1860s.

1920s, the post World War II-period in the 1950s, and lest we forget those who randomly came over for the gold rush in the very beginning," she said.

The pair will publish the book through Mrs Price's graphic design company, Contexto, and Sunday's fundraiser is the club's contribution to the project.

Viva Italia! Authors Karen Stade, left, and Karen Price, right, with Pauline Esposito, of Club Italia, promote the club's Italian Harvest fundraiser for a forthcoming history book on Nelson's Italian community.

Photo: MARTIN DE RUYTER/FAIRFAX NZ

While the writing duo are not of Italian descent, both have been affiliated with the Wood, an area historically known for its Italian tomato growers.

"The club offered to help us with a fundraiser to promote our book and it tied in nicely with Heritage Week and its autumn harvest theme," Mrs Price said.

The monetary goal for the project was yet to be established, and the current estimate had "gone all topsy", Mrs Stade said.

"That's the way with history, you don't know what you are going to unearth. However, it's a story that's worth telling."

Nelson's Heritage Week starts on Saturday.

Mrs Stade will also be speaking at the Women's Club next Wednesday about the history of Nelson's landmark, the Church Steps. Her other book, Meet You at the Church Steps: a history of a Nelson landmark, will be published in September.

Tickets to Sunday's fundraiser evening cost \$20 and include pizza. Available from Romano's, 31 Trafalgar St.

See nelsoncitycouncil.co.nz for the Heritage Week programme.

Chinese visitor totals to rise

Hamish Rutherford in Shanghai

Chinese visitors could rise five-fold to 1 million in the next five years without additional marketing, Prime Minister John Key says.

That will lead to China rivalling Australia as our largest source of visitors.

It is already the fastest-growing source of international tourists, rising 35 per cent to 200,000 last year. - Mr Key said comments from Chinese president Xi Jinping suggested this would increase substantially in the coming year.

President Xi, who took office last month, told the Bo'ao Forum that he expected the number of

Chinese travelling overseas, about 82 million last year, would rise to 400 million in five years.

From this, Mr Key believed that Chinese visitors to New Zealand could easily climb to 1 million over that period, to rival Australia as New Zealand's largest source of overseas visitors.

"This is a massive market potential," Mr Key said.

"The question is, could we do even better than that, and I think it's arguably possible. I know it's a real stretch, but it's a very big market and we're a very attractive destination."

In the year ended February 2013, 1.16 million Australians visited New Zealand, compared with 208,000 Chinese.

Mr Key made the comments at a ceremony at the China Southern Airline headquarters in Guangzhou, where parties re-signed an agreement that gives qualifying visitors speedy access through border controls.

Under the agreement, China Southern's Gold and Silver frequent-flyer card-holders do not have to produce evidence of sufficient funds to support themselves, as long as they can show their flight records over the previous two years.

Immigration New Zealand said almost 100 travellers have used the scheme since it came into effect in November last year and no compliance issues have emerged. The scheme has been contro-

versial, with concerns raised that those on the visas may never return to China.

"This is clearly an abuse of both New Zealand's border controls and the visitor visa system," New Zealand First leader Winston Peters said in November after revealing that a deal for the visas was in the pipeline.

But Mr Key said yesterday that those with the visas were typically business people who had travelled extensively in recent years "with very high degree of probability to be returning to China".

The scheme came as Mr Key met travel agents participating in a new scheme to try to attract tourists from China who would stay longer and spend more.

While the growth in tourist numbers had been strong, the majority of those who come here are those on short-stay shopping holidays which are typically part of a trip to Australia.

Late last year, Tourism New Zealand launched the Premier Kiwi Partnership (PKP) scheme, under which it helps with the marketing costs for agents selling longer holidays which travel to a wider range of destinations.

Tourism New Zealand chief executive Kevin Bowler, who is also in China as part of the trade delegation, said the first visitors under the scheme came to New Zealand for the Chinese New Year celebrations about six weeks ago. Fairfax NZ

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Critics take aim at protest law

Government moves to criminalise protests at sea have aroused high-profile opposition, with former prime minister Geoffrey Palmer, lawyer Peter Williams, QC, and Dame Anne Salmond among those protesting.

The group has a legal opinion which "finds that the proposed amendments to the Crown Minerals (Permitting and Crown Land) Bill would breach international law in a number of respects".

Under late changes promoted by Minister of Energy and Resources Simon Bridges, protesters who intentionally damage or interfere with mining sites or vessels outside the 12-mile territorial limit risk up to a year in jail.

That would allow the Defence Force to

make high-seas arrests, fines to be imposed of up to \$50,000 per person or \$100,000 per organisation, and there would be fines of up to \$10,000 for breaching no-go zones of up to 500 metres around mining vessels.

The late amendments will not go through the usual processes, avoiding a select committee hearing where public submissions are made and there will be no Bill of Rights Act vet by the attorney-general.

The proposed law was "a sledgehammer designed to attack peaceful protest" and was "being bundled through Parliament without proper scrutiny, despite its significant constitutional, democratic and human-rights

implications", its high-profile opponents said in a joint statement.

Among the other signatories were Greenpeace, World Wildlife Fund, Forest & Bird, Rikirangi Gage, of Te Whanau a Apanui, Sir Ngatata Love, the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and Peace Squadron founder George Armstrong.

The amendments "breach international law, and attack our democratic freedoms", the group said.

Breaches of international law include: ■ Interfering with the freedom of navigation. ■ Breaching human rights by prohibiting peaceful forms of protest, enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Fairfax NZ

Injunction served 'to halt leaks'

The Earthquake Commission claims to have served an injunction on two parties allegedly releasing information from its notorious leaked email, but the parties were still waiting last night.

The High Court in Christchurch yesterday granted EQC an interim injunction "to prevent any further dissemination of confidential information" from the email accidentally sent to EQC critic Bryan Staples last week.

EQC announced the injunction about 5pm yesterday, saying it had been served on Mr Staples, Earthquake Services di-

rector and the blogger known as EQC Truths.

However, neither Mr Staples nor the blogger, whose identity Fairfax has agreed to keep confidential, had been served with the injunction when contacted last night.

Mr Staples said he would see what the injunction said when he received it, but he could not control the many people who now appeared to have access to the email. "This is just more bullying from EQC. After all, this information belongs to the homeowners."

The blogger said he respected the law but "in a way I feel that if EQC want a public fight I will give it to them".

EQC chief executive Ian Simpson said the move was necessary as neither party had authorised access to the information and both were actively engaged in disseminating it.

"I have said earlier that EQC is determined not to add to any distress caused by the mistake by seeing the information spread further by third parties, and that has necessitated the intervention of the courts." Fairfax NZ

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