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**COVER:** Alena Saili  
**PHOTO BY:** Andrei Robertson of Andrei James Photography  
**PHOTOSHOOT LOCATION:** Rugby Park Stadium, Invercargill  
**MAKEUP:** Indulge Beauty Therapy  
**HAIR STYLING:** Bronze Connection

## NAKED

**NAKED CREATIVE LTD**  
**THE LOCALS PUBLISHING**  
**INFO@NAKEDCREATIVE.NZ**  
**WWW.NAKEDCREATIVE.NZ**  
ISSN 1172-5508

The Life is published annually by Naked Creative, Level 4, 5 The Crescent, PO Box 1637, Invercargill, New Zealand. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. The Life is subject to copyright in its entirety, copyright 2021. The opinions expressed in The Life are not necessarily those of Naked Creative, its staff or contributors and no liability is accepted. The content in The Life is believed to be true and correct at the time of publication in 2021.

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## From the editor...

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Here we are – edition 9! Every year it seems to creep up on me more quickly than the last.

For this edition's theme we are celebrating our masters of craft. Those who have expertly honed their speciality and given so much to others throughout their careers. Our cover story is that of star rugby player Alena Saili and her phenomenal rugby sevens career – an Olympic gold just five years after finishing high school (page 10)! We also speak with poet Cilla McQueen (page 31) and sculptor Johnny Penisula (page 36) about their love for their respective artforms, and where they find inspiration.

Take a look at the beautiful spaces and buildings the south has been working on with our architecture series (page 55), the 10-year journey to bring The Church 1914 to life (page 48) and creating a space for Rakiura/Stewart Island's taonga (page 67). Discover all the wonderful treasures of Southland and Otago with the Great Southern Road Trip (page 107), our top picks for wineries (page 72), secret waterfalls (page 94), and so much more.

As I have sat down and spoken with people and listened to their stories, what has struck me is the incredible kindness I've seen in everyone. Meeting people for *The Life* is always a pleasure, but for this edition the generosity seems to have compounded tenfold. The cups of coffee and encouraging words are always welcome.

Pandemic life continues, but I find myself in awe of everyone's resilience to soldier on, even in the face of uncertainty. To the Naked Creative team who give so much of themselves to this project: thank you. Your mahi is appreciated.

We hope you enjoy this inspiring edition of *The Life*.

*Briar Babington*

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