

# Top pic rocks in the rain

An image of Foo Fighter David Grohl has won Image Auckland's 2022 Music Photography Award – Whakaahua Puoro Toa.

The image, by photographer Dave Watson, was taken during the Fighters' 2018 concert at Mt Smart Stadium.

Judge Dave Simpson said: "This winner really does capture the moment beautifully despite the tricky rain. There's a confidence and lightness in the image which matches the stance of the musician who has plenty of room to breathe in the picture."

"The lighting and technical handling are perfect despite the rain. All the images Dave Watson's submitted are exquisitely presented, and he's a master of his craft."

Watson wins \$1500 and says he's delighted. The photo, he said, "signifies the pre pandemic years where New Zealand was a main touring country".

Second prize went to Shelley Te Haara, for her photograph of Julia Deans, performing at the first Songbirds in Suburbia.

Te Haara wins \$750.



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# Family laments search efforts

Ben Leahy

**A**s sibling of three Wai-kato children missing for the past five months says she worries police and other authorities are not taking the disappearance seriously.

Father Tom Phillips is suspected of taking the children – Jayda, 8, Maverick, 7, and Ember, 6, – into remote bushland near coastal town Marokopa in early December.

He has only reportedly been seen once since then. The children have not been seen.

Their older half-sister said her worried family members feel the police have spent months dragging their feet without taking serious steps to find the children.

Police insisted they were taking the disappearance "very seriously".

Their latest appeal for public help to find Phillips said officers had "growing concern" for the children's welfare.

But the children's adult sister questions "why is there growing concern now and not right at the beginning" when they went missing.

"It's been five months, it's ridiculous," she said.

The disappearance was the second within months in which Phillips had disap-



Tom Phillips and his children Jayda, Ember and Maverick.

peared "off the grid" with his children.

Police launched a major search for him and his children in September last year when his ute was found on Kiritihere Beach, sparking fears the family could have been washed out to sea.

Emergency service teams and members of the local community and iwi spent 17 days looking for Phillips before he and his children turned up at his parents' home on September 28.

They had been staying in a tent in dense bush, his family said.

Police charged him with wasting police resources.

However, Phillips then went "off the grid" again in early December.

The young children's mother and older adult half-sisters posted on Facebook soon after calling for help finding the children, saying they wanted "these poor babies back".

Phillips later missed his January court appearance

where he was due to face the charge of wasting police resources.

Police subsequently issued a warrant for his arrest for failing to show.

Police this week stepped up efforts to find him by appealing on TV show *Ten 7 Aotearoa* on Thursday for public help tracking him down.

But the children's oldest sister said the family has had to spearhead every new effort to bring attention to the missing children.

She said recent media reports and the police *Ten 7 Aotearoa* TV show seemed to only take place after the family started a petition calling on police, Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry of Education to do more.

"We have gone from one extreme to another – a high profile search, reported on daily, to a multiple missing person's case that people are unaware of."

She said her family have no idea where the children are or how they are doing.