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The Southland Times Unwind

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Why Matariki matters

The fire safety officers are waiting in the wings with their extinguishers . . .
Nicola Kean reports.



WHAT happened? I can tell you what happened," Rima Te Wiata roars when asked about the state of New Zealand comedy.
"People lost their sense of humour."
It is a point of contention for the actress, director and writer known formerly for her work in sketch comedy TV, and latterly for theatrical roles too numerous to mention.

"The people who were getting impersonated, politicians and celebrities, started to complain and say that they'd take you to court if you keep doing that. So everything changed."

Changed to the point where there is something of a cringe factor towards New Zealand comedy, and to New Zealand-made television in general, she says.

"It's much safer to see another culture have these murders and hit and runs and God knows what happening on television. But when it happens in your own society you think, hang on, I actually don't like this very much. Nobody likes it, but it's happening out on the street."

As with comedy, her approach to directing theatre takes no prisoners — so Invercargill theatre fans are in for something memorable with her latest show opening tonight. Along with friend and fellow actor Kristian Lavercombe, Te Wiata has been camping out in Invercargill's suburbs for the past month preparing for this weekend's *Matariki*, or the Maori new year show.

Written, cast, directed by the two, the show promises to be visually and culturally challenging, bringing the importance of *Matariki* alive with kapa haka, fire, UV lighting and talking kumara.

"It is a bit Alice-in-Wonderland. But not in the child way, in a far more symbolic way."

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It's a wrap:
Directors Rima Te Wiata (left) and Kristian Lavercombe for the *Matariki* show to be held at Civic Theatre this month, with some of the props they are busy making.
125505 ROBYN EDIE

Battling with bureaucracy

MATE
MARK WILSON



WITH Housing New Zealand recently hitting the headlines for lavish taxpayer-funded retreats, National banging away at the doors of power threatening to clear the decks of bureaucratic waste and the ordinary Kiwi battling for nine years to get the equivalent of a block of cheese back in their pocket, it seems a topical time to share a few personal experiences of where our valuable tax dollars go.

My pet hate — acquiring \$80 speeding tickets and thinking wouldn't it be far more beneficial to the nation if police, instead of being directed to chase mainly innocent otherwise law-abiding motorists who may potentially cause harm to others, have their energies directed at thousands of unsolved burglaries and attend to gang-related crime that actually has already affected people?

Topping that recently, however, is a little saga I had with ACC. I hurt my ankle running in late 2004, did the physio and doctor thing at the time and ACC covered it as an accident-related injury. By 2007 things were far worse and it was decided I would need surgery to correct the problem. My surgeon applied for funding and lo-and-behold ACC decided it was no longer an accident and that my problems actually stemmed from before 2004 and, despite my age at the time (24), was due to wear and tear.

Baffled by this lunacy, I appealed and was rejected again and referred to a hearings process. After eight months and more frustration I got my operation funded via health insurance.

My surgeon (with 30 years' experience) found clear physical evidence that the injury was accident-related and wrote to ACC informing them of this. ACC responded with a further letter by their highly qualified Cap advisory team led by a GP at student health in Dunedin who had never performed ankle surgery, saying that they would not reconsider, as despite the fact none of them had ever seen my ankle they still believed they were correct and it was wear-and-tear.

I'm not one to take things lying down so I prepared possibly a little excessively, for the hearing, and obtained a plethora of according to ACC non-existent medical research supporting my claim. Then like a scarfie at exam time, I spent many a late night moulding this with a passion into a 24,000-word 50-page submission. I attended my hearing, spoke for one hour and 45 minutes with one pause for water and, like the Stags retaining their place in first division, sense prevailed and the review panel correctly ruled in my favour. The ironic part, I got nothing but costs for attending. The insurance company which had no part in the appeal got the money and ACC spent as much fighting the case as it would have cost them to pay out in the first place. Great use of taxpayer money.

Maybe cut this sort of rubbish out and give us two blocks of cheese next time

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