

Pukeiti launch for local author's new Waffle book

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Media enquiries: Email media@trc.govt.nz or call 0800 736 222 and ask for the communications team

Imaginations are set to run wild with the launch of new children's book *Whetu and Waffle Explore Taranaki* at a free family event at Pukeiti.

Bringing her childhood imaginary cat to life local author and illustrator Hayley Elliot-Kernot will launch the third instalment in the *Waffle* series this Monday, 15 January. The original book was published in 2018 and has become a firm favourite with kids and parents alike.

With a focus on free-to-visit places, the new book acts as an activity guide for locals and visitors. Readers will discover iconic destinations around the region like Te Rewa Rewa Bridge, Puke Ariki, the Clifftop Garden and Pukeiti.

"One of the things I liked about my original book *Waffle goes to New Plymouth* was that all families could visit the places Waffle went to regardless of income. So many of the places in the new book are also free or only a few dollars to enter."

Whetu the kea and Waffle will be hitting the road later this year as they continue to explore places around Aotearoa, says Hayley.

"I am expanding Whetu and Waffle to other regions beyond Taranaki this year. I am still deciding on which locations but I can tell you that Rotorua will be one of them."

Hayley began illustrating in 2017 when she was volunteering on farms around the country.

"I created a story for my stepfather's birthday called *Paulie the Policeman*, the book was terrible but that is how it all started."

Drawing inspiration from things that are important to her and topics kids can learn from helps Hayley with the creative process when writing her books.

"I like children's books that bring some value, whether educationally, morally, or in that they simply make children think."

After a successful reading at Tūpare in 2022 Hayley is looking forward to doing it again at Pukeiti. Families are encouraged to go along and enjoy the story, perhaps take a picnic to enjoy the picturesque garden setting or check out the Kids' Treehouse Trail.

Summer story time with Waffle (the launch) will take place on the Founders Lawn at Pukeiti on Monday 15 January from 10am to 11.30am. In the event of bad weather, everything will move to the Rātā Room. Entry is free. Pukeiti is at 2290 Carrington Road, New Plymouth – a 30-minute drive from central New Plymouth.

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[Image: Local illustrator and author Hayley Elliot-Kernot with baby XX and her latest book.](#)