



Take the kids
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Rare Lego pieces help Wiremu Hopkins ensure an uncanny likeness between his creations and their real-life inspirations.

Ordered from Bricklink, a kind of Trade Me for Lego where thousands of highly-sought after individual plastic bricks are traded between fanatics around the world, Hopkins nabbed a stash of pale pink interlocking bricks for his latest build.

"I didn't have many pink parts so I had to buy a load of them to make Lady Penelope's car with," the Christchurch teenager said.

The finished six-wheeled car, best known for its role in the science-fiction



Wiremu, 15, and Alexander Hopkins, 13, build a giant Thunderbirds-themed Lego city to show at the Christchurch Brick Show.
JOHN KIRKANDERSON/STUFF

television series *Thunderbirds*, was built as part of a *Thunderbirds*-themed city that will be displayed at the Christchurch Brick Show at Horncastle Arena from tomorrow.

The show, which launched in 2012, will include builds from 250 exhibitors with profits to be donated to The Imagination

Station, in Turanga library, which allows children and adults to play in vast Lego and Duplo pits for free and offers workshops in Lego robotics.

Other highlights in the exhibition include a mechanical fairground with a motorised pirate ship, built by local engineer Harry Davis, and a UFO alien

crash scene built by Lego guru Centuri Chan.

Showing for the fourth time, Hopkins, 15, said sharing his work with the public always inspired him to go "bigger and better" with the next design.

The projects usually took "months and months" to complete, but the final push in the last few days was always frantic, he said. The *Thunderbirds* city design was inspired by a trip to Wellington's Weta workshops to see the miniatures and shooting stage.

"We wanted people to be able to do more than just look at it so we added all sorts of moving parts. The crane spins, the train moves and there's a monorail."

The tension on reality television show *Lego Masters* was a "pretty realistic" depiction of undertaking a major building project, Hopkins said.

Big numbers to Lego charity puts pressure on resources

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Imagination Station Tina Law

A massive increase in visitors to a popular Christchurch Lego charity is putting pressure on its resources as public donations drop.

The Imagination Station, which allows children and adults to play in vast Lego and Duplo pits for free and offers workshops in Lego robotics, moved into Christchurch's new \$92 million library Turanga when the building opened in October last year.

Since then the number of visitors to the station has increased 140 per cent, but donations have dropped by 150 per cent.

Imagination Station managing

director Sam Butcher said based on the numbers for the first six months, he expected to see 120,000 visitors in the first year, up from about 50,000 when the station was operating from a space in Cathedral Junction.

While it was great to see so many people now using the Imagination Station, it meant the station has had to increase the hours of its paid staff and boost volunteer numbers from about 35 to 70, he said. It has done all this while donations from the public have dropped from \$20,000 annually to about \$5000.

"We don't pay volunteers but we still have a number of costs associated with that. We provide them T-shirts and name badges." Butcher said people believed

the Imagination Station was now part of the city council because of its location and he could see how people would come to that conclusion. However, the station was still a separate entity and was responsible for all costs related to the initiative.

The station was working on ways to change people's perception and increase donations. About \$200,000 was needed annually to operate the venture. It relied on money from funding



Lewis Syddall, 2, at the Imagination Station at Turanga library. JOHN KIRKANDERSON/STUFF

agencies and local businesses to keep running. "Some of our funders have decided not to continue funding Imagination Station now that we are working alongside the city council, which has been a real shame."

It did not have to pay a rental for the first floor percentage of the revenue it gained from all its education classes, which was one of its main revenue streams. The percentage

it paid to the council was about the same as what it had paid in rent for the Cathedral Junction building, because that was heavily subsidised, Butcher said.

About 55 per cent of its visitors go to Turanga especially for the Imagination Station and 80 per cent use library services while there. Some 61 per cent said they planned to explore the city while in town. "That's almost 80,000 extra visitors in the central city each year."

Christchurch city councillors decided last week to donate \$40,000 worth of their directors' fees to the Imagination Station. The Christchurch Brick Show at Horncastle Arena on July 13 and 14 would also raise money for the Imagination Station.

Community Board Meeting - Motueka. 16.07.19.

To: Mr Chairman & Members of the Community Board.

1 A suggestion for our new "Motueka library" if it is possible could we provide funding from our "Special Projects Fund" to include lego and Duplo pits for both adults and children in our community and visitors. I personally have found this an excellent product to develop a constructive attitude in a developing child.

2 I have had a request from one of our Westpac Bank Tellers to please see if it is possible for a "wheelchair or "invalid" zoned car park positioned on the road-side outside either Medlab or the Westpac Bank. As High St is a state hi-way I realized NZTA could be involved.

3 A new resident in Memorial Drive has asked me if there is a possibility of a playground to be provided for young families who are taking up residency in this lovely area. What is my correct procedure to follow this request up?

Thankyou Mr Chairman.

MCB 19-7-16

Tabled Document