

**23 August, 2019 - 07:00**

### **Tautai Pacific Arts Trust**

Accomplished Pacific poet, editor, art critic and journalist David Eggleton has been awarded the New Zealand Poet Laureate 2019 - 2021.

David Eggleton is of Rotuman, Tongan and Palagi descent. He grew up in Fiji and South Auckland, and now lives in Dunedin.

The National Library has announced his two-year term as poet laureate starts today, which is National Poetry Day.

### **Fuseworks Media**

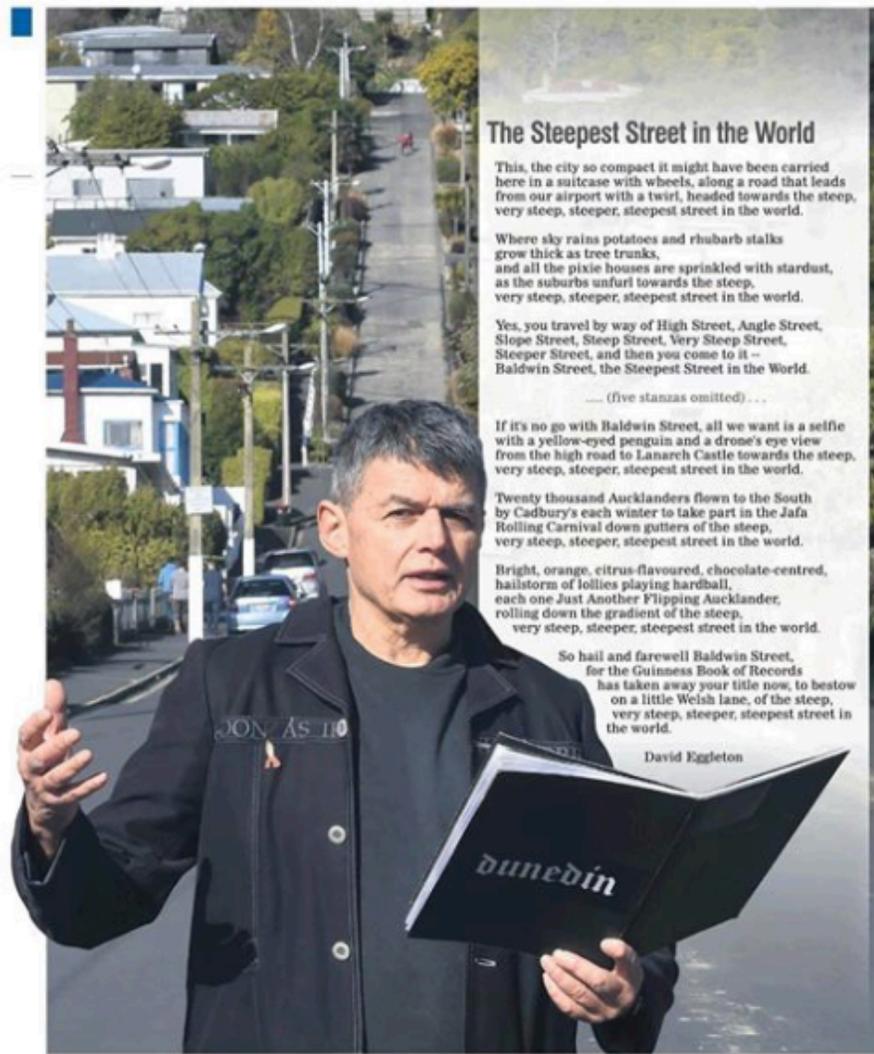
The National Library of New Zealand is delighted to announce that David Eggleton of Dunedin is the New Zealand Poet Laureate for 2019 - 2021.

Chris Szekely, Chief Librarian of the Alexander Turnbull Library describes David's appointment as further recognition for "a poet of consequence whose work continues to develop and mature. David is a significant and widely-respected voice in New Zealand poetry whose work is representative of life in Aotearoa in all its breadth and diversity."

Former New Zealand Poet Laureate Cilla McQueen says David's poetry is "informed with indigenous understanding and discerns the post-colonial legacy with a satirist's sharp eye for humour and incongruity."

Says David Eggleton on receiving news of his appointment as Poet Laureate, "I am humbled, honoured and delighted to have been chosen as the new Poet Laureate. I look forward to helping promote and celebrate the importance and need for all kinds of poetry in Aotearoa New Zealand."

From its beginnings as the Te Mata Estate Laureate Award in 1996 through to 2007 the Laureates were Bill Manhire, Hone Tuwhare, Elizabeth Smither, Brian Turner and Jenny Bornholdt. Since 2007, when the National Library took over the appointment of the Poet Laureate, the Laureates have been Michele Leggott, Cilla McQueen, Ian Wedde, Vincent O'Sullivan, CK Stead and Selina Tusitala Marsh. The value of the New Zealand Poet Laureate Award is \$100,000 over the two-year period. The Laureate receives \$80,000, with the balance held by the National Library to cover the cost of the Laureate's tokotoko, and to support their travel and participation in literary events.



## The Steepest Street in the World

This, the city so compact it might have been carried here in a suitcase with wheels, along a road that leads from our airport with a twirl, headed towards the steep, very steep, steeper, steepest street in the world.

Where sky rains potatoes and rhubarb stalks grow thick as tree trunks, and all the pixie houses are sprinkled with stardust, as the suburbs unfurl towards the steep, very steep, steeper, steepest street in the world.

Yes, you travel by way of High Street, Angle Street, Slope Street, Steep Street, Very Steep Street, Steeper Street, and then you come to it -- Baldwin Street, the Steepest Street in the World.

— (five stanzas omitted) . . .

If it's no go with Baldwin Street, all we want is a selfie with a yellow-eyed penguin and a drone's eye view from the high road to Lanarck Castle towards the steep, very steep, steeper, steepest street in the world.

Twenty thousand Aucklanders flown to the South by Cadbury's each winter to take part in the Jafa Rolling Carnival down gutters of the steep, very steep, steeper, steepest street in the world.

Bright, orange, citrus-flavoured, chocolate-centred, hailstorm of lollies playing hardball, each one Just Another Flipping Aucklander, rolling down the gradient of the steep, very steep, steeper, steepest street in the world.

So hail and farewell Baldwin Street, for the Guinness Book of Records has taken away your title now, to bestow on a little Welsh lane, of the steep, very steep, steeper, steepest street in the world.

David Eggleton

**New Zealand Poet Laureate David Eggleton reads part of his poem *The Steepest Street in the World* at Dunedin's Baldwin St yesterday. PHOTO: PETER MCINTOSH**

The National Library are pleased to mark Phantom Billstickers Poetry Day with this announcement. The New Zealand Poet Laureate is administered by the National Library of New Zealand, which is part of Te Tari Taiwhenua, Internal Affairs.