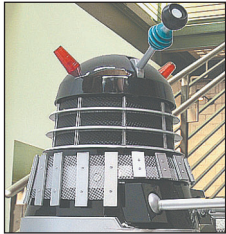


# TE WAHA NUI

FREE

"The Big Mouth" — an AUT journalism publication

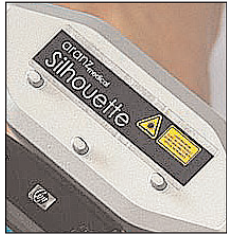
No 20, September 28, 2007



## Exterminate!

Candidate with a difference

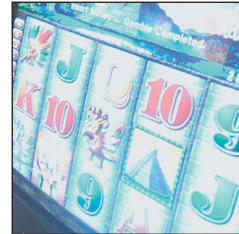
p2



## Wound scanner

Film technology to help with wound healing

p9



## Pokie trusts

Their relationship with charities

p10



ON THE BENCH: Candidates for the Auckland mayoralty gather in the Auckland Central Methodist Mission for a Green Party-hosted public forum. Full story on page 6.

# Organ bill tipped to fail

By Sophie Finemore

A bill to improve New Zealand's lousy rate of organ donations is set to fail, say its authors.

"My moles in Parliament tell me it won't be approved," says Andy Tookey, campaigner and co-author of the Organ Donor Registry Bill.

Tookey says he believes the Health Select Committee has bowed to pressure from the medical profession and will announce this week the bill will be dumped.

National MP Jackie Blue, who is sponsoring the private member's bill, says she too has been told it is doomed.

A lack of support from the Ministry of Health was fatal, says Blue.

She says she accepts the deci-

sion but feels it is simply "delaying the inevitable".

She says the onus will now be on the medical profession to increase donor rates.

Only 25 people in New Zealand donated organs last year.

The bill is seeking to create a national database where people who wish to donate their organs after death can register. That wish would be legally binding.

Currently people can specify on their driver's licence if they wish to be a donor, but this has no legal standing under current law.

Instead, the family of the deceased is asked to give permission.

New Zealand needs a binding donor register "to improve the country's appalling rate of organ donation", says Blue.

"I believe it would [make a dif-

ference] as it would make it clear to families what an individual's wishes were.

"The current driver's licence indicator of organ donation is hopeless. No-one takes any notice of it."

Tookey says he believes that under new Government proposals recently tabled New Zealand will eventually get a register but not a legally binding one.

He believes this will do little to increase donation numbers.

But Organ Donation New Zealand, which coordinates the donation and transplantation of organs in New Zealand hospitals, says a binding registry would be unworkable and unlikely to increase donor numbers.

Team leader Janice Langlands says doctors would not override the wishes of a

grieving family if they opposed donation, even in the presence of a legally binding register.

She says if doctors were forced to override a family's wishes, the potentially bad publicity could swing public opinion against organ donation.

But Tookey says this is a case of medical professionals "trying to blackmail Parliament".

"They are saying if you make this law, we will ignore the law — I think that is extremely arrogant."

Langlands also believes an additional risk of a register is the possibility more people may sign up against organ donation than for it.

Tookey believes the concerns of Organ Donation New Zealand have been proven wrong by overseas experience.

"There has been no evidence I've seen to suggest it will reduce

donor numbers. Why are so many countries adopting them if it makes the donor rate drop?"

He says the "passively obstructive" attitude of the national organ donation service to the bill shows its focus is not on increasing organ donation.

"They seem to be totally against any move to increase organ donation numbers and yet they are the organ donation service."

Tookey believes the fact the Government is currently holding its own review of organ donation under the Human Organ and Tissue Review was another nail in the coffin of his bill.

"I think my bill has failed in favour of Government legislation on the issue."

But he says he will not be deterred by the failure.

"It won't stop me. Lives are at stake."



BRAZIL HAS-BEAN: Brazil, the iconic K' Rd cafe, is closing its doors on September 30. It is in the Norman Ng Building — a narrow neo-classical building with distinctive twin flag poles and vaulted ceilings. It was built in 1926 as the entrance to the Kings Theatre (later the Mercury Theatre). The building is registered with the Historic Places Trust as a Category 2 building. Over the years it has housed a fruit shop and a fireworks wholesaler. See page 3 for the full story.

## Spotted kiwi on road to recovery

By Lauradanna Radesic

The little spotted kiwi is making a comeback, albeit slowly, on the island sanctuary of Tiritiri Matangi.

Five pairs of kiwi were introduced onto the island for the first time in 1993, with another six birds joining them in 1995.

After 14 years of breeding it is now estimated the population is between 60 and 80 birds.

Dr Hugh Robertson, a Department of Conservation scientist,

says the numbers are about as good as can be expected.

"Each breeding pair only has one or maybe two eggs a year, so we're doing pretty well," he says.

DRobertson says the kiwis are currently living in the lap of luxury.

"The island is free of predators and competitors. There are no dogs, cats, rats or stoats. We're finding the kiwis on the island are a lot larger than kiwis on the mainland."

It is expected the island population will double in the next five to

10 years.

The little spotted kiwis inhabit only five islands in New Zealand, with a total population of about 1500 birds.

It is New Zealand's third most endangered variety behind the Okarito Brown kiwi and Haast Tokoeka kiwi.

