Wednesday 4 November 2026

IMPORTANT UPDATE

Regarding the Costumiers' Fantasy Masquerade Ball Weekend 2027

This is not a statement we ever imagined we would have to make.

Dear Costumiers' family,

It is with heavy hearts that we need to let you know that the **Costumiers' Fantasy Masquerade Ball Weeken**d, planned for 25-26 June 2027 in Rotorua, will not be going ahead.

We know many of you have already purchased tickets, booked accommodation, arranged flights and travel, started costumes, committed to performances, volunteered your time, or simply spent months looking forward to seeing friends again. We understand how disappointing and upsetting this news will be, and we are truly sorry.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Many of you will understandably be asking how this happened.

The **Costumiers' Fantasy Masquerade Ball** has only ever had one home before this. We do not change venues lightly. Finding a venue for 2027 followed several difficult years dealing with venue-related challenges, changing arrangements, and uncertainty with previous facilities. Those experiences made us extremely cautious as we searched for a new home for the Ball.

The search took many months. We spoke with numerous hotels and conference venues, reviewed options across multiple locations, carried out site visits, and carefully considered what would be needed to create the immersive weekend experience that has become such an important part of this event.

After an extensive search, we selected **Arawa Park Hotel Rotorua**.

When we began discussions with **Arawa Park Hotel Rotorua**, we were not aware that the property was in the process of being sold. We only learned of the proposed ownership change in the weeks before signing the agreement.

Given our previous experiences, we sought information from the hotel regarding the ownership transition and any proposed refurbishment works. We discussed the event requirements in detail, asked about renovation plans and timelines, and sought assurance that the event could proceed as planned.

Before signing, we met with hotel representatives on multiple occasions, carried out site visits, provided detailed event requirements and timelines, explained our accommodation requirements, discussed our theming plans, and outlined the importance of the various event spaces to the overall weekend experience.

The hotel confirmed our event requirements in writing. We discussed the proposed ownership change and refurbishment works with hotel representatives and sought assurance that the event could proceed as planned. Based on the information provided to us at the time, we proceeded with the booking, paid the deposit, opened ticket sales, released accommodation bookings, and commenced preparations for the 2027 event.

We would never have committed the Trust, our volunteers, our vendors, our performers, or our guests to this venue if we believed there was a realistic possibility that it would not be available.

WHAT CHANGED

On **Thursday 29 October 2026**, **Rajesh Dahiya, General Manager of Arawa Park Hotel Rotorua**, advised us that because of refurbishment works planned by the new owners, the hotel would not be able to provide the event spaces required for the **Costumiers' Fantasy Masquerade Ball Weekend** as originally planned.

The hotel further advised that only approximately 45 guest rooms would be available, significantly fewer than the 135-guest room capacity originally arranged and recommended that alternative venue arrangements be explored.

This was the first formal notification we received that the hotel would be unable to provide the event spaces and accommodation arrangements required for the event

Like many of you, we had already invested months of planning, preparation, creative work, and excitement into the 2027 event. Receiving this news was devastating to us.

WHY WE CANNOT MOVE THE EVENT ELSEWHERE

We know many people will immediately ask whether the event can simply be moved to another venue.
We have looked carefully at every realistic option available to us.

The **Costumiers' Fantasy Masquerade Ball Weekend** is not simply a ball held in a ballroom. It is a large, immersive weekend experience built around accommodation, event spaces, vendors, performers, volunteers, logistics, venue-specific theming, and months of planning.

Before selecting **Arawa Park Hotel Rotorua**, we investigated more than 25 venues.

With just over seven months remaining, there is simply not enough time to secure an appropriate replacement venue, redesign venue-specific elements, rebuild operational planning, renegotiate arrangements, communicate those changes, and deliver the experience that our community deserves.

The Trust's administration is carried out by volunteers alongside their full-time work and personal commitments, and we do not have the capacity to rebuild an event of this scale from the ground up within the remaining timeframe.

After careful consideration, we have concluded that there is no viable path forward for the 2027 event.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW

Following the hotel's notification that it would be unable to provide the facilities required for the event, we have cancelled our agreement for the 2027 event

We are currently working through a number of matters arising from the cancellation, including:

- Return of the venue deposit;
- Guest accommodation bookings;
- Refunds to ticket holders;
- Costs incurred in preparation for the event

At the time of writing, we have not yet received a substantive response regarding a number of these matters, and discussions remain ongoing.

In the interests of transparency, we have attached the hotel's email of 29 October 2026, which explains the hotel's position regarding the refurbishment works and event facilities

TICKETS AND PAYMENTS

Tickets purchased through TryBooking

All event tickets purchased through TryBooking will be refunded in full.
Refunds cannot be processed until the hotel returns our venue deposit and those funds have cleared through the relevant banking systems. Once this occurs, refunds will be processed automatically through TryBooking and returned to the original payment method.
We will update all ticket holders as soon as we can confirm the timing.

Payment plans

If you have been making payments directly to us under a payment plan, we have already started processing your refund. **All amounts paid, including administration fees, will be refunded in full** within the next five working days and returned to the account from which the payments were received.
To help us complete this process, please cancel any automatic payments you have set up for the event.

ACCOMMODATION BOOKINGS

The hotel has advised that it will contact all guests who booked accommodation and arrange cancellation of rooms and **refund in full any monies paid.**
Please retain all booking confirmations and related correspondence.

FLIGHTS AND OTHER TRAVEL COSTS

We know many of you have already booked flights and made other travel arrangements to attend the event. We understand this may be one of the most upsetting aspects of this situation.

Accommodation and travel arrangements were made directly between guests and their chosen providers.
We are therefore unable to provide advice regarding individual entitlements, refunds or claims.

However, given the circumstances that have led to the cancellation of the event, we have asked the hotel to consider the impact on guests who have incurred non-refundable travel costs.
At this stage, we have received no indication as to whether any assistance will be offered.

For now, we strongly encourage everyone to:

- Keep all receipts, invoices and booking confirmations;
- Contact airlines, accommodation providers and travel operators regarding available refunds or credits; and
- Check whether any travel insurance policies may provide cover.

We will provide an update if any further information becomes available.

TO OUR VENDORS, PERFORMERS AND CREW

There are not enough words to properly thank you.

For six years you have poured your creativity, talent, energy, and countless volunteer hours into making this event what it became. Every performance, every stall, every prop, every set piece, every workshop, every backstage task, and every late-night problem solved helped create something magical.

- You helped build worlds.
- You helped create friendships.
- You helped create memories that people will carry with them for the rest of their lives.
- Thank you.

We could never have done it without you.

THE FUTURE OF COSTUMIERS' NZ

With great sadness, we also need to share that this marks the end of the Costumiers' New Zealand Charitable Trust.
This decision has not been made lightly.

For six years, **Costumiers' NZ** has been far more than an event. It has been a community of creative, passionate, and generous people who helped bring extraordinary worlds to life. Every event existed because hundreds of people gave their time, talents, energy, and support simply because they loved being part of something special.

The challenges of running events of this scale have grown significantly over recent years. Repeated venue issues, changing arrangements, increasing costs and ongoing uncertainty have required us to carefully consider the future of the organisation.

The cumulative challenges of recent years, together with the cancellation of the 2027 event, have ultimately led us to conclude that there is no longer a sustainable path forward for the Trust.

This is not the ending we hoped for.

We had hoped to gather together once more in 2027 to celebrate everything this community has achieved and the friendships, memories and creativity that grew from it. Instead, circumstances have brought that chapter to an earlier close than any of us expected.

Over the coming months, the Trust will begin winding up its affairs. Much of our props, theming, décor and event infrastructure will be sold through public auction, and we will share details once plans have been finalised.

THANK YOU

More than anything, we want to thank you.

What started as an idea became a community.

- Together we created beautiful costumes, breathtaking themed spaces, unforgettable weekends, lifelong friendships, and moments of genuine magic.
- We celebrated together, fundraised together, created together, and supported one another through difficult times.
- Nothing that has happened changes those memories.
- Nothing can take away what we built together.

Please continue supporting local artists, performers, makers, volunteers, community groups, and creative events wherever you can. Communities like ours exist only because people choose to give their time, passion, and support.

THANK YOU FOR BELIEVING IN US.

Thank you for helping make the **Costumiers' Fantasy Masquerade Ball Weekend** something truly special.

And thank you for six extraordinary years.

With all our love,

Rozanne & Paul de Wild
Costumiers' New Zealand Charitable Trust

Attachment: Schedule D - item 23 - Email - 2026 10 29 - Raj.pdf