

# TARANAKI DAILY NEWS

TE KARERE O TARANAKI

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ENTERTAINMENT

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SPORT

## Visitors to cemetery fear gang



**New Plymouth**  
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Three grave sites at Awanui Cemetery are neatly decorated with blue flowers - Black Power's traditional colour - black T-shirts, and other memorabilia. STUFF

The presence of patched gang members at a Taranaki cemetery is causing concerns for families visiting the graves of loved ones.

New Plymouth's Awanui Cemetery has a history of drivers performing skids in its grounds as a tribute to departed friends, but now the presence of Black Power gang members paying their respects to departed members is said to be intimidating other visitors.

New Plymouth District Council, which manages the site, has had a number of calls from the public and now plans to install speed humps to stop drivers performing wheel spins, but is powerless to prevent gang members from visiting.

Three grave sites are decorated with blue flowers, the gang's traditional colour, black T-shirts, cans of alcohol and other memorabilia but it's the physical attendance of patched members that's causing concern for the public.

One woman, who spoke on the condition she could remain anonymous, said some people were afraid to visit the cemetery.

"You go up there to visit your loved one and they are sitting in their cars and they are obviously smoking drugs or something. They are out of it," she said.

She was not aware of anyone being approached or threatened or of any damage by the group to

headstones. However, the skid marks were a sign of disrespect, while some were parking on the grass verge almost on top of the graves, she claimed.

"When I go up there now I hop in the car afterwards and I have a cry because I just think what environment are you leaving your loved ones in."

In a written response to questions, NPDC external relations manager Jacqueline Baker said: "After a number of calls from the public concerned about this behaviour, we are planning to install speed humps at Awanui Cemetery and a contract for this work has been tendered."

She did not respond to questions about how many complaints the NPDC had received regarding unruly behaviour at the cemetery or what the most common complaint was.

Sergeant Phil Quinn said if anyone witnessed burnouts in the cemetery grounds they should contact police.



Taranaki journalist Jim Tucker, right, is writing a book about Raewyn and Nell Wolfe. Below: Wolfe gets back behind the wheel in a fire truck. PHOTOS: SIMON O'CONNOR/STUFF

## Wolfe finds fire truck again

**Community**  
**Stephanie Ockhuysen**

As a 2-year-old, former All Black Neil Wolfe ran away from home for a life as a fire truck driver.

Not knowing where he had gone his mother was frantic and immediately jumped to the worst conclusion, rushing to New Plymouth's Pukekura Park fearing he had drowned in the lake.

But Wolfe was three blocks in the other direction, at the fire station sitting in the front seat of a fire truck.

On Wednesday afternoon and now 77 years old, he was back in the driver's seat recreating the story as part of a book Taranaki journalist Jim Tucker is writing on Wolfe and his wife Raewyn.

"I was sitting there trying to drive it after I had escaped from home. My father was a part-time firefighter anyway, so I was known to them," he said. "We used to have a bell in the house that would go off every time there was a fire."



Raewyn said her husband had always had a fascination with the emergency services and his ears still perked up whenever a siren went off.

The idea for the book of their life came about while the pair were having a coffee with Tucker.

Raewyn thought it would be a good idea to get Wolfe's history set in print for their grandchildren, as he has Alzheimer's and may not be able to tell them himself one day.

"It was going to be just Neil's story but Jim has decided it has to

be both of us."

As well as being an All Black, Wolfe was on the New Plymouth District Council, chairman of the New Plymouth Boys' High School board, and managing director of Western Bottling, which he took over from his father.

Tucker knew Wolfe from his days as a rugby reporter writing about Wolfe, or Wolfie as he calls him, on the field. Wolfe was the seventh-youngest All Black - he was just 19 on his 1961 debut.

The book will focus on three areas - Wolfe's rugby career, Raewyn's connection to the Chatham Islands through Ngāti Tama and Ngāti Mutunga, and their daughter Katie Wolfe and her career in film.

"Wolfie's mother kept every single clipping of every single appearance in every single world newspaper. Every breath he took is recorded, which is great for me," Tucker said.

The book, which has the working title *Wolfie - the story of Nell and Raewyn*, is due for publication by the end of the year.





Taranaki journalist Jim Tucker, right, is writing a book about Raewyn and Neil Wolfe. Below: Wolfe gets back behind the wheel in a fire truck.

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