

# The Rangitoto Observer

Takapuna, Milford, Castor Bay, Forrest Hill and Sunnynook

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 4 - 26 April 2019

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

**\$600K for landfill remediation  
at Barry's Pt reserve... p2**

**Rough road ahead for  
Hurstmere shops... p3**

**Ram raids spark security  
concerns ... p9**

## Campground loses Kiwiana caravans

It's the end of an era as classical Kiwiana caravans disappear from the Takapuna Beach Holiday Park.

Locals and visitors expressed sadness and

anger on social media, as the 10 caravans were removed and sold in the week of 2 April to 7 April.

"I'm saddened by the loss of uniqueness

and character that they gave the park and concerned about view obstruction by making way for more powered campervan sites,"

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## Madagascar musical showcases diverse talents



**Madcap zoo creatures... Madagascar the Musical features a cast of Takapuna young people, many of whom have disabilities. Performances will also be inclusive. Photo: Andi Crown. See page 8.**



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From page 1

## End of an era as caravans removed

Andrew Drake, a regular at the holiday park, says.

"It's just lost the 'Kiwi' in it now. There's not much that separates it from the other campsites."

A woman who formerly cleaned the caravans was sad to see them go, as they reflected an egalitarian spirit.

"It is sad not many people own a caravan and having those there to stay in while on holiday was convenient. They need to put more in. Those ones were run down," Angela Mihi Huntley says.

Jill Schroder, who lives near the campground, has enjoyed meeting people from all over the world there, as well as people from other parts of Auckland who may not be able to afford a campervan, but could stay in the caravans and enjoy Takapuna Beach.

"People have come for years and years who will no longer have that choice, and can't afford to buy a campervan. As a society, we can't forget there are people different from ourselves. I hope whoever gets the lease takes that into account. They need different sites for different groups in our community," Schroder says.

Other locals commented "not the same any more", "it looks bare" and "there goes a bunch of memories".

The holiday park said it removed the old caravans to let the grass re-grow and to make space for new powered sites.

"We have no plans at this stage to bring caravans back onsite, but people can bring their own campervans and use powered



**On the move... the long-established caravans at Takapuna Beach Holiday Park**

sites," a campground office worker said.

The organiser of a group set up to save the campground when the council had previously planned to lease it to a high-performance sailing group was philosophical.

"It's a little bit sad in some respect, but I can see the point behind it. They were a bit old and decrepit," Gavin Sheehan says.

The Takapuna Beach Holiday Park, which is still waiting on Panuku Development to assign a new leaseholder, is currently being leased on a month-to-month basis.

Sheehan is frustrated by what he describes as "a wall of silence" from Panuku.

"Everything they have reported back to us

has been very generic," he says.

It will be up to the new leaseholder whether they decide to bring in new caravans or leave the spaces as empty powered sites.

However, Sheehan insists that his group has fought for the park to remain family-friendly and affordable.

Panuku Development Auckland says it is continuing to progress negotiations for the Takapuna Beach Holiday Park lease.

A new preferred supplier has been identified and, subject to being approved by the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board, will be announced to the community around the middle of this year, the statement says.

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**NEXT ISSUE:** May 10  
**ADVERTISING DEADLINE:** May 3

## Remedial works in motion for Barry Point landfill

More than \$600,000 in remedial works are being carried out on the old landfill in Barry's Point Reserve in the first half of 2019.

"The current budget for remedial works at Barry's Point Reserve is \$620,000. Early earthworks to improve the cover over the refuse began in early 2019. The first stage of work is expected to be completed in the next few months," Branko Veljanovski, Auckland Council's head of engineering design and asset management, said.

Concerns over old landfills have increased recently after an old rubbish tip at Franz Josef was washed away in a flood, sweeping plastic

and other refuse along the West Coast.

Veljanovski said landfill waste may continue to consolidate long after landfills have ceased operation, which leads to 'differential settlement' at the surface.

The remedial works at Barry's Point include filling areas which have settled, increasing the depth of soil cover over the waste, and improving stormwater drainage.

Further investigation is needed before work can be carried out on the stormwater system in the northern area of the reserve. Upgrades to the leachate system pump station are planned for mid-2019, he said.



# Hard road ahead for Hurstmere businesses



**Retrospace owner Rochelle Scoones is 'sceptically positive' about the upcoming year-long road works, saying Takapuna needs the development, but it will be challenging for retailers.**

It's going to be a rough road ahead, Takapuna shop-owners agree, as the council moves to start a major upgrade of Hurstmere Rd.

One long-time business owner, John Innes of Innes Jewellers, has been through it before and knows some businesses will go under.

"It was extremely hard and we expect it to be hard again. There's no doubt a number of businesses will not survive," Innes says.

He is optimistic for his own business, which, after 35 years in the vicinity, has a customer base of thousands.

Newer businesses may not be so lucky.

While all business owners the *Observer* spoke to are in favour of the upgrade, which includes repairing the carriageway, and updating stormwater, sewers and lighting, they have concerns about losing the majority of short-term parking.

"People want to be able to drop in and do their shopping, so taking car parks away will mean customers won't want to come to the area," Innes says.

While Auckland Council says the new 'gasometer' car park in Huron St and the nearby Bruce Mason car parks will compensate, Innes reckons his customers do not agree, and neither does he.

Retrospace owner Rochelle Scoones describes herself as "sceptically positive".

While Scoones supports Panuku's vision for the area, she shares concerns about the loss of car parks and believes the likely year-long works will be hard for businesses.

However, Scoones believes the current angle parking, which will be replaced with

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**"We businesses suffer and some may leave, which is rude, because we make the community"**

Life for Men owner Scott Donovan

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fewer parallel car parks, is unsafe.

There is always a long queue of traffic waiting for a green light and what Scoones sees, on a daily basis, is people forgetting to look behind, before they pull out.

"I must have seen 20 crashes in 10 years [with drivers] going into the stationary traffic," she says.

The Takapuna Beach Business Association has undertaken a survey of business needs, Scoones says, adding that's helpful.

Overall, the new town square and development will be positive, so businesses just need to be clever, she says.

One thing that would help would be more

communication from Auckland Council and contractors.

Over the road, the owner of Life for Men, Scott Donovan, couldn't agree more. Better communication from Auckland Council and more certainty about timing are top of Donovan's wish list.

His clothing store has already taken a hit, as the timing of the project has changed.

Donovan has to order stock a year to 18 months ahead and 'moving goal posts' have meant he had already planned around the road works, which then didn't go ahead as planned. Suppliers aren't flexible, he says.

"For us it is disruptive. It's already had an impact on summer and winter and probably next summer and next year too."

Businesses can lose 25 to 30 per cent of their income during road works and Donovan believes the council should offer monetary help, such as a rates reduction.

"We businesses suffer and some may leave, which is rude because we make the community."

Donovan is already talking to customers and urging locals to shop in Hurstmere Rd during the works.

"I'm all for the change, but let's hope it's not sacrificing good people," he says.

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# Businesses sure to suffer during roadworks

## From page 3

The council is not considering monetary compensation, as, technically, it is making essential repairs to the road, Auckland Council general manager development programme John Dunshea says.

Neither is the council able to provide a schedule for the work.

"We aren't able to provide detail just yet on things like phasing and construction days/times, as this will be determined when contractors are on board," Dunshea says.

"But their plans for disruption mitigation, including hours of operation, traffic management and so on, are part of the negotiation process with them.

"Making sure the street and businesses remain accessible throughout construction is a priority."

The council will work with individual businesses on how best to manage disruption for them, as well as working with the business association and the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board, Dunshea says.

Meanwhile, one Takapuna business owner has already left, because he saw the writing on the wall.

After 58 years in Takapuna, Mike Sheehy closed his store, Home Fabrics, last year, consolidating in Mairangi Bay, a move prompted by both the roadworks and the closure of nearby Anzac St car park.

"It's going to be a lot of hard work for people working there. Unfortunately, these things have to be done. You can't have an area, without roadworks," Sheehy says.

The council could help businesses by providing a detailed schedule of works now, Sheehy, who is also a local board member, says.

"If the plan said a section of road would be taken up by works for four weeks, the business association could know to have a promotion immediately afterwards."

The council says it can't confirm a timeline until the contractors come on board, but Sheehy says it could tell the contractors to follow a schedule.

"They tend to focus on what is good for AT not what's good for the business community."

Sheehy thinks it would also help if the work was staged, so one section was completed before the next one started, and if contractors had to work at night and weekends to get the work done as quickly as possible.

The Takapuna Beach Business Association wants the work done as quickly as possible.

The association's chief executive Terence Harper is lobbying the council to ensure all tenders consider how best to limit the impact of the road and utility works on businesses.

"We want to see how they [contractors] will keep the place attractive during construction, for example, not having huge



**More communication and certainty is top of Scott Donovan's wish list**



**John Innes is opposed to the reduction in car parks along Hurstmere Rd, but otherwise supports the upgrade**

hoardings and not obstructing pedestrian flow," Harpur says,

The association is planning additional marketing to help businesses and urging residents to shop locally.

"If you are thinking about shopping, support these businesses, because that money goes into this community and the benefits go around and around," Harpur says.

It has also asked the local board to assist businesses.

While construction could be a painful time, there will be amazing benefits, Harpur says, with the big one being the stormwater improvement.

The plans include rain gardens, which will filter contaminated water from Hurst-

mere Rd, before it drains down to Takapuna Beach.

The work on the carriageway needed to be done anyway, as it was subsiding, Harpur says.

Parallel parking will replace the current angled parking, something Harper says will make it safer and easier for pedestrians to cross the road, plus there will be space for taxis and Ubers to come and go.

"Making it more attractive for pedestrians is good for businesses," Harpur says.

"People who enjoy an environment spend more time there and spend more money.

"So, it [the Hurstmere Rd upgrade] will be better for businesses and for the community," Harpur says.



## Council plans for pedestrian-friendly road



**An artist's impression of Hurstmere Rd, with rain gardens to filter stormwater, parallel parking, a cycle lane and new seating, planting and improved lighting**

Hurstmere Road is being upgraded to create a more open, modern and lively beachside destination in the heart of Takapuna, Auckland Council says.

North Shore councillor Chris Darby says the new design will reduce vehicle dominance and provide more space for outdoor dining and events.

"It's also an important step in improving

our water quality as the rain gardens along the street will filter out pollutants that presently discharge directly into the sea at Takapuna Beach."

When the works are finished, the development will see a reduction in traffic to one lane north-bound (with south-bound traffic redirected along Anzac St and Lake Rd), and a 30km/hour speed limit.

It will include wider footpaths, a cycle lane, more public seating, better street lighting and new planting, including pohutukawa trees.

At the moment, the council's design team is working on a detailed design, in collaboration with underground utility providers, so all services are upgraded at the same time to minimise future disruption.

## The art of budgeting

One of the big issues we are seeing in the market for home buyers is the affordability gap in house prices vs incomes. Essentially, without foreign buyers and with tighter credit, house prices have begun to soften a little, but domestic incomes are not really increasing at all. There is little anyone can do about the house prices, and often little they can do about their income.

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# Anzac Day wreath-laying – but on the quiet

Local authority Anzac Day wreaths will be laid at Devonport and Takapuna war memorials – but it may take place in the dead of night.

Traditional Anzac Day parades have been cancelled in Devonport and Takapuna (and many other places around Auckland), as Auckland Council and the police felt safety could not be guaranteed across the wide number of memorials.

An independent memorial gathering is planned in Devonport and some informal

wreath-laying was likely in Takapuna as well.

The Devonport-Takapuna local board was in a quandary over what to do with wreaths planned for Devonport and Takapuna.

Member Grant Gillon said the board should not be seen to be part of the independent gatherings, but “a wreath could be discreetly laid... at a time that is appropriate”.

Member Jan O'Connor suggested the night prior to Anzac Day.

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members broadly supported the police and council's stance, but acknowledged the deep disappointment in the communities that people could not attend traditional services near where they lived.

However, members were concerned at the potential numbers which could attend the individual services. Member Mike Cohen said the board should be taking a leadership role in the issue.

Gillon noted no traffic-management plans existed for the independent gatherings: “Mike is right to bring this to our attention.

“Hopefully the day would go without incident.”

Moreover Gillon felt a ‘lack of transparency’ surrounded the police and council decision to consolidate Anzac Day Services, which had led to ‘misunderstandings in the community’.

The board would reiterate to council the cancellation of services in Devonport and Takapuna should be a one-off and they should be held again in 2020.

• A petition was presented to the board calling for the reinstatement of the local Anzac Day services. Organiser Catherine Mason said thousands of people were disappointed they could not attend local parades. The consolidation of services meant 70% of Aucklanders could not attend a local parade.

## Push for discounted preschool swimming lessons at Takapuna Leisure Centre

The Takapuna Leisure Centre should be included in an Auckland-wide push for cheap swimming lessons for preschoolers, says the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

An initiative from Plunket, the YMCA

and Auckland Council for half-price swimming and water-safety lessons for preschoolers, from three months to five years, should include the Takapuna centre, the board decided at its meeting last week.

## Targeted water-quality rates supported

Targeted rates to improve water quality and biodiversity at Milford and Takapuna are supported by the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

The rates would improve water quality and biodiversity at Lake Pupuke and the Wairau

Steam and continue investigative work to improve water quality at Milford and Takapuna beaches. Water quality was not the only issue facing Lake Pupuke: its biodiversity was degraded by pest fish and weeds, the board was told at its meeting last week.

## The Retirement Conundrum

Warren Suttie  
Barry Perrow



Many of the ‘baby boomer’ generation are either retired or working their way towards retirement. They have worked hard to build their ‘nest egg’ and need the accumulated funds to work for them, in order to enjoy their desired retirement lifestyle. Our experience is that making decisions on where to invest these funds can be quite a conundrum in the current investment environment.

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# Swimmers want beach clean-ups fast-tracked



**A group representing sea-swimmers says the council needs to spend more on cleaning up the city's beaches sooner: left to right, Ian Gunthorp, Jo Hammer, Simon Walter and Alton Jamieson.**

Takapuna Beach is being targeted for a council clean-up in the wake of widespread dismay over pollution, but sea swimmers say more could be done.

Over the summer of 2018, Auckland Council's Safeswim declared Takapuna Beach at high risk of contamination one-third of the time, provoking what programme manager Nick Vigar describes as 'an outcry'.

"Everybody regards Takapuna as one of Auckland's iconic beaches and we got the message loud and clear from the public," Vigar says.

Water quality this summer has been much better, but that's mainly due to far less rain than the previous summer, Vigar says.

Between 1 November and 15 April, the north end of the beach has been deemed unsafe for swimming 4 per cent of the time and the south end 5 per cent of the time.

However, that is not yet due to any improvement in beach water quality, though that should start to change.

Dozens of council staff have worked with Watercare officers on a programme of property inspections over the past year.

So far, they have inspected drainage at almost 500 private properties, both homes and businesses, using smoke and dye testing, as well as CCTV cameras to identify issues, including broken drains, blockages and illegal plumbing.

Of 31 issues on private property, so far 20

have been resolved.

The causes of pollution at Takapuna Beach are multiple, Vigar says, but the biggest single problem is ageing pipes, with most of the suburb's waste water and storm-water pipes dating back to the 1940s.

On private properties, the council has to negotiate with property owners to get the work done.

Problems identified include a washing machine plumbed directly into the stormwater system and stormwater plumbed into waste water.

Both of these issues have been rectified, Vigar adds.

Last summer, national ocean swim King of the Bays had to move from Takapuna to Devonport, because of the water quality at Takapuna.

A group representing some ocean swimmers, CleanSwim, has been impressed with the enthusiasm and activity from council's SafeSwim team, in particular their commitment to understand what has been causing the seawater-quality problems at Takapuna Beach, where tests have shown that a variety of pollutants are entering the storm-water network.

"Ratepayers are being told water-quality issues could be fixed in 10 years, rather than 30 years, if the proposed Auckland Council targeted rate is implemented.

"But around 80 per cent of the \$452 million raised by this rate would be used to assist fund-

ing the Western Isthmus storm-water project, leaving a paltry \$9 million a year to upgrade Auckland's 6000km storm-water network.

"Ten years is unacceptable to address a water-quality problem Phil Goff says has been ignored for more than 25 years. It should become high priority now," Alton Jamieson, spokesperson for CleanSwim Auckland, says.

Much of the work on cleaning up Takapuna Beach has focused on businesses, which are often suspects when pollution spills out onto the beach.

Over the summer, a Watercare trade-waste compliance officer visited 55 cafes and restaurants to inspect their grease traps and educate businesses on better waste management.

However, Auckland Council issued zero fines to Takapuna businesses or contractors in the past year for practices contributing to beach pollution, official information shows.

While the local board is unhappy at a lack of prosecutions, Devonport-Takapuna Local Board chair George Wood says it's a fact of life.

"Officers can think, on the balance of probabilities, this was the place, but it's getting an admission or evidence that's difficult."

Wood is pleased the council has been so proactive in work towards cleaning up Takapuna Beach.

Takapuna Beach Business Association has been educating members on waste management, with brochures and an information evening on washing down buildings.

# Inclusive performance takes to the stage

A deaf interpreter will recite the entire script of the children's musical *Madagascar* at an all-inclusive performance of the children's musical at the Rose Centre.

The cast includes 41 children, most of whom live locally. Aged from 6 to 18 years, almost half the cast have a learning difference or disability, including autism, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome and spina bifida.

Based on the 2005 animated movie, the show is being produced by Touch Compass Dance Company.

Director Charlotte Nightingale says audiences should be prepared for the children to steal the show... and their hearts.

The musical will also be fully accessible, including deaf signage by a young interpreter who is deaf herself. The interpreter will be learning the entire script word for word. This is a practice that is unique to New Zealand.

The group will be performing a special relaxed show – with quieter sounds and slower movements – for younger theatre-goers with autism and sensory sensitivities.

One show will be audio-described for those who are blind or have low vision.

Prior to the relaxed show and the audio show there will be a "touch tour" of the props and stage.

• *Madagascar - A Musical Adventure Junior* runs at The Rose Centre from Thursday, 16 May until Sunday, 19 May. Adults \$15, children 8 and under \$8 and senior citizens \$10. Buy tickets online at [iticket.co.nz](http://iticket.co.nz)



**Modelling Madagascar characters are: Melman the Giraffe – Matthew Whittington; Alex the Lion – Anna Stevenson; Gloria the Hippo – Amber Stevenson; King Julien the Lemur – Arika Parker-Wendt. Photograph: Andi Crown**



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## Takapuna needs more CCTV cameras, say locals



### Cameras needed... Street Organics owner Nicky Partridge is still reeling after criminals hit her store

A business owner whose cafe has been broken into twice in the past few months is calling for better security in Takapuna, including CCTV cameras and a greater police presence.

Many in the community are concerned about crime, after several ram raids this year, and widespread thefts from cars and letterbox, as well as burglaries.

"I would like to see the Takapuna business association install more surveillance cameras throughout Takapuna, and Takapuna police station should be manned for more hours," Nicky Partridge, owner of Street Organics, says.

Street Organics hadn't recovered from losing cash in a Boxing Day break-in, before it was hit by a second raid early on Friday, 12 April. This time a glass sliding door, fronting the cafe, was smashed, but nothing taken, Partridge says.

Even covering those costs is a blow for the business, which makes its organic food from scratch.

Takapuna Central Residents Group says members are concerned about widespread crimes this year, including reports of an increase in shoplifting and burglaries at the Mon Desir.

Spokesperson Jill Schroder says more CCTV cameras would help, but other late night problems are emerging.

Byron Ave Neighbourhood Watch coordinator Sandra Allen says this year residents have had valuables stolen from their cars and letterboxes have been vandalised five times.

Other Neighbourhood Watch coordinators are

reporting a similar crime wave in nearby streets.

"The population of Takapuna is growing, with all these apartments and there aren't enough police," Allen says.

Takapuna Beach Business Association is assessing the security situation in Takapuna, chief executive Terence Harpur says.

The association is working with police and businesses to improve security through a number of measures, some environmental. For example, it has helped with new lighting of a problem area next to Burger King and cutting back planting to open the area up.

CCTV cameras are a useful tool, but a holistic approach to safety and security needs to be considered, Harpur says.

Community patrols, private CCTV in busi-

nesses and outside homes, Neighbourhood Watch and trespassing people on private properties can all help.

In the case of ram raids, there have been arrests following each of the incidents in Takapuna in 2019.

So far this year, Michael Hill Jewellers, the Apple i-Store and the Huron St dairy have been ram-raided, as well as Street Organic having its glass door smashed.

Traffic cameras often help police identify offenders in cases of ram raids through capturing images of drivers of the cars, which are almost always stolen. The business association is lobbying council for a traffic camera that recognises licence plates that could instantly identify stolen cars as they come off the motorway.

## Residents and businesses split over longer bar opening hours

The Takapuna Central Residents Group is opposed to a move by several Hurstmere Rd bars to extended their liquor licences to 3am.

Spokesperson Jill Schroder believes extending the bars' hours will increase crime.

She says she has photographs and videos of street fights, vandalism and antisocial behaviour by drunk people in the early hours of the morning.

"Nothing good happens after 1am."

The Takapuna Beach Business Association supports the bars wanting longer licences – the Master and Apprentice, Florrie McGreals and The Elephant Wrestler – to stay open until 3am, saying they have a good record of dealing with intoxicated punters.

"It is important to have a range of entertainment options for the community," Harpur says.



## Thousands hop along to 'I Love Takapuna' Easter Carnival

About 4000 people, young and old, hunted for hidden Easter eggs, enjoyed free face-painting, petted friendly farm animals and took part in fun activities at the 'I Love Takapuna' Easter Carnival on 13 April.

Takapuna was 'absolutely buzzing' with children, parents, grandparents and others who had travelled from all over Auckland to the festive event, according to Takapuna Beach Business Association's Terence Harpur.

Chocolate fountains, where people could dip their own marshmallows or fruit, were especially popular.

There were six food trucks and performers on a stage – musician John E. Clist and Cherry the Clown.

The town centre was decorated with toadstools and flamingos and children could build creations at an 'imagination playground'.

Everybody who completed the Easter egg hunt, using a map, got a free goody bag, says Harpur, who believes many of the visitors will return to Takapuna.

**Left: Toadstool table and chairs were just the right size for Sophia Tschan, left, and Nadia Barreto.**

**All photos by Keeley Watson.**



**Above: Eliza Youngs basks in the sun on her toadstool.**

**Left: Dipping marshmallows in chocolate was an activity with delicious results, enjoyed by Spencer Jefferson and others**





**Tallulah Montgomery checks out her new look after free face-painting and, below, goats, sheep and llamas were available for pats**



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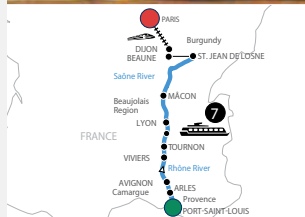
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## Milford apartment battle set to go to mediation

A fight over a developer's plans for apartments at 110 Kitchener is set to go to mediation in late May.

This is the first step in an appeal by neighbours, the Pierce Rd Coalition, and the Milford Residents Association, against an independent panel's decision to grant a

resource consent for the six-storey block, even though it breaks a number of rules in the Unitary Plan.

The commissioners were not unanimous in the decision and the consent was granted on the basis of a two to one majority.

Milford Residents Association has joined with the Pierce Rd Coalition as an interested party under Section 274 of the Resource Management Act.

The residents groups have lodged their appeal in the Environment Court.

## Takapuna rugby continue good start to season

Takapuna premiers rugby side is unbeaten in four matches this season with a 46-20 win against Marist last weekend.

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## Head librarian keen to meet locals



**Looking forward to her new role ... new Takapuna Library manager Trina Roycroft**

Takapuna Library's new manager, Trina Roycroft, loves books and is especially looking forward to spending time in its extensive art section.

Roycroft (46) has worked in libraries around the country since she was 17 and is excited to face the challenge ahead.

She effectively took over from previous library manager Helen Woodhouse in March, albeit with a long hand-over.

"I'm stepping into such big, pretty shoes," she says. "Helen is such an amazing woman. She has touched a whole lot of lives. I've just got to continue that."

As a mother of four, Roycroft says family and community are extremely important to her and she carries those values into her work.

Her children are aged from an 11-year-old at Wairau Intermediate School to a 24-year-old who has just finished law school and is a clerk to the Chief Justice of New Zealand.

A book-lover herself, Roycroft says her favourite part of the library is the section that houses lavish books about art.

Career highlights have included library management jobs in lower-decile areas, such as Otahuhu, 1999, Glen Innes, 2002, and

Northcote, 2014.

"It's not until you work in communities like that that you learn the importance of a space like that [a library]," she says. "It's warm, it's dry and it's non-judgmental."

She felt an affinity with Maori culture, perhaps because of her mother's Samoan heritage.

Roycroft made the move to Birkenhead Library in 2017, realising she wanted to build her skills as a leader.

"I recognised in myself that, if I wanted to develop my leadership skills, I had to make the move from focusing on the community to team-building," she says.

Roycroft, who lives in Forrest Hill, plans to take baby steps at the Takapuna Library, finding out exactly what the community needs before making any big plans.

She wants to get to know the community and her staff and for them to get to know her as well.

"I am who I am. I don't claim to know everything. I'm very straight-up, I wear my heart on my sleeve," she says. "So when you get me, you get honesty."

"I'm not here to replace Helen and do the same things as her. I am coming in with a new set of eyes. I'm here to say, 'This is who I am, this is what I'm proud of and this is what I stand for.'"

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# Novella penned in three days wins award



**Stretching boundaries ... Xiaole Zhan's poetic work didn't quite follow the brief, so judges created a new prize for her work of magic realism**

After a month of thinking, talented young writer Xiaole Zhan wrote a prize-winning novella in three days, and now it is going to be published.

The 17-year-old Westlake Girls student

was named winner of the Editor's Choice prize in the Young New Zealand Writers Youth Laureate competition.

Judges described Xiaole's 11,000-word novella, *The Extinct*, as "a fabulous piece of writing".

The prize was publication with Phantom Feather Press and \$200.

"The writing process was a bit daunting," says Xiaole.

"The idea came to me about a month before deadline but that was during exam time, so the actual writing was done in about three days."

The brief for the competition was to write a piece of speculative fiction which has elements that do not exist in the real world, but Xiaole opted to write in the genre of magical realism, where the narrative occasionally moves into surrealism or fantasy.

"I decided to give it a go and try my luck."

A few weeks later, she received an email from organiser Lee Murray, explaining they were awarding two prizes this year.

"Although we didn't plan to publish two books, and the competition was for novels rather than poetry, *The Extinct* is better classified as a narrative poem. Because of

the high quality of *The Extinct*, we feel it warrants publication."

*The Extinct* explores the idea of memory and follows a narrator reflecting on their childhood and what they've lost, says Xiaole.

"I wanted to write about something I knew about at this point and I know what it's like to be young. I know that key idea of losing childhood, but also the magic of remembering what childhood is like."

This isn't the first time Xiaole has been recognised for her writing. In 2018, her poem *Sympathetic Resonance* was displayed in Antarctica as a winner of an international poetry competition for young people.

While Xiaole is unsure what she will pursue as a career, she knows that writing will always be a part of her life.

"If I was in a world where I knew I couldn't fail, I would definitely choose to be a writer," she says.

*The Extinct* will be officially launched at the GeyserCon Science Fiction and Fantasy convention in Rotorua on 31 May.

You can order a copy of *The Extinct* through Christina Pollock at [cpollock@westlakegirls.school.nz](mailto:cpollock@westlakegirls.school.nz) or online at Amazon from 31 May 2019.



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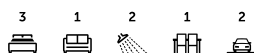
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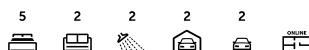
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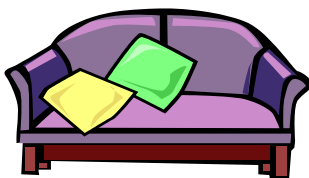
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# About face on Forrest Hill land sell-off

A section at Forrest Hill which was to be sold off by Auckland Council is now set to become a neighbourhood park.

In July 2016, the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board voted to support Panuku's (Auckland Council's property arm) plan to sell the 650sqm section at 2 Forrest Hill Rd.

However, this decision was chucked out by the board at its meeting last week and it voted to retain the land as a park.

A new open space management plan for Devonport and Takapuna, made public last month, said there was a lack of reserves and parks in region, particularly in Forrest Hill, where the section is located.

Moreover, in the past couple of years, the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board has been increasingly concerned about the sell-off of council assets and land in the board area.

In the board's public forum, prior to last week's meeting, Sunnynook Community Association member Peter McNee said it was pleasing the land would be retained as a park.

McNee hoped the community would be involved in the development of the park and that included Westlake Girls and Westlake Boys schools, as well as the Kings Plant Barn and Atlas Concrete.

In its Long Term Plan, the council sets a goal of selling \$650m worth of "non-strategic assets", such as pocket parks, in the 10 years to 2025.



**A residents group is pleased this small parcel of land at 2 Forrest Hill Rd is going to be retained for community use, in an area that is particularly short of open space.**

## Petanque court for Sunnynook

A new petanque court is planned for Sunnynook Park.

The international size court will be 15 metres by 12m and big enough for three matches at a time.

Local residents hope it can be built at a cost of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 and possibly ready for play next summer.

Sunnynook Community Association member Peter McNee told the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board's public forum last week the court would be located near the park's new exercise area.

It was hoped a petanque club could be formed after the court is installed.

Board member Jan O'Connor supported the establishment of the court, but said open space in parks also needed to be safeguarded.

## Baroque treat in church

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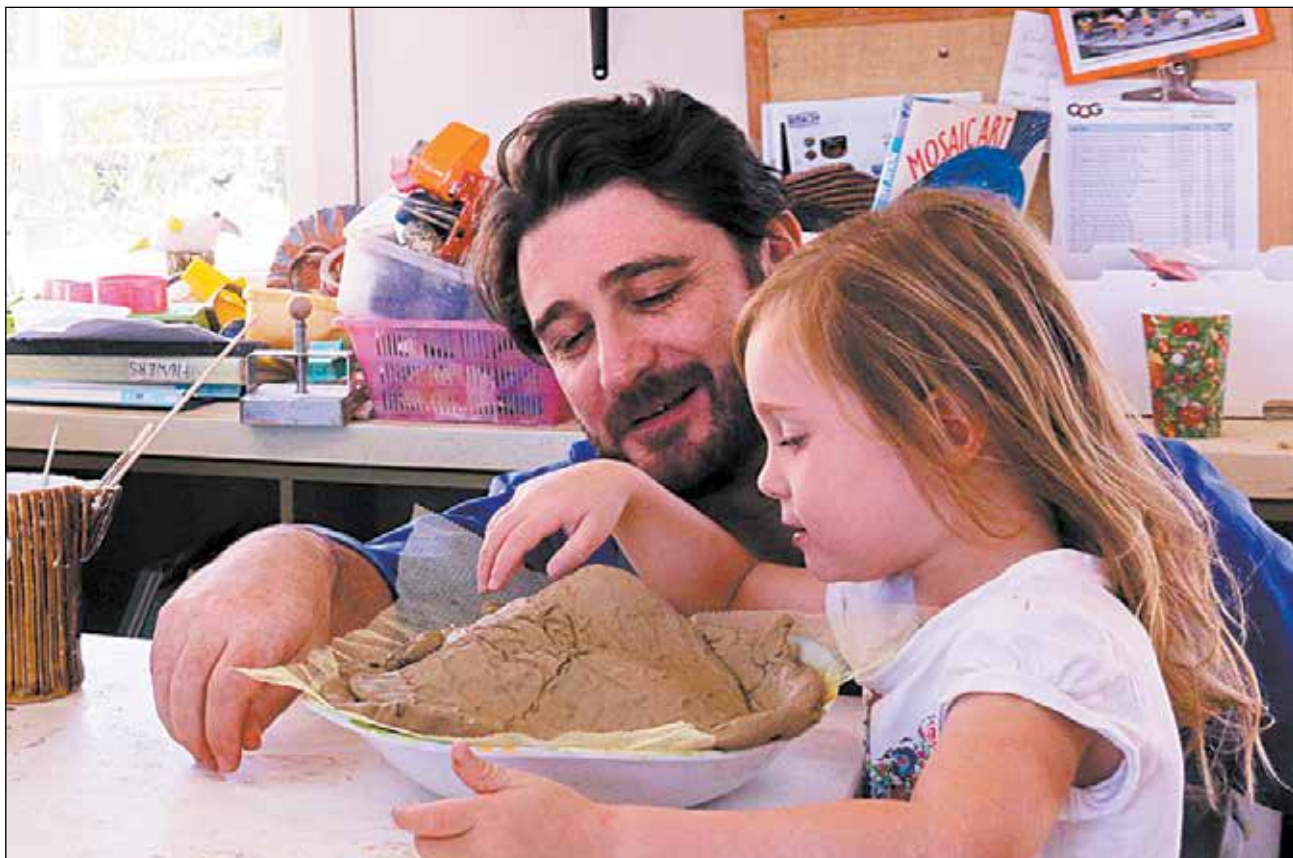
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## Grae Burton opens Lake House centre's doors to all



**Lake House manager Grae Burton with his daughter, Lily, 5, work on a pottery project, as part of a school holiday programme**

Coming from an artistic career that saw him 'nearly starving to death', Lake House Arts Centre manager Grae Burton aims to offer manaakitanga to fellow artists.

Burton strives to minimise the hardships artists experience by creating a strong sense of community at the centre, where the door is always open.

"One of the hardest things about being an artist is that, by its nature, it is very isolating. For vulnerable artists that can be very hard.

"I have almost starved to death, making a pizza last me a month just to survive," he says.

"It took nine years for me to get into a place of security. It can take a toll on you."

In the two years since he took up the role of operations manager, Burton, 42, has spearheaded multiple large-scale events, such as the annual open day, which sees thousands of visitors through the arts centre, as well as a 125-year celebration of women's suffrage.

"One of the most fun things we did was a 'dogable art day'. We had a 'dog-walk' fashion show where dogs and owners dressed up as artists and artworks."

November 2020 will mark 20 years since The Lake House Arts Centre (formerly The Coach House) was saved by Takapuna arts patron Genevieve Becroft and the North Shore

City Council and moved from the north end of Takapuna Beach to its current location on Fred Thomas Drive.

In 1996, The Coach House, located at 127 Hurstmere Road, was saved from demolition, divided into seven pieces and moved to Fred Thomas Drive.

Becroft, the North Shore City Council, and other citizens raised the money to rebuild the house onsite, which took four years.

The Sands apartment complex now stands on the original Lake House site.

Burton and his team are excited about the 20-year celebrations coming up in 2020.

"We are going to have a full-scale Woodhouse symposium, heritage tours and are going to bring back original artists to exhibit," he says.

The Woodhouse Symposium will see a large group of woodcraft sculptors creating a large-scale wood sculpture, which will stay onsite throughout summer 2020–2021.

Among projects Burton is currently working on are a Matariki exhibition, and an outreach programme that will take ceramics, painting, drawing and even virtual reality into retirement villages.

Burton has little time for his own art projects, which can include taking part in 48Hours, a movie-making competition, papier

mâché and sci-fi-influenced video art.

"I only create one of my own works a year now, I'm too busy to do anything else," Burton says.

Prior to the arts centre, Burton's varied career has seen him working as a specialist curator and associate producer for the Wallace Arts Trust, associate producer for Woah! Studios and acting in several New Zealand film and TV projects.

"I was also a freelance director for musicals like Grease and Copa Cobana," he says.

Burton still does some work in film and television, and he has two children, aged 16 months and 5 years old.

"I love that my kids get to be in this environment," he says. "They get to be exposed to not only art but to community. We have such a diverse community."

When it came to his career choice, Burton admits he didn't have much choice.

His father passed away when he was young and it was his 'dying wish' that his son pursue his creative side.

In his current role at the Lake House Arts Centre, Burton says he will continue to 'celebrate, innovate and elevate our diverse arts culture practices for the benefit of the entire community'.

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**Gardener Available** Qualified and experienced landscape designer. Enjoys getting his hands dirty. Good plant knowledge. Hard-working, reliable and creative with plantings. Contact Paddy 022 502 2122 or 446 6188, paddyvogt@gmail.com

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**Gardening help?** Call the WEEDS & WORMS team. Local, experienced, efficient, reliable. Free quotes. Jeni 021 951 153 or Kirstan 021 540 226.

**Gutter Guards / Gutter Cleaning** LeafScreen Gutter Protection, Competitive Rates, Flagstaff discount. info@leafscreen.co.nz, 0800 LEAFLESS (53 23 53)

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**House plans, renovations, alterations, and sketch designs.** 30 years experience in heritage area. First hours consultation free. Call Donn 021 273 9739.

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**Let me mow your lawns** and trim your hedges. I live locally. Phone Chris from Lifestyle Plus on 09-488-7279 or 027-245-6264. Or you can email me on chris@lifestyleplusltd.nz. References available.

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*Photos are indicative.*

## Donation raises hopes of youth hub opening



**A group of young people hope to open a multi-million dollar youth innovation hub this year.**

A project to transform the old RSA building in Shea Tce into a youth innovation hub has been given a significant boost with a \$1.5 million grant from Foundation North.

"It's exactly what we've been waiting for and I'm confident it will propel us quite quickly towards the total required to get building work under way very soon," Yes chief executive Sonya Thursby says.

The Shore Junction project team still has to raise another \$1 million towards its goal of \$3.3 million, but they hope to secure the remaining funding and achieve their goal of opening this year.

The aim is to create an innovation centre for young people aged 13 to 24 years, which will both foster STEAM careers and offer a place for young people to hang out, connect and network.

Shore Junction was given a kick-start two years ago, when the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board awarded the building's lease to the Yes organisation and provided a \$123,000 grant to enable the building's interior to be demolished and new wiring, insulation and walls to be installed.

Businesses and individuals in the community have generously supported the youth hub, with donations of cash and all sorts of equipment, from computer systems and professional software packages for design, research and sound recording, to 3D printers, laser cutters and CNC machines, to free flooring, furniture and soft furnishing.

Shore Junction currently sits under Yes, a youth disability not-for-profit, but will eventually be independent.

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## Forever impressed, says resident at The Poynton retirement village

Garry Carter and his wife Carrol moved into Metlifecare's The Poynton almost 7 years ago and haven't looked back. For Garry, moving to the retirement village was practical, provided security and offered fantastic amenities.

### Downsizing was worth it

After living in Milford for 16 years, Garry and Carrol Carter made the move to The Poynton in June 2012.

"What drew us in to The Poynton was probably location. We didn't live far from the village, and if we were going to shift and downsize, this was the best option.

"For a two-bedroom place in Milford, we would have had to pay considerably more and it wouldn't have a swimming pool, a bowling green and all the other wonderful facilities that come with life at The Poynton," says Garry.

Garry describes security as another important factor when deciding on moving into a retirement village, as he wanted his wife to feel safe and be looked after should anything happen to him.

"I was happy that she would be well looked

after here, and that unless she wanted to, she wouldn't have to move for the rest of her life," Garry says.

### Peace of mind

Perhaps the most beneficial part of living at The Poynton, Garry says, is having the peace of mind that all their wants and needs are taken care of.

"We like travelling, and now I don't have to worry about the roof leaking or the hedge growing. We can go away, and I don't have to worry about any of the maintenance. My wife is also pleased I don't have to spend any time on ladders anymore," Garry explains.

Garry says that with all your cares and worries taken care of, life is easy and enjoyable.

"One of the residents went down to get his driver's licence renewed and he was asked what day of the week it was. He told them it didn't matter because he lived at The Poynton," he laughs. "And that says a lot about what life is like here, I'm forever impressed."

**For more information on  
The Poynton's retirement lifestyle,  
phone Suzee on (027) 218 7985**

# A special decade, says resident at The Poynton retirement village

Coming up to her 10th anniversary at The Poynton this August, Pru Giles reflects on a happy decade spent at the retirement village and her many special memories with residents, family and friends.

## A great move

Pru, 73, is one of The Poynton Pioneers, the first group of 20 residents who moved into the village after it opened its doors in August 2009. This year, she celebrates a decade in her three-bedroom apartment.

"What drew me to The Poynton was the lifestyle, and the fact I had always wanted to live in an apartment building. I just thought, rather than try and keep up with the maintenance on a big house, I would move into an apartment and I haven't regretted it," says Pru, "It was a great move for me."

## Three generations

Pru and her family have a particularly special relationship with The Poynton, as she has spent the past decade developing cherished relationships with residents and staff.

"My friends and family think I am in the best place that I could possibly be. My children are especially happy knowing that I am safe and secure, and they can go away knowing that I am well looked after here," Pru says.

In fact, Pru and her family loved The Poynton so much that not long after she arrived, her then 91-year-old mother moved from Adelaide to join her at the village.

"She had a serviced apartment, so I didn't have to do anything for her because everything was looked after. We just enjoyed our time together, which we hadn't previously because I had moved to New Zealand from Adelaide 51 years ago. So that was really special," says Pru.

And for a time, there were four generations of Pru's family at The Poynton. Not long after her mother's arrival, her daughter, Natasha, came to stay with her as she prepared to bring Pru's grandchild into the world.

"My grandson, Ben, who is nearly nine now, has virtually grown up at The Poynton, so he has lots of grandmas and grandpas here who think he's marvellous as well. His nickname is Lord Poynton," Pru says laughing.

"He was almost born here! Natasha went into labour at midnight and went across to



the hospital and came back five days later with this beautiful baby. She stayed with me for six weeks," adds Pru.

## Security, friendship and lifestyle

There are many enjoyable aspects of life at The Poynton, says Pru, including the activities she has been involved in and the special occasions that the village offers.

"We're so lucky! All I do is go down in the lift, I can have a glass of bubbly and not have to worry about drinking and driving. The Poynton hosts plenty of fantastic events, so we are never bored," says Pru.

Pru enjoys a number of activities at the village including cards, musical events, bingo, rummikub and more. Her busy schedule of activities means Pru gets to know a wide circle of residents, forming a community that she describes as always being very warm and friendly.

"I've met so many people who have become great friends and we do quite a bit together. I'm very happy to have made a new group of friends here," Pru says.

"I do also have friends outside the village who I can invite here to have dinner in the restaurant, which I find so much easier than trying to cook for all of them," she adds.

An important element of village life that eases her worries is security. It is also something Pru's family values about having their mum at The Poynton.



"Living in a big house down a right of way, my main concern was security. I love that we have wonderful staff here, who keep you secure and make you feel good," says Pru, "and I always feel happy knowing our two night-watchmen are on duty. Knowing that they're there, I think that's been the most important part of coming here."

**For more information on The Poynton's retirement lifestyle, phone Suzee on (027) 218 7985.**

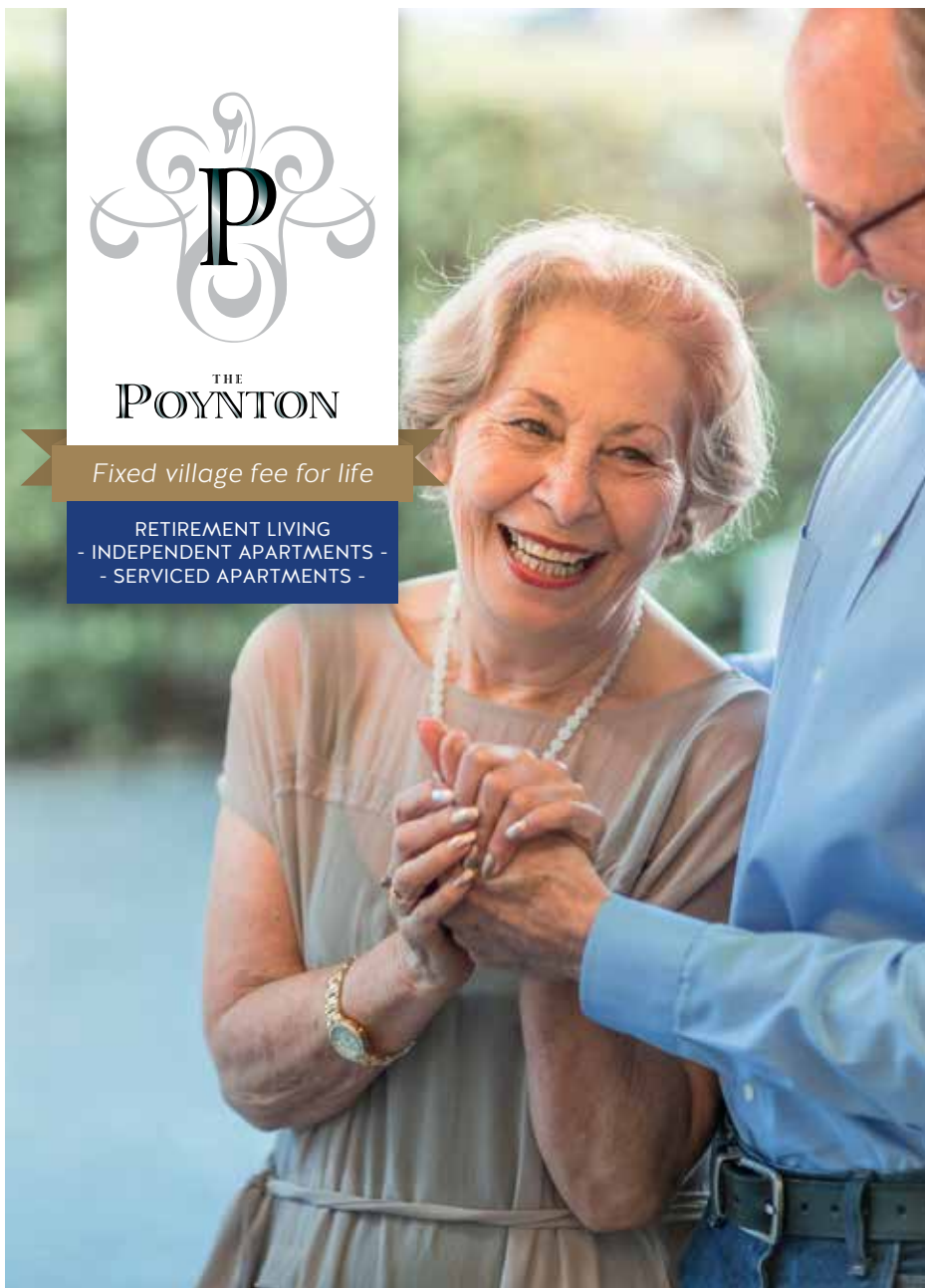




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## Kids take the plunge at Waterworld on Lake Pupuke



**Dozens of kids took to the Waterworld floating playground on Lake Pupuke next to Sylvan Park over the Easter break.**

**A Rangitoto Observer photographer was on hand to record the fun.**









# Westlake Boys scull their way to silver at Maadi Cup



**Westlake Boys won silver in four categories at the Maadi Cup, the national secondary schools rowing regatta held at Lake Karapiro from 25 to 31 March. Above left: Under 18 coxless pair: Sam Shotter, Bowen de Gouw. Above: Under 18 coxed four: Sam Logan, Brahm Erdmann, Bowen de Gouw, Sam Shotter, Jack Cresswell.**

**Under 17 coxed four: Sam Logan, Bowen de Gouw, Jared Barry, Oscar Dorbeck, Jack Cresswell**



**Under 16 coxed four: Connor Chatfield, Sam Logan, Rafe Beaman, Finn Hoban, Greg Severin, Oliver Eliot**

**Has your school team won a sports and cultural title?**

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## Milford bridge to nowhere still out of action

The lifting bridge at Milford marina will stay up while major maintenance work is carried out.

A council advisory says it will remain up until repairs are done, so boats aren't stuck outside the marina.

Since November, the bridge's software and systems have been updated to today's technology, as they had become outdated.

Significant work has also been done on the bridge's hydraulics, and control systems.

The final repairs will require a barge to work under the bridge, local board chair George Wood says.

In a newsletter, the Milford Residents Association hopes the major maintenance work will make the lifting mechanism 'far re reliable than it has been recently'.



Repair survey...workers under the Milford bridge last Thursday

## Mid-life dramas still play out today

The fact his play *Middle Age Spread*, first performed in 1977, is still being put on 40 years later surprises even its Takapuna playwright Roger Hall.

Hall hasn't needed to update *Middle Age Spread* for an upcoming run at the PumpHouse because most of its themes are just as relevant today.

"It's about relationships and what people talk about and what concerns them and social issues that haven't changed very much."

Some themes, such as the demands of bureaucracy and increasing amounts of paperwork, apply even more today, while

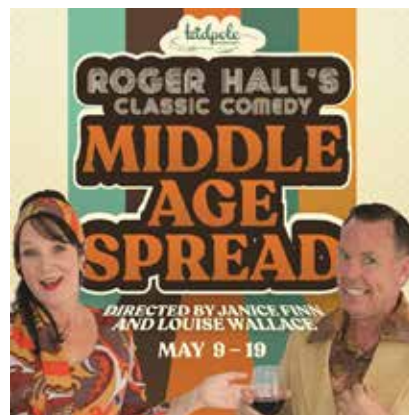
mid-life crises and relationship issues are still 'the same old things', Hall says.

However, there's the odd issue in the play that has changed over time, such as the grip of unionism.

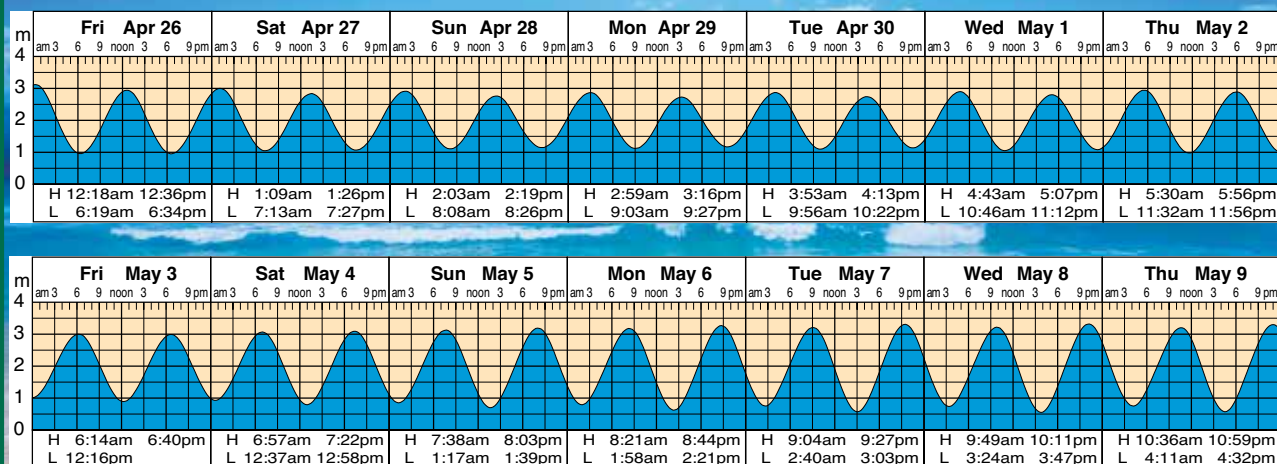
The play is still set in the 1970s, so expect bell bottoms, cheese fondue, big hair and a lot of beige.

Hall says it is a poignant and funny play, which is typical of his work.

Tadpole Production's *Middle Age Spread* runs from 9 May to 19 May, with tickets from The PumpHouse (09) 489 8360 or [www.pumphouse.co.nz](http://www.pumphouse.co.nz)



## Milford / Takapuna Tides



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Beautiful inside and out this striking recently renovated home in the heart of Takapuna oozes street appeal with cherry trees edging the perimeter within the secure gated grounds.

VIEW | BY APPOINTMENT

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