

UPLIFT

Aotearoa
Festival of
Architecture
2026

Wellington
21 September
– 4 October 2026



New Zealand Institute of Architects
Wellington Branch



OPEN STUDIOS

Friday September 25th
3pm-5:30pm

Ever wanted to go behind the scenes of an architecture studio to find out what architects do? Take a self-guided tour around the architectural studios of Wellington. See the spaces where creativity takes place and chat to the architects that reside there.

- 1 **Jasmax**
Level 3, 126 Lambton Quay
- 2 **Design Group Stapleton Elliot**
Level 1, 318 Lambton Quay
- 3 **WSP**
Level 9, Majestic Centre
- 4 **Architecture + / Micah Architecture**
Ground Floor, NZX Building, 11 Cable Street
- 5 **Studio Pacific**
Level 2, 74 Cuba Street
- 6 **Tennent Brown**
Level 6, 7 Dixon Street
- 7 **Melling Architects**
26 Egmont Street
- 8 **Stephenson & Turner**
Level 2, 158 Victoria Street
- 9 **Voxell**
Level 1, 3 Swan Lane
- 10 **McKenzie Higham Architects**
171 Vivian Street
- 11 **Archaus**
62 Cambridge Terrace

Please leave Open Studios promptly by 5:30pm, and ask your host about photography, enjoy!

CHECKMATE

Friday September 25th
5:30pm-6:30pm

Jasmax, Level 3, 126 Lambton Quay

Emerge x SANNZ Mixer. Connecting Mentors and STUDENTS. Enjoy a social unwind after the OPEN STUDIO tour at the Jasmax Studio. Register online now.

Aotearoa Festival of Architecture 2026

WEEK 1

**MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 21**
FESTIVAL LAUNCH
+ GHOST FOREST LAUNCH
6:00pm, 113 Taranaki St

Join us for the official launch of the 2026 Festival of Architecture and Ghost Forests - Photographer Andy Spain's latest photographic series exploring the ecological histories hidden within New Zealand's architectural heritage. This evening of celebration includes a short presentation discussing the motivations behind the Ghost Forests exhibition and the context it engages with, as well as teasers from the presenters of the upcoming lunchtime talks series

**TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 22**

**FUTUNA LECTURE SERIES:
Catherine Hunter & Nick Sissons**
6:30pm-8:30pm, Old St Paul's

This year documentary maker Catherine Hunter and Sydney architect Nick Sissons share their experiences working with Glenn Murcutt, Australia's eminent architect and Pritzker Prize Winner in 2002.

**WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 23**

SIP 'n' SKETCH
7:30am-8:30am,
Sketchbook Coffee

Come along for a morning café sketch, where good coffee meets creativity. Get inspired with Anne Kelly (AKA Architecture) and Jan Smitheram (VUW) of places and people that uplifts you and enter the competition!

FOREST OF DECISIONS
1:00pm,
113 Taranaki Street

Join NZIA Gold Medal laureates Hugh Tennent & Ewan Brown for a lunchtime talk exploring how different approaches to material selection have come together to form the firm's award winning work.

GLENN MURCUTT ON SCREEN
6:30pm-7:30pm,
The Embassy Theatre

Join the Futuna Chapel Trust for a rare screening of two documentaries written and directed by Catherine Hunter about internationally acclaimed Australian architect Glenn Murcutt.

**THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 24**

A MOMENT BETWEEN LINES
7:45am-8:45am,
Awhi Yoga + Wellbeing

Step away from the drawings, deadlines and details. Take a breath, move, reset and enjoy a moment of calm with morning yoga and herbal tea before and after. A morning yoga experience with herbal tea before and after, created as a space to pause, breathe and reset during the festival.

**THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 24**
ROTUNDA BUILDING TOUR

4:00pm,
Band Rotunda, Oriental Parade

Tour the icon of Oriental Parade, for years this building sat empty gazing out to the Wellington Skyline. Now on the cusp of living once more, come have a sneak peak!

**CITIES, PEOPLE, ARCHITECTURE
MOVIE SERIES**
5:30pm,
VUW School of Architecture

'H7 Digital' Documentary + Panel Discussion
A re-imagination of an industrial site, breathing new slide and purpose into a vast, two level space spanning over 5000m2 across two adjoining buildings (adaptive reuse), followed by a panel discussion framing the movie in the local context.

**FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 25**

OPEN STUDIOS
3:00pm-5:30pm,
Central Wellington - Refer to Map

A self-guided tour around the architectural studios of Wellington. See the spaces where creativity takes place and chat to the architects about the profession.

CHECKMATE
5:30pm-7:30pm
Jasmax, Level 3/126 Lambton Quay

Emerge x SANNZ social mixer, bringing architecture students and industry professionals together. Every great career starts with the right move in one night.

**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 26**

**DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER: A
Walking Tour**

1:00pm,
Start: St Peters Church
Ends: Vivian Street

Join Walk Tours NZ for this special 90-minute walking tour as we pay tribute to the late Georgina (1957-2023) by exploring the sites, streets and public spaces of central Wellington that shaped her remarkable journey.

**SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 27**

**GHOSTS OF THE CITY: A Walking
Tour**

1:00pm,
Start: Old Government Buildings,
55 Lambton Quay
Ends: 113 Taranaki St

Join Photographer Andy Spain and Architect Tina Williams for a walking tour through the streets of Wellington exploring the inspirations and histories of the buildings which feature in the GHOST FORESTS exhibition.

WEEK 2

**MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 28**

**CITY TALKS: 'LIVING WITH'
EXHIBITION LAUNCH**

6:00pm,
VUW School of Architecture

Join us for the official Wellington launch of the international exhibition 'Living With' accompanied by a City Talks presentation by Architect Brendan MacFarlane of Paris based architectural practice Jacob+MacFarlane. Brendan will discuss the firm's most recent work and the evolution of the "Living With" exhibition.

**TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 29**

**MELTING MOMENTS: ENERGY,
POLICY & BUILDING**

6:00pm,
VUW School of Architecture

Energy is often discussed in terms of technology and efficiency, but the deeper questions are about how much is enough, how our buildings support wellbeing, and how communities can thrive within environmental limits. Bringing together voices from across the energy, policy and building sectors, this facilitated discussion will examine the challenges, opportunities and emerging signals shaping Aotearoa's energy future.

**WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 30**

SIP 'n' SKETCH

7:30am-8:30am,
Sketchbook Coffee

Come along for a second café sketch session, where good coffee meets creativity. Be inspired with Jan Smitheram (VUW) of places and people that uplifts you and enter the competition!

**THE ARCHITECTURE CENTRES
BIG QUIZ**

6:30pm, 7pm Quiz Start
Garage Project, Leeds Street

The Architectural Centre weekly online quiz is going live for 1 night only! Join us and fellow competitors for a journey, via trivia, through architectural theory and built form. Curious prizes!

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 1**

LIVING WITH NATURAL HAZARDS

1:00pm,
VUW School of Architecture

Join the Natural Hazards Commission for an informative lunchtime talk on the Action Plans that guide our resilient building programmes. Including an overview of current and future projects, and discuss their alignment with industry needs, and where there may be opportunities to collaborate with architects

September 21
- October 4

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 1**

**CITIES, PEOPLE, ARCHITECTURE
MOVIE SERIES**

5:30Pm,
VUW School of Architecture

Green Paris Documentary + Kōrero
A community driven re-wilding movement in which the residents, architects and socialists transform abandoned city infrastructure. Followed by conversation and Q+A with local experts, framing the discussions of the film within the local context.

**FRIDAY
OCTOBER 2**

LIVING WITH WATER

1:00pm,
VUW School of Architecture

Stu Farrant of Morpium Environmental unpacks how our past relationship with freshwater in an urban context has resulted in so many unintended consequences, and how this awareness should inform a future where we can truly 'Live with' water again.

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 3**

**FESTIVAL FINALE
MUSIC & THE CITY**

1:00pm-1:00am,
Cuba Street Tavern

A collaboration between &theCity, RadioActive and Cuba St Tavern exploring the spaces where music happens, what makes them special, and how architects, landscape architects and experiential designers can help shape the future of music and the city

1:00-4pm: Late Late Breakfast
Show Live from CST

4:00-4:30pm: Music & The City
Panel Talk

4:30-5:00pm: Music & The City
Audience Q&A

5:00pm: RadioActive DJ Sets

1:00am: Event Closes

**SUNDAY
OCTOBER 4**

**A CHANGE IS COMING: A Walking
Tour**

1:00pm,
Start: Jack Ilott Green
Ends: Parliament Grounds

2026 marks the 40th anniversary of the passing, in 1986, of the Homosexual Law Reform Act. Join Walk Tours NZ for this special 90-minute walking tour celebrating the people and movements that fought for a brighter future for rainbow communities while exploring the buildings, streets and public spaces where that history unfolded.

UPLIFT

Aotearoa Festival
of Architecture 2026

Aotearoa Festival of Architecture Wellington celebrates the joyful, energetic spirit of the city, with a nod to our famously windy climate. Uplift is about bringing people together, embracing Wellington's creative energy, and contributing positively to the life of the city through architecture, design and community.

& MORE

**SEPTEMBER 21
- OCTOBER 4**

**TE MATAPIHI "LOST
ARCHITECTURE"**

Level 2, Local History's Collection,
Te Matapihi ki te Ao Nu

Explore Pōneke's architectural past, present and possible futures through a special display of books and archival material at Te Matapihi. Featuring Wellington City Archives' photographs and stories of lost and almost-lost architecture and landscapes, alongside buildings that were proposed but never realised, the city's architectural "what ifs."

**SEPTEMBER 28
- OCTOBER 18**

'LIVING WITH' EXHIBITION
VUW School of Architecture

THE EXHIBITION CONTINUES!
From the Venice Biennale, on its journey around the world, Jacob+MacFarlane's 'Living With' exhibition comes to Wellington on a range of architectural and urban projects which press the most important questions of our age; How do we live with the many facets of the Climate Crisis?

ENCORE

**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 9**

LIVING WITH OUR AWA

1:00pm,
VUW School of Architecture

Join the Kumutoto Restoration team for a lunchtime discussion on how this grassroots project is building a community committed to a better future for this urban taonga

**TUESDAY
OCTOBER 13**

LIVING WITH MANU

1:00pm,
VUW School of Architecture

Capital Kiwi was one of the Capitals most audacious plans now it has captured the hearts and minds of the world with its phenomenal success. How did this seemingly impossible plan get started and what does the future look like for re-wilding the capital

**TUESDAY
OCTOBER 15**

**CITIES, PEOPLE, ARCHITECTURE
MOVIE SERIES**

5:30pm,
VUW School of Architecture

The Legacy of the Olympics Documentary + Kōrero
A film examining how a global event reshapes territories and lives, looking at the economic, social, environmental, and cultural effects. Followed by conversation and Q+A with local experts, framing the discussions of the film within the local context.