



THEN AND NOW: Queen St as it was in the 1950s and the buildings on the same site today.

## Queen St remembers

by Rosie Cotter

Selwyn Paine remembers a time when Queen St truly was the heart of Auckland city.

The 83-year-old Mt Albert resident has shared his memories with the Auckland City Council as part of the Queen St upgrade project and Heritage Week this month.

Paine worked in the old Union Bank building (now the ANZ Bank) on the corner of Victoria and Queen Streets during the 1950s.

"Queen St had a wide variety of aromas. From florists, butchers, fish shops, fruit shops, even from hardware shops," he says.

Queen St was built on swamp land and the first wooden buildings were erected in 1841.

Paine recalls the problems the bank faced when rising tides from the harbour met storm water run-off.

The manhole outside the bank would burst under the pressure and Paine's office in the basement would regularly flood.

"The whole street was a quagmire in those days," he says.

Paine started working for the bank's Blenheim branch when he was 15 and eventually moved to the Queen St branch.

During World War II, the bank employed women to cover staff shortages and they remained on with the men after

the war.

"Little intrigues and happenings" in the office were to follow, Paine says.

After work everyone would join the "six o'clock swill" at the pub then pile on trams to go home.

"Trams were the lifeblood of the city," Paine says.

Trams have been a strong theme in many of the stories received by the council.

The council is planning to have some of the major themes translated into bronze etchings.

These etchings will become plaques sunk into the pavement on Queen St as part of renovations to the street due to begin late this year.

## Electoral funds system unfair, say Greens

by Nicole Stanley

Smaller parties are crying foul over the allocation of the Electoral Commission funds.

Broadcasting funds allocated from taxpayers' dollars are up by \$1 million from the last election in 2002.

The commission has divided up funds used for buying television and radio advertising from a total pool of \$3.2 million.

Helena Catt of the commission says the cost of advertising has risen significantly in the last three years.

"The rise in funds is recognition that there has been a 47 per cent increase in the cost of placing a television or radio ad.

"The rise was basically a necessity to ensure that parties have enough money to buy television time," she says.

Labour and National were allocated their funds, at \$1.1 million and \$900,000 each, from a pool fixed at \$2 million.

The smaller parties all shared the remaining amount of just over \$1.2 million.

"It was the commission's decision to split this larger amount between the two biggest parties. They are just so much bigger and this is why they get so much more," Catt says.

Factors affecting the funding allocation include votes gained at the last election, size of the party and number of current members of Parliament.

Rod Donald, co-leader of the Green Party, says this type of fund allocation system is unfair because the electoral commission ultimately has to try to predict the election outcome, to work out how much each party deserves.

"The commission will inevitably get it wrong," he says. "Parties always get less or

more than they deserve. The funding allocation becomes a self fulfilling prophecy - larger parties have more money for broadcast advertising which means they do better and get even more money for the next allocation."

The Greens at this election have been allocated \$206,607 for broadcast advertising, an amount Donald calls "pathetic."

"It's not enough to buy any sort of meaningful coverage. We are reduced to 15-second advertisements which don't show on good programmes."

Donald says television has become one of the most essential media to campaign on as it reaches such a large audience.

"Most people engage with television. It is very important to an election campaign," he says.

The Greens will be pushing for proper state funding to replace the current allocation system. The state funding would be organised directly after each election in order to better reflect the strength and performance of each party at the time.

The Electoral Commission says although the system may seem unfair on the surface, it is essential to place rules on how political parties can use television and radio advertising.

Catt says the broadcasting fund allocation only applies to advertising for the party vote and it is necessary to place boundaries on spending.

"Each party has an overall spending limit on their whole election campaign. They are allocated a certain amount per party plus \$20,000 per electoral candidate fielded.

"Almost all of them complain about the amount of funding they receive. It's not just the smaller parties," Catt says.

"They all think they should have more."

**"The commission will inevitably get it wrong."**

## Time running out for Auckland Central contenders

by Bonnie White

Stakes are high, voters are undecided, and time is running out in Auckland Central, New Zealand's smallest electorate. The three main contenders are kicking into high gear and taking to the streets to canvass and cajole as many voters as they can.

Unlike the South Island, where you need an aeroplane to cover one electorate, Auckland Central voters can be reached by walking down Queen St.

So just what are the candidates doing to convince us and what exactly do they stand for?

The current Auckland Central MP, Labour's Judith Tizard, won by more than 5000 votes in the 2002 election, and it doesn't look as though much has changed this time either.

But she is not resting on her laurels.

"I've never won an election by thinking I would win. Every MP is judged on their effort. I have always taken elections seriously, and people have to be convinced I would be a good MP."

And in order to convince the people, Tizard has a couple of campaign tricks up her sleeve.

"We started street corner meetings on Monday, although one man said he would vote for me if I didn't canvass on his street corner before 10am!"

Public transport, vehicle emissions, and the protection of traditional knowledge are high on Tizard's agenda if she is elected for a third term.

The Green Party's Nandor Tanczos has a different aim this time around.

Despite gaining the third highest number of votes in the last election, Tanczos, in accordance with Green Party tactic for this election, is not aiming to enter Parliament through an electorate seat.

Instead, the Greens hope to cross the 5 per cent threshold through campaigning for the party vote.

However this has not stopped Tanczos from working his electorate.

"We have had a number of meetings, and we are also focussing on being on the ground, going door-to-door, around Aotea market, on the street, visiting businesses, and

trying to get as much visibility as possible."

Tanczos will also push for policies that represent his region.

"Public transport policy is pertinent given the record prices in petrol."

He is also concerned about student loan policy, because it has a high impact on the Auckland Central electorate.

"There is a high proportion of students and graduates in this electorate," he says.

Ahead of Tanczos by fewer than 2000 votes at the last election, National's Pansy Wong is also using grassroots strategies to get her messages out.

"I like the old-fashioned campaigning, where we communicate directly with people, so we have been doing a lot of street corner meetings," she says.

"This is also complemented by

mail drops, as part of a national strategy."

Like the other Auckland Central candidates, the issue of transport is high on the agenda for Wong, with an emphasis on petrol tax being dedicated to solve traffic woes.

She also hopes to curb graffiti and halt local rate increases.

"People are frustrated that rates have been increasing, but there has not been an increase in services. People are being punished just because they keep their property in shape."

So keep on the lookout for one of your local representatives campaigning to bring you their best slogans and policies.

With only days before voters decide on the future of the government, this is one of the few opportunities to harass or support your local politician in person. Make use of it.

**"I've never won an election by thinking I would win."**