

The New Zealand Herald

Plush apartments going to (drug) dogs

By [Anne Gibson](#) @Anne Gibson

5:30 AM Saturday Oct 19, 2013

Drug-detecting dogs are running through the hallways, reception areas and carparks of Parnell's The Mirage apartments.

In a crackdown aimed at warning people against bringing drugs on to the premises or trying to use the resort-style twin towers as a methamphetamine lab, the body corporate at The Strand complex backed the moves which building manager Helen Blick described as "popular".

Residents were not offended by the dog raids, she said, pointing to a prominent foyer sign warning of snap surveillance.

"It's more of a deterrent. If people think they're coming to live at The Mirage with drugs, watch out!" warned Mrs Blick, an apartment owner and resident for nine years.

Mirage Matters, the residents' and owners' newsletter, listed the dogs' arrival as one of the key improvements at the 125-unit block, developed 11 years ago.

But apartment owners were also warned they would have no idea when the dogs would arrive because searches would occur randomly.

Janet Williams, managing director of NZ Detector Dogs which has The Mirage contract, said her specially trained dogs came from the SPCA, pounds or animal welfare agencies.

"They're rescued dogs and we train them up. They're ones given a death sentence. We don't publicise what drugs they are looking for but they're illegal drugs," said the former policewoman of 13 years' service.

Mrs Blick said residents knew the surveillance would help achieve high standards and ensure The Mirage maintained a safe, secure and healthy environment as a highly desirable place to live with its tennis pool, multi-level winding lagoon, lap pool, spa and gym.

"Firstly, we do not feel we have a problem in this area," the newsletter said. "We will not enter any apartment. The dogs have an extremely good sense of smell and are easily able to detect the existence of drugs from the hallway."

Miles Stratford of MethSolutions, which rents out P-detection monitoring machines, said many Auckland apartment blocks suffered drug issues. But few cases came to public attention because residents feared bad publicity, resale and reputation damage.



The Mirage in Parnell where rescued dogs trained to detect drugs scan the buildings regularly as a deterrent. Photo / Brett Phibbs

A nose for the job

Auckland apartment drug alerts:

- **This month:** Turkish police discovered 10kg of methamphetamine to be delivered to Quest apartments, Queen St.
- **Last year:** Police investigating drug case bug apartment in Metropolis, the 40-level Courthouse Lane block.
- **2011:** Police find P lab in four-star The Quadrant, Waterloo Quadrant, near the High Court.
- **Now:** Twin-towers The Mirage, 86 and 88 The Strand, calls in Janet Williams' NZ Detector Dogs for random raids.

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