

THE BEGONIA HOUSE REFURBISHMENT: A COMMUNITY PROJECT IN FULL BLOOM

By Bec Ramsay and the Wellington Gardens team

For generations, the Begonia House has been a special place in the Wellington Botanic Garden ki Paekākā. It is a place to wander, discover, escape the weather, admire incredible plants, listen to music, enjoy exhibitions, celebrate special moments, or simply sit quietly among greenery.

We're excited to be restoring this much-loved glasshouse and preparing it for its next chapter.

A project like this is about much more than a building. It is about caring for a living collection, protecting an important piece of Wellington's history, and ensuring the Begonia House continues to inspire visitors for generations to come.

The Begonia House is home to an incredible collection of plants, with 1,782 different plant species, cultivars, and hybrids from around the world. These plants tell stories of adaptation, survival, and the important role plants play in supporting life on Earth.

Behind the scenes, it takes a dedicated team of four highly skilled horticulturalists to care for the collection. Their work includes year-round plant care and the careful movement of plants between the nursery and glasshouse to keep the displays looking their best.

The building itself also has a fascinating story. The first glasshouse at the Botanic Garden was built in 1898, with the current Begonia House constructed in 1960 and expanded over the years. With more than 800 panes of glass, the restoration will help bring the building back to life, including repairs to the glasshouse systems that allow natural airflow and temperature management.

As part of the restoration, the team has carefully moved the entire plant collection out while construction takes place. This includes repairing the steel framework, replacing and restoring services, improving visitor facilities, upgrading lighting, and restoring the growing spaces before the plants return home.

The project has only been possible thanks to the incredible support of our community, the Friends of Wellington Botanic Garden, and our generous project partners who have embraced a 'for the love of Wellington' approach. These amazing people and companies on the project team include LT McGuinness, Ignite Architects, ABS, Silvester Clark, Local, and the Glass Group.

A huge thank you also goes to the Thorndon community for your ongoing care and support of the Gardens. Many local residents have supported the project through generous donations to the Friends of Wellington Botanic Garden, and some may even have a little piece of the Begonia House in their own homes after purchasing plants through the fundraising sale earlier this year.

There is a long history of community involvement in caring for Wellington's gardens, and we're always looking for new ways for people to connect. Opportunities to volunteer are available through Wellington Gardens, the Friends of Wellington Botanic Garden, and the Friends of Bolton Street Cemetery.

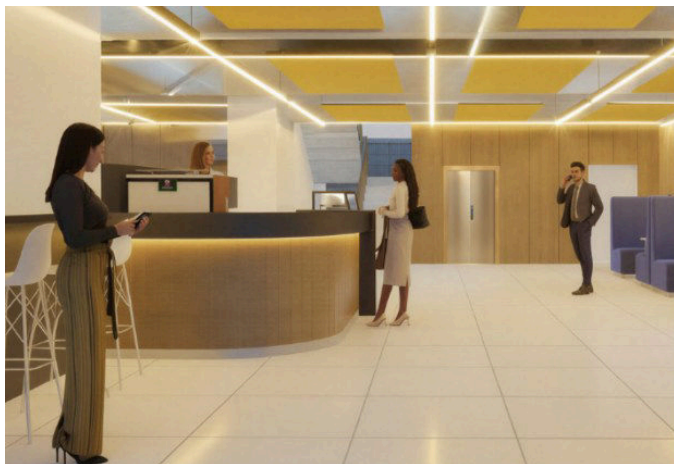
We can't wait to welcome everyone back when the Begonia House reopens in May next year. It will continue to be a place of inspiration, respite, discovery, and joy; a sanctuary for people and plants in the heart of Wellington.

You can follow the Begonia House project on the Wellington City Council project page or keep up to date via the Wellington Gardens Facebook page.



3–5 GEORGE STREET DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

By Claire Friend, Marketing Manager, Holmes Group NZ Ltd



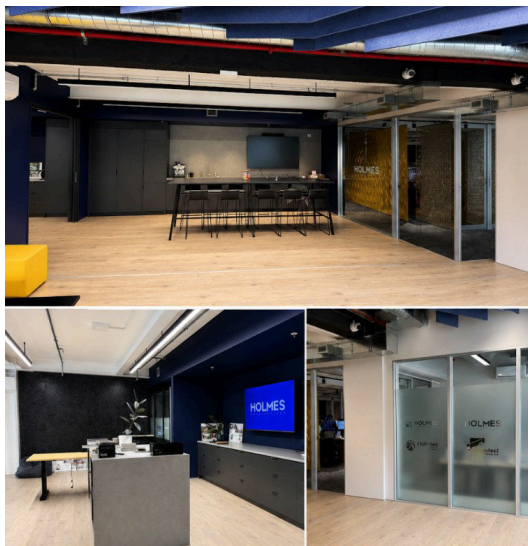
Proposed lobby area

The transformation of 3–5 George Street continues to take shape, with a major milestone already reached. Holmes Group has now moved into its new home.

The completed office space now brings Holmes Construction and Holmes Architecture together under one roof, creating a purpose-built environment designed to support collaboration, creativity and growth.

While we're enjoying our new space, there's still plenty happening across the wider development. Work is continuing on two additional commercial office tenancies, a shared entrance and hospitality space that will eventually be home to a café, and an underground car park. Together, these additions will help create a vibrant and functional hub for businesses and visitors alike.

It's been rewarding to see the site evolve over the past 18 months, and we're looking forward to sharing more progress as the remaining stages come together.



WINTER ENERGY SAVING TIPS

Keep Your Home Warm & Cosy

Keep heat where you need it

Close doors to unused rooms to stop heat escaping and keep central living areas warmer for longer. Encourage everyone in your home to spend time in the same rooms—fewer spaces to heat means more savings.

Block drafts effectively

Drafty doors and windows can leak a lot of heat. Seal gaps with door sweeps and draft stoppers to keep the warmth in and the cold out.

Close curtains and blinds

A surprising amount of heat escapes through windows. Pull your curtains or blinds in the evening to help trap warmth and keep your home cosy.

Check your insulation

Good insulation makes a huge difference especially in the attic.

Seal unused fireplaces

Open fireplaces can let heat escape when not in use. Keep them sealed to stop warm air travelling up the chimney.

Use Energy Efficiently

Unplug unused devices

Many appliances still use power even when turned off. Unplug 'energy vampires' or use power boards to switch off multiple devices at once.

Upgrade to LED lighting

Switch to energy-efficient LED bulbs. They can use up to 85% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs.

Choose the right heater

Select a heater suited to your space. Oil heaters are ideal for small rooms or bedrooms. Look for models with a thermostat and timer and monitor usage to manage costs.

Smart Water & Heating Tips

Insulate your pipes

Adding insulation to pipes reduces heat loss, meaning your water stays hotter for longer and requires less energy to heat.

Save Energy in Everyday Tasks

Do fewer, fuller laundry loads

Running larger loads means fewer cycles per week, saving energy. Avoid overloading your machine and follow manufacturer guidelines for best results.

AED/CPR TRAINING

The first AED/CPR training session sponsored by the Thorndon Residents' Association (TRA) was held on 7 July 2026. Due to the size of the venue, demand exceeded capacity, with more people registering for training than there were available places.

Those who were unable to be accommodated were offered a place on a waiting list. As a result of this strong interest, a second training session was approved and is scheduled to take place on 22 September 2026.

This session is already fully booked.

This initiative will result in an additional **25** people being trained and able to assist in an emergency, whether they are called upon or are present when urgent help is required.

The willingness of individuals to learn these life-saving skills reflects a strong commitment to community wellbeing. Those who undertake this training may one day save the life of a neighbour, friend, colleague, family member, or even a stranger.

Collectively, this growing network of trained residents and workers within Thorndon and Pipitea plays a valuable role in building a community that is confident, prepared, and ready to act when it matters most.

For those who remain interested in undertaking training, Wellington Free Ambulance will, where possible, endeavour to place individuals into other workplace or community group sessions that have been organised, subject to availability.

Wellington City Council

Me Heke Ki Pōneke

Puka Tuihono FIXiT
FIXiT

Call 04 499 4444 for hazards with risk to life or property, noise control complaints, major water leaks, urgent parking complaints, etc, or use the webpage

<https://services.wellington.govt.nz/report>

FRIENDS OF QUEENS PARK 2026

10am – 12 noon weather permitting.

Volunteers meet near the top of the Park Street steps. All are very welcome.

Just turn up and join us, and/or email Peter Steel at peter@steelfamily.nz or phone 021 244 1850.

We will try to reschedule when we have bad weather – potentially the day before, if the weather forecast allows this, or after a cancellation, we will shift the gathering to the following day or the following weekend. The next meeting dates are:

Sunday 26 July Saturday 29 August

Sunday 27 September Saturday 31 October

THANK GOD IT'S FRIDAY (TGIF) CONCERTS

Every Friday, the Wellington Cathedral of St Paul, Hill Street invites a local musician to perform in the TGIF Lunchtime Concerts. Concerts begin at 12:45 in the Cathedral Nave each Friday. Entry by donation.

<https://www.wellingtoncathedral.org.nz/tgif>

July 31 tbc

August 7 tbc

August 14 Duo Mimesi (piano duo - Italy)

August 21 The Kugels

August 28 Michael Stewart (organ)

September 4 Luu Hung Quang (piano)

September 11 Elementi (Pepe Becker - soprano, Monica Verburg - flutes, Nicholas Hancox - viola)

September 18 Wellington Organist Association

September 25 Ziqian Xu (piano)

MUSICAL PUNCH OVER LUNCH SERIES

Old St Paul's, Mulgrave Street.

Thursday 12.30pm - 1.15pm. Bring your lunch, take a pew, and enjoy live music in one of Wellington's most distinctive, and beautiful, heritage spaces. The performance will be up to 45 minutes in duration. Koha entry.

This is the last lunchtime Punch Over Lunch concert for 2026.

July 23: Wellington City Chorus, women's barbershop

Joining the TRA helps support our community work

<https://www.thorndon.org.nz/join-us/>

Published quarterly by Thorndon Residents' Association.

Proudly supported by Tommy's Real Estate.

Email contact@thorndon.org.nz with suggestions.

FEATURED PROPERTIES: BUY ONE OR BUY BOTH!

368 & 370 Tinakori Road, Thorndon



368 Tinakori Road, Thorndon

R.V. \$1,180,000

Fee Simple | Floor 160m² | Multiple Carparks

370 Tinakori Road, Thorndon

R.V. \$1,430,000

Fee Simple | Floor 160m² | Multiple Carparks

These properties are situated in one of Wellington's most sought after suburbs, Thorndon. It's literally City fringe, with an easy stroll to the CBD, Government Precinct, Botanical Gardens, Universities, cafes and other excellent suburb amenities.

RECENT THORNDON SALES BY TOMMY'S



7 Saint Mary Street, Thorndon



33 Grant Road, Thorndon



1 Parliament Street, Thorndon

Thank you for your positive feedback and support for me at Tommy's Real Estate. I've truly enjoyed helping those who have been in contact. Just a reminder—I'm more than happy to provide free market appraisals with absolutely no obligations, especially after the recent RV changes. If you're interested, feel free to give me a call on 021 969 808!

Barry O'Brien
The Peoples Agent

