

The Rangitoto Observer

Takapuna, Milford, Castor Bay, Forrest Hill and Sunnynook

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

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AN INDEPENDENT VOICE



Romy Udanga
for North Shore

Labour

labour.org.nz/romyudanga
Authorised by Timothy Grigg,
160 Willis Street, Wellington.

North Shore residents flock for Covid tests... p2

Fines hit Milford car-park overstayers... p7

Schoolgirl swimmer's next big goal... p19

Middle-aged thieves wreck kids' garden project

Forrest Hill School had its gardens ransacked by thieves last month, when vegetables and flowers were uprooted by two middle-aged female intruders.

The pair were recorded by the school's security cameras around 2am on Wednesday

16 September. Police are now investigating the theft.

The vandalism and theft of vegetables devastated pupils who worked hard in the gardens as part of a "garden to table" programme, making a sad end to the third school term.

It is now unclear whether the programme will continue.

"When the children arrived at school the next day, they could see a trail of dirty footsteps and had to pick up the scattered bits and pieces of their crops."

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Surf arrives to mark daylight saving



Surfs up... Devin Tootil takes advantage of the swells at Takapuna Beach on Sunday evening – the first of daylight saving.

Simon Watts



North Shore

National

Authorised by S Watts, 107 Great Stn Rd, Akl.



North Shore residents flood Covid testing stations

In the wake of a Covid-19 scare sparked by a woman who attended gym classes at Les Mills Takapuna before realising she was unwell last month, 409 people in the wider Les Mills gym community were tested. All returned a negative result.

The woman, a border worker, took three classes on 9 and 10 September, before also shopping at the Milford Centre on the second day. Several days later she became unwell and recorded a positive test, triggering a public health alert. This provoked a flurry of tests among those deemed close contacts and among other worried community members.

A spokesperson for the metro Auckland DHBs (Waitematā, Auckland and Counties Manukau) said in the month taking in the dates of the scare, 5695 tests were done at the Northcote community testing centre on College Rd.

This is the main testing site on the lower North Shore. The test numbers were recorded from 12 August until 21 September. Tests were also done at other local medical centres and urgent care clinics, she said, although a detailed breakdown of these figures could not be provided.

The scare prompted deep cleans of the gym and of the Warehouse and Countdown, along with extra attention to public areas at the Milford Centre. Gym attendance numbers dipped initially, but quickly bounced back.

"We're once again seeing full classes within level-2 restrictions, with distancing and room limits in place," said Takapuna Les Mills manager Peter Pearless. Anti-viral fogging was also employed.

All 86 people who were deemed close gym class contacts had been contacted, isolated and tested, with all returning a negative result. Pearless said it had been a stressful time for members and staff.

The Milford Centre said it had not fielded calls of concern or comments to its information

kiosk from shoppers. The woman who later tested positive had spent only a short time at the centre in the late morning and the big stores she visited both had well-established procedures in place for dealing with Covid, said a spokesperson. The centre itself had undertaken an extra spray treatment to its central area after learning of the visit. It had stepped up cleaning in high-touch areas.

The metro DHBs spokesperson said it had worked closely with providers on the North Shore to ensure there was good access to testing.

"We continue to encourage anyone who has any cold or flu-like symptoms to get a Covid-19 test. A Covid-19 test is free of charge, whether you are displaying symptoms of Covid-19 or not." Those eligible for free testing did not have to be a New Zealand citizen or resident.

Testing is provided by GPs as well as at the Northcote centre, or at one of six designated North Shore practices and three urgent-care clinics. The full list is on the Auckland Regional Public Health Service website.

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Devonport Publishing Ltd Level 1, 6-8 Milford Road
Telephone: 09 445 0060
Email: sales@rangitoto-observer.co.nz
news@rangitoto-observer.co.nz
Website: www.rangitoto-observer.co.nz

MANAGING EDITOR: Rob Drent
PUBLISHER: Peter Wilson
ADVERTISING: Liz Cannon
CHIEF REPORTER: Janetta Mackay
REPORTER: Anneka Brown

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2 The Strand: empty for 918 days

The former Takapuna Library building at 2 The Strand has been vacant since an earthquake notice was issued in March 2018. The 1956 heritage-listed public building has now been unoccupied for 918 days. At some point, its future will be determined by Auckland Council.

Historic theatre model unearthed in cupboard



Pumped up... theatre administrator Mags Delaney is delighted a piece of PumpHouse Theatre history can be restored

A find in a cupboard has delighted staff of the PumpHouse Theatre, giving a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the Takapuna landmark's conversion into an arts venue.

The meticulously made 1:50 scale model, built in the 1970s, shows the theatre without a number of more-recent extensions. It was found in an archives clean-out during heightened Covid-19 levels, which have hit the number of shows able to be staged.

The theatre's community engagement co-ordinator, Mags Delaney, was cleaning out a cupboard, sorting old records to send to the museum, when she came across the wooden model and two smaller ceramic versions.

"It must be 40 years old at least," she said. The metre-long model was made for the North Shore Theatre and Arts Trust by an Auckland designer, Peter Gossage.

Old newspaper clippings quoted him saying it took 100 hours to make. The model was made with a roof that lifted off to show the stage and seating arrangements of the PumpHouse shortly before it opened as a community arts venue.

Gossage, who worked in television, is also known for the classic children's book *How Maui Slowed the Sun*.

The model has suffered some damage over the years. The chimney of the building is not anchored to the base and its roof rafters are missing.

The PumpHouse is hoping to find someone willing to restore it. "If we can get it fixed we might put it in a perspex box on display in the foyer," said Delaney. Theatre-goers would be able to see how much had changed over the decades, with the addition of a box office, extra space for offices and a green room. A roof had also been added to an outdoor area to create the Coalbunker studio.

Delaney hopes repairs can be made by May next year, in time for the 50th anniversary of the formation of the trust. The group spent years working to transform the 1905 building into an arts venue.



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Labour

Authorised by Timothy Grigg, 160 Willis Street, Wellington.

Sculptures set to surprise mall shoppers:

Carved pillars of hope are among artworks going on display as part of the first Milford Centre Sculpture Trail – with a pay-off for charity.

Navy marae manager Ngahiwi Williams’ five pou representing the strength of whanau in the face of Te Korekore or the darkness that surrounds mental health will be on show with the work of nine other artists.

The week-long exhibition will benefit Mike King’s I Am Hope Foundation.

It is being held during Auckland Art Week (10-18 October) and will help fill a big gap in the North Shore arts calendar, after the Covid-19 related cancellation of the Sculpture on the Shore show.

Walker, like several other of the artists on the trail, had been selected to show at the biennial Sculpture on the Shore held at Fort Takapuna. He welcomed the fresh opportunity the Milford trail provided and is now part-way through completing new work especially for it.

So too are other Shore participants, including Bill Hayes, a resident artist at the Lake House Arts Centre for 23 years, who taught ceramics there for a decade, and Devonport painter Graham Downs, who has switched mediums to shape a large rudder he found in the sea. The fourth Shore participant is Christian Nicolson from Torbay, who like Downs, is well known for his paintings featuring the sea.

The trail has been curated for the centre by a Devonport gallery co-director, Mike Geers, who said it featured some spectacular large pieces.

The rudder Downs has shaped into an ode to seafaring, with carving, painting and metal work additions, stands three metres tall.

Hayes has worked a piece almost that long. Called ‘To Market’, it is a skeletal man hand-fabricated in steel with a brain and a heart inserted, pulling a cart laden with ceramic vessels. Originally conceived s small bronze, the work grew to bring together his varying skills and mediums.

Walker’s pou stand at varying heights, representing a kaumatua, a kuia, male and female leaders and mokopuna. The tallest rises above his head. At the base of each pou, his chisel marks signify the darkness that challenges us all, with other symbols varying to depict different whanau characteristics that can combat this. “If you’ve got the darkness there in the family, it affects everyone.”

The Devonport resident, who hails from the East Coast and is of Ngati Porou descent, has managed Devonport Naval Base’s Te Taua Moana Marae for several years. It hosts community as well as Navy events. Walker was approached by Geers to show and said the cause the gallery owner wanted to back was convincing.

“The kaupapa is good,” he said, referring to the fact a portion of any works sold at the



Post man... Ngahiwi Williams with some of his unfinished pou

free-to-attend show will go to King’s foundation to help deal with mental health issues.

Hayes also supports the cause. The American-born artist – who last year completed a commission featuring a sextant to stand at Cooks Beach to commemorate Captain Cook’s journey to New Zealand 250 years ago and the Transit of Venus – said he imagined his sculpture would sit best outside, but he didn’t try to contemplate where it might end up. “You make these works and you hope someone finds them interesting.”

A centre spokesperson, Kate Carey, said it wanted to mark Art Week on the Shore and in working with Geers it was also able to help the foundation. “Bringing high-class art into a public space was a way of offering some



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Steel and ceramics... Bill Hayes, resident artist at the Lake House for 23 years, is among other artists with work on the Milford Centre Sculpture Trail

support to artists hit by cancellations in what had been a tough year." The artworks would be dotted around the central spaces

of the centre, she said. Some were sizeable additions. Private guided tours are available to ex-

plain the works. These are free, but must be booked, with details on the Milford Centre website.



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Covid-19 has positive spin for Milford Tennis Club



Chelsea cup winners... (from left) Vanesa Cutfield, Vivian Yang, Aishi Das, Shona Nakano, Jacqui Anderson, Hyeok Min, Matt Alexander, Matavao Fanguna, Sion Wiggin, Matt Shearer and Riki McLachlan

Milford Tennis Club won the prestigious Chelsea Cup in both the men’s and women’s divisions this year – 34 years after it previously achieved the rare double.

The Chelsea Cup has been the top prize for premier North Harbour tennis teams since 1986, when Milford last won both women’s and men’s grades.

Covid-19 restrictions played a part in the dual success this year: Men’s captain and number one Matt Alexander usually heads

to overseas to in 2020 he was trapped in New Zealand and won both his singles and doubles matches in Milford’s 5-1 win against Whangaparaoa in the final.

The top two Milford women, Vivian Yang and Shona Nakano, were also stuck in New Zealand enabling Milford to field its top team in the finals series.

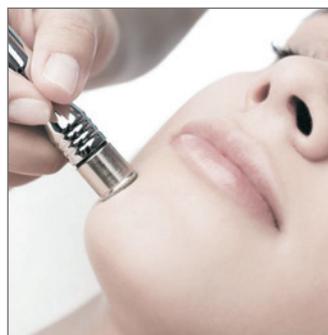
The women’s final was closer than the men’s. Milford won 4-2 over Northcote, but it could have easily gone into a countback

until an excellent performance by 12-year-old Aishi Das in the last match, with Milford leading 3-2. Aishi lost the first set 7-6, but took control in the second 6-1 and then rounded out the match 6-2.

“She’s just amazing for her age,” said team captain Vanesa Cutfield. The wins in 2020 continue a golden couple of years for Milford, now New Zealand’s largest club. Last year, it opened a purpose-built new clubhouse overlooking the courts and Lake Pupuke.



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Parking restrictions bite at Milford town centre

Parking overstayers in the front section of the Milford shopping centre car park are being hit with fines for the first time.

Auckland Transport (AT) began issuing warning notices last month, but has since stepped up its enforcement action to fines.

These start at \$12 for over-staying the two-hour limit by less than 30 minutes, rising in steps to \$30 for a breach of more than two hours and up to \$57 for all-day parkers.

The crackdown is a spin-off from an AT survey on parking in the Milford town centre.

AT recommended no charges for street parking in the commercial area "at this stage". Parking availability was deemed adequate, with most parkers staying for an hour or less. But in the council-owned section of the mall car park, where average peak-time occupancy was more than 90 per cent, it decided enforcement would encourage turnover of spaces.

The area being policed is accessed from Kitchener Rd and sits between New World and the Milford Senior Citizens Hall on one side and the main entry to Milford Centre.

"AT is expecting that the overall parking situation in this carpark will improve significantly once enforcement starts," said the report, tabled at the September monthly meeting of the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

The Observer has since confirmed that enforcement is under way.

The Milford parking study and another on Devonport, which raises the prospect of installing parking meters there, was received by the board, but not without some comment.

Jan O'Connor cautioned that if AT introduced meters to Devonport, on top of those already in Takapuna, then "it will go down to Milford, because as night follows day there is

more money in meters. It should all be short-term parking."

Member Trish Deans said that until a workshop last month, the board had not had any notification from AT that meters were in the offing for Devonport's main streets. Toni van Tonder said she too thought time-limited parking was to be standardised, but without meters.

Parking on central Milford streets is well below the 85 per cent average peak-time occupancy rate that triggers AT to recommend charging. In Devonport, it sat at 82 per cent in a mid-year count, prompting AT to raise the prospect of meters, although Deans noted it did this only on page 69 of its detailed report.

The much shorter Milford report assessed parking in an area bounded by the bottom of Shakespeare Rd, Omana Rd, Craig Rd, Milford Rd to the beach heading south, then back up Saltburn Rd to Kitchener Rd, across that and down Pierce Rd towards the lake, across to Otakau Rd and back to rejoin Shakespeare Rd.

Towards the beach end of the zone much of the parking occupancy was found to be under 70 per cent. On the south side of Kitchener Rd it was 70-85 per cent. Occupancy above 85 per cent was reported only in the car-park off Kitchener Rd, along Milford Rd closest to the mall (which is mostly short-term parking) and on Frieston Rd.

AT surveyed the area on 28 and 29 July and 1 August. The board had advised delaying the survey until the mall redevelopment was done, but AT felt doing it sooner would highlight any current problems. Aside from recommending parking-limit enforcement in the car-park, it found that the current 30-minute limit in the town centre was working and that parking on residential streets, while "quite busy, could be monitored pending further review.

Reviewing Milford's parking again after redevelopment of the mall (where apartments are being built on site) would allow the true impact of completion to be understood, AT said.

'Summernova' hits the Shore

Smales Farm and Takapuna Beach will host two of the 'Summernova' series of activities designed to wrap around the America's Cup.

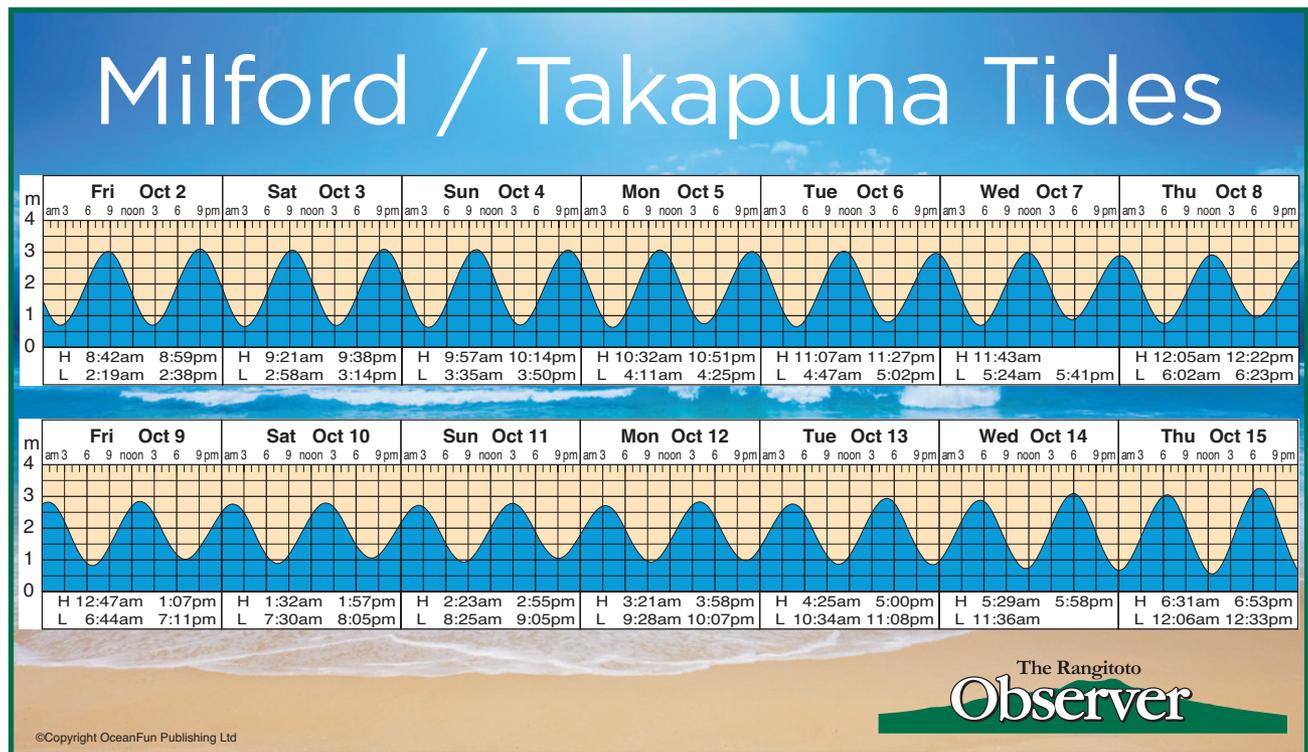
Running from December through March, a programme of more than 10 events was officially announced last week, although some of the activities had already been confirmed, including the Waterbourne festival on Takapuna Beach Reserve from 27 February until 21 March. Described as a sustainable beach festival, this will offer live music, water sport and cultural experiences along with food and beverages.

Another North Shore event on the

programme is the Sunsetter Food, Wine and Music Festival to be held on Saturday 13 February at Smales Farm. The idea is to transform the business park into an urban oasis, rocking with live music, food and drinks.

Summernova is sponsored by global fashion brand Prada, which is also an America's Cup sponsor.

Supernova, under the umbrella of Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (Ateed), includes arts, sports and cultural showcases, with events also held at Britomart and along the Tamaki Drive waterfront.



Trust is key to success for European car specialist Burgers Motor Works

Building trust via the integrity of its expertise and transparency of operation are the drivers of success for Burgers Motor Works owner Jamie McDonald.

“Trust is everything for us. That’s trust in our team’s expertise and trust in our processes,” McDonald says.

Burgers Motor Works, located on Archers Rd Wairau, specialises in the service and repair of the big four European brands – BMW, Audi, VW and Mercedes – and prides itself on the fact that McDonald and six of his seven employees are dealer-trained.

“I did my apprenticeship at the old Jerry Clayton BMW dealership in Takapuna, and I typically hire mechanics with extensive training and experience from BMW, AUDI, VW and Mercedes dealerships,” McDonald says.

“With our dealer trained team, we pride ourselves as experts.”

McDonald also believes in absolute transparency over work done at Burgers Motor Works. “We take photos of any issues we find and all significant measurements and diagnostics we take, which keeps our customers informed of what is going on with their car at any given time and builds trust.”

McDonald says he looks to build trust first and make money second.

“A lot of people come to us because they are fed up with paying a premium for maintenance done on an ageing car and want a reliable and cost-effective alternative.

“Most people come to us after their dealer warranty has finished. So most of our customers have cars that are five-six years old, when people need maintenance options that are reasonable,” he says.

Customers also appreciate the seven courtesy cars available for their use while cars are in the workshop.

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“Our workshop is well equipped with the latest diagnostics equipment and we have



a strong network of experts in the trade so there’s very little we can’t handle.”

McDonald, who grew up in Birkenhead, went to Rosmini College and studied Business at Massey University, bought Burgers Motor Works from founder Burgers Oosthuizen in December 2017, after selling a successful trucking company he built up with his father. “After selling the trucking business, I did a brief stint in commercial real estate, but wanted to follow my passion for the motor trade. When I came across Burgers Motor Works it ticked a lot of boxes for me.”

McDonald is also a former champion Sprint Car racer, and still races on weekends. He has been successful over the years, including winning the New Zealand Championship in 2007.

McDonald believes Burgers Motor Works’ transparent approach combined with expertise from dealer-trained mechanics sets it apart from other mechanic shops. “Sometimes the root cause of a problem has an inexpensive fix, but if you don’t know what to look for you can end up replacing the wrong part,” he says.

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Sports cancellations but cream still rising to top

Secondary-school sport has been badly disrupted by Covid-19 restrictions, giving students little opportunity to test themselves in competition, but some highlights have still been recorded.

Carmel College sports director Annie Sadlier said, "The impact of this shortened season will be felt for many years to come in terms of development of athletes and, for the year 13s, losing what should have been their pinnacle year of school sport."

For Carmel, the high points included Robyn Spark being named in the national senior women's water polo squad, Manon Bonar making the national Under 17 beach volleyball team and Grace Buxton and Maria Hanabadi being named in the national junior women's beach volleyball team.

Rosmini College 1st XV rugby coach Jacob Corbett said, "It's a glass half full vs glass half empty situation. Although we weren't able to complete the season and send our Year 13s out on a positive note, we are incredibly grateful that we were able to play any rugby in 2020 with everything that is going on right now."

One of the biggest highlights this season for Rosmini's 1st XV was a victory at home against Whangarei Boys High School. "The team set themselves a goal to restore pride in the jersey and represent the school's old boys well. The indication of their success in this



Higher honours... Rosmini fullback Keano Kini was picked for the Blues development squad

was shown with great interest building around the team and crowd numbers increasing at every game," said Corbett.

He hopes the side can springboard from the momentum created this year into a positive

season in 2021.

1st XV captain and centre Rory Taylor and fullback Keano Kini were selected for the Barbarians-Blues Under 18 Development Squad.

They were to participate in a week-long camp in the first week of the school holidays, culminating in a game against the Chiefs U18 Squad. The North Harbour U18 Squad is yet to be announced but Rosmini is expecting to have several players in that team.

Westlake Boys High School sports director Paul Strang said major casualties of winter sports cancellations included the National Cross Country Championships, the National Cycling Championships and the North Island Orienteering Champs. "Many will talk of loss and unfinished business this year, but we prefer to focus on what has been gained," he said.

Westlake Boys premier hockey side had a strong season: they were North Harbour Champions, beating Rosmini 2-1 in the final.

Westlake's 1st XV were unbeaten and top of the table when the winter sports season was cancelled. The school's premier football and basketball teams were also progressing well and in semi-final contention.

1st XV captain and half back Brook Robson, wing Taufuai Lolohea, fullback Caleb Tangitau and prop Righard Snyman have been selected for the Barbarians-Blues Under 18 Squad.

Yo-yo retail rebound hoped for as Covid levels drop

Hospitality businesses are counting down to a hoped-for Covid-19 alert-level '1.5', says Takapuna Beach Business Association chief executive Terence Harpur. With the rest of the country at level 1 and Auckland having relaxed from level 2.5 to level 2 last week, allowing bigger gatherings, trading regulations were still challenging in bars and eateries, he said.

Figures from Takapuna showed that while there had been an immediate rebound on the

move out of level 3, the retail returns had not been fully sustained. The latest Marketview data showed total spending in Takapuna in the week ending 13 September had been down 11.7 per cent compared with the same week in 2019. The week earlier it was down just 3.5 per cent.

"When we dropped down to level 2.5, retail enjoyed an instant rebound, largely thanks to some pent-up consumer demand. However, with level 2.5 then extended, trade started

slowing again, so level 2 will be disappointing to many businesses, especially our bars, cafes, and restaurants," says Mr Harpur.

Spending on hospitality and accommodation was down 22.5 per cent on the same week a year earlier, the latest data showed. Harpur urged businesses to consider the wider cost to retailers when staff were working from home. "The busted harbour bridge is not helping either. We really need everyone to come back to the office."

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From page 1

Thieves ransack school gardens



Thief at work... an image of one of the intruders, caught on security footage



Pride and joy... Forrest Hill School gardens before they were ransacked

says deputy principal Angela White.

The thieves stole the school's garden hose and all of its fittings, destroyed garden beds and stripped plants bare.

"The students were able to collect a wheelbarrow full of what was left on the ground," White says. "The thieves were able to take a substantial amount of produce."

Forrest Hill school was the first school on the North Shore to adopt the 'Garden to table' programme to encourage students to grow healthy food. The students had been growing and harvesting produce to cook healthy recipes MasterChef style.

Every two weeks, the school's year 5 students create recipes and make meals to feed around 35 people.

Anyone with information about the theft, or who would like to help the school with its gardens, is asked to call the school on 09 410 8939.

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Board fights for autonomy over weed-spraying

Local politicians are fighting to retain the right to make decisions over weed management on local footpaths and roadsides, including the use of chemical sprays.

Plans to impose an Auckland-wide approach to spraying have sparked community concern, with Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members caught in the crossfire.

Members do not support proposals in an Auckland Council weed-management report that would scrap hot-water spraying and use more of the contentious chemical glyphosate citywide. They voted unanimously against standardisation.

Board chair Aidan Bennett said he was sure he was not alone in being peppered with texts and emails urging chemical spray methods be totally rejected.

To keep more than 5000km of urban roadsides clear of weeds, the council wants to align the historically different methods of management used across various local-board areas.

In the Devonport-Takapuna area, hot-water spray is commonly used, with limited use of glyphosate spray on resistant weed types. "There's a bit of an urban myth that Devonport is completely spray-free," observed member Ruth Jackson.

The Project Streetscapes: Weed Management report recommends citywide use of a cheaper combination of plant-based herbicide and spot spraying of glyphosate. "This is estimated to lead to a reduction in glyphosate, carbon emissions and water usage across the region while achieving effective control," it said.

Board deputy chair George Wood said it would be hard to get the approach accepted locally, given there was less chemical spraying in the board area than many other parts of the city. "I'm concerned this is to be sorted out by a committee of the governing body and Roundup is going to figure pretty highly," he said.

Jackson said: "This sounds like a drop in service levels, by one-size-fits-all delivery."

A "definitive position" hadn't been taken by the council, an official told the meeting. The aim was to maintain standards, have a regional decision made and "then we can look at the local boards."

Several board members said matters were being rushed. They wanted more information, including the results of trials of other methods of control, including foam treatment, which they had been told previously were in train.

"Aren't we putting the cart before the horse?" member Trish Deans said. The council's policy for parks and open spaces set in 2013 was to reduce agri-chemical use overall, she said. Any proposals should recognise this, yet, confusion existed about measuring how much glyphosate was being used. Deans wanted more detail and better public notification through local newspapers when any chemical spraying was done.

Bennett said: "One day, everyone would like to not use chemicals, but that day is not here yet." Other methods were more expensive and less effective. This had been seen with playing fields, he said. (After lobbying by the North Shore Cricket Club, a decade-long policy of no

Bus cuts loom

Bus trips on the 842 route from Crown Hill to Smales Farm will be halved as part of Auckland Transport (AT) cost-cutting moves, prompted by Covid-19 revenue shortfalls. The peak-only weekday service will run every 20 minutes, rather than every 10 minutes, taking effect from late January, 2021. A spokesperson said AT believed there was still sufficient capacity for passengers riding to the Smales Farm bus station.

Express interrupted

The NX2 bus service will no longer run as far north as Hibiscus Coast on its weekend late-night trips. Two trips on Saturdays and two on Sundays will from late January instead terminate at Albany.

chemical spraying on Devonport Domain was reversed by the board in late 2019. Other sports grounds were already being sprayed.)

Jackson said, like many people, she did not want agri-chemicals used. An exception was glyphosate for nut grass, because "you can't get rid of it any other way".

The Kaipatiki Local Board also opposes standardised control. All of Auckland's 21 local boards are giving their feedback, with the council's Environment and Climate Change Committee due to decide on the proposals on 12 November.

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Free art and craft over school holidays

The Takapuna North Community Trust has free fun art and craft activities for primary-aged children lined up on Wednesdays during the holidays. The second session will be from 10am to 1pm on Wednesday next week, at the Mary Thomas building at 3 Gibbons Rd Takapuna. Caregiver supervision is required.

Parent Amy Ellis from Castor Bay said: "I often visit the Takapuna North Community Trust preschool play. It is always set up with lots of engaging age-appropriate toys for preschoolers. It is a place where children can interact alongside other children." She said with many activities and venues for kids not yet reopened, it's refreshing to have preschool play activities available. "Parents can interact with other parents or just take a mental break and have a cup of tea, while the little ones are amused."

Takapuna Normal holds 50th jubilee

Takapuna Normal Intermediate School holds its 50th Jubilee next month. It will have an open day at the school on Friday 13 November, with student tours for ex-pupils and ex-staff, followed by an evening mix and mingle. Old photos, school memorabilia and writing from current students will be on display. The school will also open a time capsule from the 25th Jubilee in 1995. Students and staff members have made tiles that will be displayed on five poles in the garden to represent the school's five decades. Contact the school at admin@tnis.school.nz

Shining light

The 'Beacon' sculpture in Milford Reserve is a finalist for several top design awards. Sculptor Ling Ea's striking reflective work has been shortlisted in three categories in the Designers Institute's annual Best Design Awards. The winners will be announced on 13 November. A week earlier, a Covid-delayed public function will be held to celebrate the sculpture, introduce the artist and also recognise 127 years since women won the vote in New Zealand. Beacon and its purple lighting was inspired by the suffrage movement. The event is on Saturday 8 November, beginning at the Milford Cruising Club at 10.30am, then moving on to the reserve.

New mask-making machine

A new sewing machine has been bought by the busy volunteer mask makers of the North Shore Hospital Auxiliary group. On top of making 400 masks to give to hospital mental health service users, the team has been selling their masks to the public for \$5. Since their fundraiser featuring in the last Observer, around 150 masks have been sold. They can be bought on Monday, Wednesday or Friday from 10am to 2pm at the auxiliary's base at 136 Shakespeare Rd (near the hospital entrance), through the group's Facebook page or by contacting president Linda Smalley on 021 620 373.

Extra checks for building site

Foundation and earth works at a Takapuna apartment development site will be in for extra checks, Auckland Council says.

Residents living near the site at 42-44 Byron Ave had raised concerns about work there (Observer, 18 September). Worksafe closed the site down briefly after a slip along the boundary which undermined a neighbour's garage, meaning he could no longer use it or his driveway. Noise and vibrations from pile driving was another cause of complaint from those living nearby.

A council spokesperson said staff visited the site immediately after they were informed about the slip to assess and manage safety issues. The garage area was fenced off and a Dangerous Building Notice was subsequently issued restricting access.

The developer was required to complete approved remedial works and stabilise the slip to ensure no further collapse occurs.

The council said it would closely monitor the works to ensure they were up to standard.

"Additionally, all foundation and earthworks at 42-44 Byron Ave will now undergo extensive assessment to ensure compliance," the spokesperson said.

New recycling hub

B:HIVE and Smales Farm have partnered with Terracycle to become a community collection hub for hard-to-recycle items. Terracycle recycles items such as toothbrushes or used pens which would usually go to the landfill. Money from the recycling will go to Harbour Hospice North Shore.



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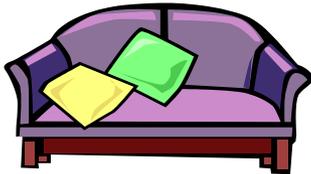
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Schools build connections with local parks



Look and learn... Carmel College students learn about native planting at Sylvan Park

Carmel College's new Adopt-A-Park Club has been planting at Sylvan Park as part of a new Auckland Council initiative to improve Lake Pupuke.

Over winter, Carmel and Sunnynook Primary carried out native plantings at Lake Pupuke and Lyford Bush at the Sunnynook Reserve.

Auckland Council Park Ranger Anna Baine said, "We are hoping to work with these two schools and Takapuna Primary school on a

range of conservation activities within their local parks."

Auckland Council's Adopt-A-Park programme will help students learn about their local parks and its habitats. "It is a wonderful opportunity to do something good for the community and environment," said Baine.

Involvement can be tailored to suit each school's needs, from one class completing an activity each term, through to the entire school

being involved. Activities can include picking up rubbish, monitoring wildlife or pests, reporting damage to parks furniture, and tree planting.

In addition to the park activities, rangers can also run educational sessions with students on park-related topics. To learn more about taking part, please contact community programme rangers Anna Baine at anna.baine@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or Glenn Browne at glenn.browne@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

Doctors zoom through appointments

A soundproof booth is helping North Shore Hospital doctors continue patient consultations. Using phone and video technology, they have been able to keep up with confidential consultations that would normally have been done in-person, rather than have to postpone them during Covid-19 restrictions.

Patient feedback to tele-health had been positive, a spokesperson for the Waitemata District Health Board said. Between 23 March and 3 July, the board had delivered more than 26,500 virtual appointments, compared with just 1246 for the whole of 2018.

"Giving patients the option to connect and communicate with their doctor from their own home removes hurdles for people, whether this is transport, finding child care or having to take time off work to go to an appointment," said the chief medical officer, Dr Jonathan Christiansen.

Risks of exposure to Covid were also reduced. It was estimated that nearly 100,000 kilometres in travel and nearly \$4 million in travel costs and loss of earnings had been saved.

A trial using a pod in the outpatients department at North Shore Hospital had the side benefit of freeing up a clinical room for the essential

appointments that were continuing. The pod contained a computer, phone and online toolkit for doctors to video call or phone patients.

"Face-to-face consultations are still required for many patients for clinical reasons, but if high-quality care can be provided via telehealth, we offer patients that option," said Christiansen.

A second pod would soon be set up in the community for patient use as a way to bridge the digital divide, said Dr Penny Andrew. This would be an eight-week trial. Dr Andrew said not everyone had access to a computer, the internet or a space to take a call.

Shore silent as tsunami sirens tested

Tsunami sirens were sounded in a test along parts of Auckland's coastline at noon last Sunday, but the North Shore was silent.

New sirens at Orewa were among those tested, along with around 40 others, most of which were installed by the former Waitakere and Rodney District Councils. Gaps in the network will be studied by Auckland Council to decide if more sirens are needed. "This work will help us in deciding whether tsunami sirens are appropriate for the rest of our coastal communities, such as Devonport," said the principal science adviser for Auckland Emergency Management, Angela Doherty, in response to an Observer query.

Two sirens had been added at Orewa because it was considered a high-risk site due to its flat topography and population, she said.

"Before we look at expanding our regional siren alerting network, we first need to understand the specific risks damaging tsunamis will bring to each community, said Doherty. With more than 3000km of coastline, many Auckland communities were potentially at risk, she said.

The team was half-way through a 10-year project aimed at understanding more about these risks. Tsunami inundation (flood) zones were being remodelled, using latest techniques. "After we've completed the new modelling,

we'll start looking at how to best support our coastal communities and support the existing national alerting system, the Emergency Mobile Alert."

Doherty said the mobile alert was the country's primary warning mechanism. "Anything we do is to support that system or provide additional alerting capability." Other warnings included a sign-up SMS service.

Sirens in the old Rodney district are sited at Omaha, Port Wells, Whangateau, Waiwera and Orewa. In Waitakere they are at Te Henga/Bethells Beach, Piha (north and south), Karekare, Huia, Little Huia, Whatipu, Te Atatu (north and south) and Herald Island.

Putting their backs into it at Byrnes Reserve



Mulch ado about planting....Milford Rotarians Bruce Rasmussen, Sharon Donohue and Weston Kerr at work at Brian Byrnes Reserve

A major restoration effort at Brian Byrnes Reserve in Milford saw 950 native shrubs and trees planted last month.

The North Shore Birdsong Project received a planting grant of just under \$3000 from the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board and Auckland Council.

Auckland Council funded 470 plants and the others were funded from a portion of the local-board grant.

Over the last few weeks, nearly 50 community volunteers helped with planting. Last week, Milford Rotarians worked to mulch and water the planting area. Recycled coffee sacks were also pegged down to protect the trees on the Wairau Stream banks.

Takapuna North Community Trust environmental coordinator Fiona Martin said, "We were running a few weeks late due to lockdown, but we squeezed it all in and did more than a few bucket trips to the stream to water the plants."

At Smith's Bush East, off Karaka St, volunteers just finished planting 120 saplings in their special ecological area. "Groundwater levels are lower than can sustain some of the older trees, so we are seeing large trees like the kahikatea or white pine trees dying off," said Martin.

Smith's Bush East volunteers are working on what they can do to replace dying trees and identifying which ground cover plants should be growing there for the next planting season.

Next winter, the North Shore Birdsong Project will be looking for planting volunteers for the planned ground-cover plantings.

Any new volunteers who are interested in helping with maintenance of planting at Brian Byrnes Reserve over the next few months can contact Martin at enviro@takapuna.co.nz.



Sack solution...Takapuna North Community Trust environmental coordinator Fiona Martin uses coffee sacks to keep the soil moist

Residents disappointed over tree removal

Milford residents are shocked that a 50-year-old Puriri tree was cut down to make way for the Milford School car park. Milford Residents Association member, Norma Bott said she was disappointed that the school did not do more to save the tree. "It is disrespectful to cut down a tree so old and especially

one that is a stepping stone for native birds. I spend lots of my free time investing in pest control, volunteering on different committees to enhance our neighbourhood, and with the single stroke of a chainsaw, down can come a magnificent specimen of a tree," said Bott.



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Strait up: Carmel's Caitlin dives into Foveaux challenge

Carmel College swimmer Caitlin O'Reilly made the most of the second Covid-19 lockdown by getting stuck into training at Takapuna Beach.

Swimming 10km at a time in 12 degree water was part of the 16-year-old ocean marathon swimmer's training preparation for an attempt at swimming 28.6km across Foveaux Strait between the South and Stewart Islands early next year.

If she is successful, she will be the youngest swimmer to complete New Zealand's triple crown of marathon swimming: Lake Taupo, Cook Strait and Foveaux Strait.

"The satisfaction from finishing and the adrenaline from racing keeps me motivated," Caitlin says.

A documentary, *Swimming Foveaux*, is being made about her latest challenge.

Caitlin swam Cook Strait, a 26km swim which took her 7 hours and 19 minutes, in 2017, aged 12.

Last year, she swam Lake Taupo, a 40km swim taking her 13 hours and 26 minutes.

"I didn't want to be a one-hit wonder when



Foveaux bound... Caitlin O'Reilly plans to swim the 28.6km between the South and Stewart Islands early in 2021

I finished the Cook Strait, so then I went on to complete Lake Taupo," she says.

Along with Foveaux Strait, she has a further goal of completing the Oceans Seven, a challenge consisting of seven open water

channel swims, including the English Channel and six other swims around the world.

"My first swim, Cook Strait, was the hardest mentally because I finished the swim in the dark.

"I remember looking up, seeing land and thinking 'Okay I'm not too far away'. Three hours later I was still swimming and crying," she laughs.

She also remembers swimming at Takapuna Beach, when a strap on her watch came loose and she thought it was a shark brushing her and freaked out.

"Sometimes I'm afraid of what could be down there, but I always have a board or boat nearby so I'm not alone."

Caitlin trains with the North Shore Swimming Club, clocking more than six two-hour sessions a week.

She says her parents have always supported her goals, as have coaches Ryan Skinner and Philip Rush.

To support Caitlin, and help have the documentary completed, visit her Facebook page 'Swimming Foveaux'.

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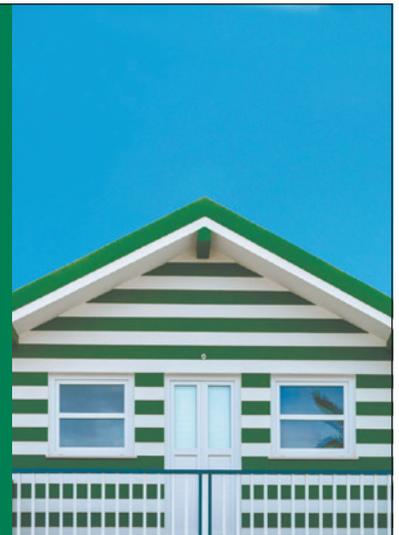
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Showcasing Milford's past

An exhibition of heritage photographs of Milford gives residents of today a chance to see the suburb of yesteryear.

Beach and town scenes collated by the Milford Residents Association are among those on display. In all, around 60 images are being shown at the Milford Centre.

Residents association co-chair Norma Bott said this was the second year the popular exhibition had been mounted, but with different images. Her co-chair, Debbie Dunsford, had brought her historian's skills into play with insightful captions.

Over the last few years the association has gathered around 300 images, drawn from the National Library and other public sites, and also collected from private individuals. "I spent Covid collating a database," said Bott.

Images from the collection would also feature at the rescheduled Milford Big Day Out, which is now planned for late November. With the day's organiser, the Wairau Estuary Environmental Protection Society, focusing on healthy waterways, Bott said this would be a chance to show early images of Wairau Creek.

The mall exhibition, supported by the Milford Business Association, and the shopping centre owner, who is providing use of a spare space next to the Health 2000 store, runs until November.

Picture this... scenes from old Milford



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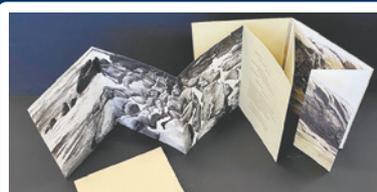
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LOW SENSORY HOUR

As part of Takapuna Library's commitment to inclusion and sharing the complete library experience with people of all abilities within our community, we will be trialing a low sensory hour from 4-5 every Friday afternoon, starting 30 October. Lights and noise will be reduced during this time.

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Book review – Dictatorland: the Men who stole Africa

On the surface, a rumble through African history over the last 100-or-so years could seem a repetitive catalogue of despots and corruption, with little to teach us other than 'power corrupts'.

But in the capable hands of former BBC journalist Paul Kenyon, his *Dictatorland* offers much more.

All the usual suspects of post-colonial excess – including Robert Mugabe and Colonel Gaddafi – are profiled, alongside the political machinations that brought them to power.

Kenyon's strength is how he intermingles the rise of the dictators with other forces at play: the dying days of the colonial regimes and rise of their replacements; the diamond, oil and cocoa industries.

It's no academic study. Historical data is expertly woven into Kenyon's own on-the-ground reporting and interviews with exiles, warlords and refugees.

The true cost of Western foreign policy is laid bare – Africans end up paid a pittance to supply oil and chocolate to the West, while their leaders salt millions away into Swiss bank accounts, at the same time as grabbing photo-ops on the world stage with leaders such as Tony Blair and Barack Obama, who knew full well the carnage

being wrought on the wider population.

Dictatorland is journalism in its highest form, shedding light on some of the world's darkest areas, such as Eritrea: one of the most repressed and secretive countries, second only to North Korea in its lack of press freedoms.

In New Zealand, journalists have been criticised recently for challenging Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and health chief Ashley Bloomfield over the handling of Covid-19 border controls. Read this book and you'll see that any loss of press and individual freedoms can lead down a slippery and often treacherous slope.

Kenyon does offer some hope for Africa – four or five countries are doing okay, gauged on the Western scale of stable government, increasing life expectancy and overall economic health.

He does caution on China's increasing influence in the area, as the emerging economic/colonising power – a global trend, with history in danger of repeating itself on the African continent – which is why this is an immediate and important work.

Reviewed by Rob Drent
(Dictatorland was purchased as part of our Covid-19 support for local businesses.)



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Teen lands contract for debut novel

Westlake Girls High School student and talented writer Rachel (Ray) Carr has been awarded a contract to publish her novel, *Guardian Angel*.

At just 16 years old, Ray was the youngest of the 1000 writers chosen by WebNovel, an online writing and publishing site, to be given a contract.

Then, as an added bonus, in late July *Guardian Angel* was successful in the Spirit competition held by WebNovel, in which writers can win prizes for completing novels. To be eligible, her book needs to have 120,000 words.

“At this point, I had only finished the draft for the first 28 or so chapters of my book – 22,242 words. I chose to give myself the challenge of writing 100,000 words in 66 days. The closing date was 30 September and I wanted editing time,” Ray says.

This meant she had to write 1500 words a day, starting the writing challenge on 25 July.

She’s on track to complete the novel in time, despite the challenges of lockdown.

Ray started writing in Year 6. “My first writing account was opened in September 2018, but I had been writing for several years before that on paper and in journals,” she says.

She has a complete book of poetry with 100 poems online, and is working on a second.

Ray plans to go to university after high school, hoping to study journalism and criminology.

“My love of writing comes from a passion for communicating. I love the freedom of writing” she says.

“Writing gives me a sense of accomplishment, that I have the ability to create something that is unique and new that I hope will be loved by my readers.

“It’s an outlet for my creativity and imagination, and gives me a chance to get everything out of my head and down into words.”

Guardian Angel is a three-part story that



covers a lot of sensitive subjects. The story is about political corruption, segregation, Darwinism, dystopian lifestyles, religion, broken families and a young girl who just wants a change. It is set in a futuristic world where money is the only thing keeping people afloat.

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David Attenborough: A Life on our Planet (E) 114min	SPECIAL SCREENINGS 1-3 OCT
The More You Ignore Me (M) 99min	ADVANCE SCREENINGS 2-4 OCT

COMING SOON

The More You Ignore Me (M) 99min	8 OCT
Lucky Grandma (M) 88min	8 OCT
It Must Be Heaven (PG) 102min	8 OCT
Tintoretto: A Rebel in Venice (E) 90min	15 OCT

SPECIALS
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*EXCEPT PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

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