

The Rangitoto Observer

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 47 – November 27, 2020

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

It's a wrap
for top student... p3

Principal graduates
to new school... p12

Lake House saviour
honoured... p23

Westpac shutting shop in Milford

The Westpac Milford branch is closing – the latest in a rounds of bank shutdowns sweeping the country.

The Rangitoto Observer learned last week that Westpac had been consulting with Milford staff about a possible closure.

Westpac confirmed last Friday that the branch would be closing before Christmas.

“Nationally, in the past four years over-the-counter transactions have fallen by 65 per cent. There are now 100 logins to online banking for each transaction in a branch,” a

Westpac spokesperson said.

“With that in mind, we began consulting with our team at our Milford branch in October about closing the branch.

“This week we confirmed to our team that

To page 3

Pitching in: students school yard Covid-year camp



In-tents experience... Sunnynook Primary School pupils (from left) Immanuella Nyati, Miriana Peeti-Roberts, Zoe Salatielu and Isabella Kwon went tenting at school after Covid-19 ruled out an off-site camp. More pictures, story pages 10.



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Beachside Golden Weather continues this Christmas

An “iconic” event for Takapuna – the Christmas morning performance of a segment from Bruce Mason’s play *The End of the Golden Weather* – was one of the few recent applications for a grant from the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board that won the full amount requested.

The board gave organisers the New Zealand Theatre Month Trust Board the \$2000 it requested, but not without debate.

Trust board chair Sir Roger Hall had warned that without backing the solo performance was unlikely to be staged.

Most “quick response” grant applications from community groups were trimmed back by a local board mindful of tight budgets and future grants rounds ahead.

In all, nearly \$33,000 was asked for and just over \$18,000 granted at this month’s meeting.

The board has discretion in how it allocates Auckland Council funding from its annual community grants budget of \$245,000. This comes with set criteria for detailed applications from community, cultural and sports and recreation groups.

The board dispenses the money through

two larger application rounds for amounts up to \$15,000 and in two “quick response” rounds for smaller grants, up to \$2000.

The first round of each category saw a total of just over \$100,000 allocated, with an additional \$7000 chipped in last month to ensure Christmas by the Lake in Milford could continue.

The recent second round of quick-response grants ranged from applications for street-beautification projects, networking events and a school water-tank installation.

Board members mostly came to quick agreement on new lower amounts to be allocated, in some cases cutting requests by half.

The Mason play stood out in eventually receiving all it had hoped for, as did a Christmas carol event at the PumpHouse, which received \$1000.

But the Ngataranga Tennis Club’s wish for \$1275 for a Christmas party did not come true.

Of the tennis-club application, board member Toni van Tonder asked, “Why?” She noted that a lot of clubs might want to have money for a party.

Board deputy chair George Wood said the

amount asked for was a lot of money. It was explained that the tennis club had previously been supported, but the board decided that \$500 was enough this year.

Several board members queried why the Mason play’s allocation should not be reduced as others were, but member Jan O’Connor argued strongly in favour of the need to meet the \$2000 request which she said did not cover the trust’s full costs.

“This is an iconic New Zealand play and set in our area,” noted member Trish Deans.

O’Connor said the free play was a Kiwi classic that attracted hundreds of people beachside every year. “Anyone can rock up.”

For those without families, or not wishing to attend church, it provided a familiar Christmas touchstone. If it rained, the organisers had to move to the Takapuna Memorial Hall, which came with hireage costs. This occurred last year and the hall was overflowing.

Other board members were swayed.

The board’s final larger funding round will be decided in the second half of the 2020-21 financial year and announced in mid-2021.

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ADVERTISING DEADLINE: December 4

Court action seeks consultation on property sell-off

A legal challenge has been lodged against the potential sale of the former library at 2 The Strand Takapuna, three North Shore public reserves and the former Devonport borough council building.

Both Auckland Council-owned buildings have been vacant for years and post-Covid are on a list of assets under investigation for sale.

The reserves are located at Linwood Rd and Forrest Hill Rd in Forrest Hill, and on Bloomfield Spa in Takapuna.

Save Our Shore Public Spaces, a newly formed incorporated society made up of community leaders from Milford, Sunny-nook, Takapuna and Devonport, has lodged an application for judicial review in the High Court, seeking an order forcing council to have meaningful consultation with the public over any sales.

As part of the legal claim, an interim order to stop any sales was sought.

Council had until this week to file its defence. That would trigger the setting of a date for a hearing.

Group spokesperson Grant Gillon, a former Devonport-Takapuna Local Board

member and North Shore City Councillor, said while sales could not be permanently stopped, the law was clear that council needed to consult meaningfully with the community over land disposal.

“We are arguing the buildings should be included in this as well, as they are community spaces. Council should consult on them if they want to sell them,” Gillon said.

The retention of the buildings for community use was the thrust of a number of Devonport-Takapuna Local Board resolutions over recent years.

Council had been aggressive, Gillon said.

“There has been some mediation [last Wednesday] at my request, after council threatened a community group with costs, which is pretty reprehensible.”

The original Save Our Shore Public Spaces claim included another reserve at Hauraki. Council had since dropped this from its list of 102 parks for sale across Auckland, Gillon said.

• A spokesperson for council’s property arm, Panuku, said both buildings were still on the emergency-budget recycling list but no decisions had yet been made.

2 The Strand: empty for 932 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 932 days. At some point, its future will be determined by Auckland Council.

Letters to the Editor

Topics should be local and not overly long.. Noms-de-plume or submissions without a name will not be printed.

Email news@rangitoto-observer.co.nz or post to Rangitoto Observer, PO Box 32 275, Devonport.

School korowai honours first recipient



Cloak in Westlake colours... Top Maori student Eliakim Tiakia in the korowai made by school trustee Euphymya Lavelle

Westlake Boys High School student Eliakim Tiakia was presented with the school's first traditional Māori korowai after being awarded the school's special Ta Taonga Peri Award.

Westlake board of trustees member Euphymya Lavelle spent this year carefully sewing the korowai for the school's top student of Māori descent. She wanted to honour the recipient with something traditional and meaningful.

Eliakim, said: "I felt really privileged to get presented with the korowai. I have never received a proper Maori taonga before." The Year 13 student who hopes to study engineering after going on a two-year church mission, is from the iwi Ngati Wai.

Lavelle said she thought Westlake Boys High School needed its own korowai. From now on, the top Māori students will have

their names and iwi embroidered onto the cloak each year.

Lavelle finished it off with help from her mother, who taught her how to make the unique tassels traditionally sewn on the garment.

Before the prize-giving ceremony, the korowai was blessed by the Head of Maori, Matua Johnny Waititi, and Pou Ārahi Clare Nasey.

It is made to include the school colours and specific patterns to represent the school. The lining and edging was made from a school blazer.

"I'm really happy and proud at how it turned out," Lavelle said.

Māori families sometimes make their own korowai to give to their children for special occasions, such as prize-giving ceremonies and graduations.

New parking building opens

Takapuna's new public car park will open with a dawn blessing for invited guests today, 27 November. After the karakia, the public will have to wait until early December to be able to use the building.

The five-level, 420-space building on the Gasometer site off Huron and Northcroft streets is designed with growth in mind and will replace the smaller central car park, which is being transformed into a new town square.

In addition to car parking, the building will provide 84 bike spaces, including 28 for e-bikes, plus changing rooms. There will also be space for electric car-share vehicles.

Panuku, Auckland Council's development arm, says that by relocating the car park from the middle of the town centre, more space will be available there for public events and gatherings.

Upgrades are planned for the walk down the Huron and Northcroft St blocks to Lake Rd and the main shopping area.

Park and save

Parking fees at the Killarney car park in Takapuna have been cut by three-quarters, with the running of the facility passing from Wilson Parking to Auckland Transport (AT).

The Covid-19 outbreak resulted in a huge drop in parking use and revenue, said Regional Facilities Auckland (RFA), the council-controlled organisation which owns the carpark as part of the Bruce Mason Theatre complex.

With RFA needing to save costs by reducing the monthly management fees for the carpark, it engaged with AT, also council-owned, to look at ways they could work together to save the city money.

Car-park users benefit, with Wilsons hourly rates of \$4 cut to \$1 under AT, and daily rates dropping from \$12 to \$8.

"We negotiated that AT would manage the carpark at a greatly reduced management fee; and AT also introduced significantly reduced parking costs for patrons," said an RFA spokesman.

The new deal took effect from 2 November.

From page 1

Branch closure

we would be proceeding with the closure. The last day the branch will be open will likely be on December 23rd," the spokesperson said. All the employees at the branch will be redeployed within Westpac. The nearest Westpac Branch to Milford is 3km away in Takapuna.

The BNZ, ASB and ANZ banks still have branches in Milford.

Council issues warning on safety and sea slugs

Beach walkers coming across what they think might be toxic slugs linked to dog poisonings should report sightings to Auckland Council.

“It’s a normal occurrence for sea slugs to be washed ashore, but if there’s unusually high numbers council will investigate,” said its environmental health manager, Mervyn Chetty.

Vets recommend a close eye (or a leash) be kept on dogs, who may try to eat the slugs. People should not touch them, says the council, and young children on the beach should be monitored.

The toxic grey side-gilled slugs (*Pleurobranchaea maculata*) are native to New Zealand and grow to 10cm long. Postings have been made on social media of recent sightings at Narrow Neck. This follows cases of dogs becoming unwell after visiting Takapuna and



Milford beaches.

“While it hasn’t been confirmed that this is due to the dogs being poisoned by eating toxic sea slugs, it is a timely reminder for people to be vigilant and remain cautious at all times,” said Chetty.

In 2009, the slugs were linked to dog deaths in Auckland. They are known to contain

tetrodotoxin, which can be highly poisonous.

The council advises that sea life generally that is found on the beach should not be handled as it may contain harmful levels of bacteria or be poisonous. Anything washed ashore should not be eaten.

People who have been in contact with a sea slug and who start to feel unwell should immediately call 111 for emergency assistance. Anyone who thinks their dog has licked or ingested a toxic slug should contact a vet immediately.

Chetty said people spotting what they thought was a grey side-gilled slug (see photograph) could call the council on (09) 301 0101. They could also take a photograph to send to council staff (at Healthenforcement@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz) to help with identification.

New MP wins shadow role in health

North Shore’s new MP, Simon Watts, has been appointed the National Party’s spokesman on ACC and its associate health spokesman.

Although he sits at the bottom of the party’s rankings, as expected, along with the other first-termers, the poor election result for the party has given newcomers the chance to pick up roles that in a larger caucus would most likely not have been available.

“I am excited to get stuck in,” said Watts. He would spend the next few weeks getting his head around his shadow portfolios.

Select committee memberships were yet to be announced, but Watts hoped to be considered for health or finance, given his career background.

He is a former banker, who spent nearly a decade working in the UK, before returning home to New Zealand in 2013 to work in health management.

Locally, his electorate office in Anzac St, Takapuna, is up and running.

Woof ends in a whimper – big dog day out cancelled

A big dog day out at Milford Reserve was cancelled last Sunday after growing fears toxic sea slugs are washing up on the beach.

The Woofstock 2020 festival was set to kick off with an on-lead 1.5km walk along Milford Beach. But event organisers and charity A week before Woofstock Paw Justice the event would be postponed until 2021 citing the combined uncertainty of Covid-19

and the emergence of sea slugs on North Shore beaches putting dogs lives at risk.

“Your dog’s health is the utmost importance to us and we just couldn’t justify the event if someone’s dog got sick,” Paw Justice said.

The beach walk was to be followed by dog rescue charities, retail stalls, food and entertainment.



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Rowers' mum goes the extra mile

Westlake Boys High School parent Clare Logan will be walking the length of New Zealand in the next six months to raise money for talented rowers who need financial support.

Logan turned 50 this year, with big plans to go hiking and biking with her best friend in Patagonia. But when Covid-19 restrictions hit, she had to rethink her plan, deciding to challenge herself on a six-month journey along New Zealand's Te Araroa Trail, which stretches 3000km from Cape Reinga to Bluff.

"I wanted to show my family and friends that we have all had plans squashed in 2020 and that you can bounce back and do something amazing, no matter how big or small, to move on and get on with life," said Logan, who starts her walk on 20 December.

Along the way Logan will be attending rowing regattas around the country to cheer on her two boys, Sam and Alex, who are in year 13 and year 10 at Westlake Boys.

She aims to raise around \$6500 for the Westlake Boys High School Rowing Society. Her employer, Vodafone, will be matching the funds she raises up to \$3000.

Logan has been involved with rowing on the North Shore for 30 years and holds the sport dear to her heart. She also enjoys photographing the sport. Her husband, John Logan, rows in the masters category for the North Shore Rowing Club.

"Rowing is an expensive sport, and with Covid we haven't been able to run our usual fundraisers this year," said Logan.

It can cost up to \$3500 a year for a Westlake Boys rower, including entry fees for competitions, transport and accommodation costs at regattas.

Logan's fundraising will help to support rowers with fees and also uniform costs.

Janine Sullivan, who heads Westlake Boys Rowing Society fundraising, said Covid-19 had crushed the ability to raise money by



Oarsome effort... Clare Logan with her sons Sam, 17 (left), and Alex, 15

way of group gatherings such as golf days and quiz nights.

A Give A Little page was set up in late September to help raise \$28,000 needed for the new four quad-rigged skiff. In seven weeks it raised \$11,070, thanks to 57 generous donors. Another \$8000 was received from Pub Charity and \$10,000 grant from the New Zealand Community Trust.

It is hoped to have the new skiff on the

water and racing by the end of the month.

Covid has disrupted much of the normal training schedule, but Sullivan said the school's rowers were looking forward to completing their end-of-year exams and getting back to Karapiro for some serious competitive racing.

They will be competing in the Head of the Harbour Regatta at Lake Pupuke on 13 February.

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Fifty-year-old Intermediate's

Takapuna Normal Intermediate School celebrated its 50th Jubilee last week with a special visit from its very first pupils.

The school welcomed the school's foundation students from 1970 to morning assembly.

One, Jane Carolan, remembered the school when it was brand new.

"The best part about the school is that it brought students together from all the primary schools in the area," said Carolan, now 63.

"The school still looks the same. Most of us went to Westlake after Takapuna Normal Intermediate. I know a lot of foundation students who would have loved to be here for the jubilee but are stuck overseas."

Carolan and the other foundation students were able to see their old classrooms and reminisced about the old teachers they had.

The jubilee recognised the school's principals. There have been four in 50 years: George Hood (1970-1979), Des Withell (1980-2000), Owen Alexander (2000-2017) and now principal Wendy Sandifer.

"The students have really enjoyed the jubilee," said Sandifer. "They have been searching for old photos of their parents. They have been amazed by how much the school has changed."

In 2019 the school introduced collaborative open classrooms after knocking down some walls. This year the school has highlighted the success of its chess team who are the New Zealand School Champions for a second consecutive year.

To celebrate, every student and staff member created a unique clay tile that was used to decorate and revamp the 25th Jubilee garden.

More than 700 tiles were made. Over 100 people celebrated the 50th Jubilee at an evening function held at the school.

Old school records and photos will be available online in early December.



Takapuna Normal Intermediate School principal Wendy Sandifer with year 8 pupils Isla Penberthy (left) and Noah Cheng.



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first pupils return for jubilee



Good to be back... Takapuna Normal Intermediate School foundation pupils Christine McDonald and Greg Hall cut the 50th jubilee cake, while others who first attended the school with them in 1970 look on. Many commented on how familiar much of the school still seemed.

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On yer bike

Expect everyone from Santa Claus to the community constable to take to two wheels for Sunnynook's Christmas Wheels event on Thursday, 10 December.

Designed for family fun, it will take place at Sunnynook Park from 5pm to 6.30pm.

Children are encouraged to dress up in a Christmas theme and to decorate their bikes, scooters and wheelchairs. A series of challenges will be set up around the park and free face-painting, a sausage sizzle, games and treats will be on offer.

Organisers at the community centre suggest people ride or scooter to the gathering, because parking will be in short supply in the early evening, due to touch rugby drawing big numbers to the park.

Christmas Wheels is backed by Auckland Transport to encourage active transport in the community.

Creative thinking

A market featuring the work of young designers and creatives will be held at Smales Farm on 6 December, from 2pm to 6pm.

Hosted by the Takapuna North Community Trust, it is youth-led, with around 40 stalls run by clever creators aged from 12 to 25. Youth buskers and performers will also be at the market.

Council tapping into Quarry Lake

The low levels at Auckland's domestic water storage lakes has forced local authorities to take water from local sources.

Auckland Council's Healthy Waters department has set up a site at the Quarry Lake next to Lake Pupuke, where businesses such as waterblasting firms and the construction industry can access water.

The council has applied for a resource consent to take 150 cubic metres of water a day from the lake.

Water will be pumped to a filling station located on the bank of the lake, near the North Shore Rowing Club and North Shore Canoe Club.

The water take would have no impact on the neighbouring Lake Pupuke, says an assessment of environmental effects submitted with the resource consent.

Auckland has faced water restrictions since May 2020 and lake storage levels have remained much lower than usual.

Trial planned for new safety measures near school

Efforts to make the road layout safer for Milford Primary School are continuing.

Auckland Transport (AT) wants to make cycling and walking safer, while reducing congestion for parents who have to drive.

AT told the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board it planned to trial an interim road set-up for six months before any final design was implemented. Community workshops

have been held to talk through a design that proposes footpath improvements and guidance marking leading to raised speed tables on both Stratford Ave and Woodbridge Ln where they meet Shakespeare Rd. A rubber speed bump would be installed on Trevaughn Glade.

Board members hold concerns around the safety of the intersection of Shakespeare and Kitchener roads

Estuary health long-term priority

Ongoing improvement to Wairau Estuary water quality is one of three priorities the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board is pushing to have included in Auckland Council's 10-year plan.

In conjunction with the Kaipatiki board which shares the estuary catchment, a targeted water rate for Healthy Waters was promoted, with a view to enabling the council department to fulfil multi-stage plans, already under way, to clean up the estuary and improve the water quality from the stream flowing from it to Milford Beach and Castor Bay.

The other big ticket items pushed for were:

- A walkway and cycleway linking Esmonde Rd to Francis St, Hauraki. This could potentially create a route from the base of the Devonport peninsula to Takapuna and

across the motorway to link to the Skypath that will eventually connect the North Shore and the city.

- Upgrading the Bayswater ferry terminal from what has been described as a shed, into a suitable commuter facility.

The priorities, along with those of other local boards across the city, have been put to the council's Finance and Performance Committee, which will firm up its long-term plan next month. The community will then get a chance to provide feedback on this in a consultative process from 15 February to 15 March next year.

Getting major projects on the books is a key step to having planning and design work factored in and budgets set aside, but until they enter shorter-term plans it is not a guarantee that the work will proceed.

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Main-street marauders in Milford

Pirates of all ages were out in force in Milford on Saturday, from children in dress-ups to a performing troupe who enlivened the tenth annual Pirate Market Day.

Kitchener Rd was closed from Shakespeare Rd to Milford Rd, so stalls could be set up along the main street.

The event, put on by the Milford Business Association, also saw bouncy castles, including one shaped like a pirate ship, set up for fun and games.

An auction-style prize draw, featuring items donated by local stores, ended the day, with bidders having exchanged store receipts for "Milford money" to participate.

Association manager, Murray Hill, was pleased with how the relaxed event ran, saying the full closure of the street this year, spreading stalls beyond the pavement provided plenty of room for families to wander freely.



Twin terrors... Rosie Buhagiar, aged 6, and sister Jazie, aged 3, made the trip from Mairangi Bay for a dress-up day



Milford pirate... Lev Kelsall, aged 8, went to the shopping centre in the morning with his father, then returned home for an afternoon outing in costume, complete with a cutlass to juggle



Fly girl... Zoe Farmer, aged 5, was one of a queue for face-painting, choosing a butterfly design, during her day with her grandparent

School camp pitches up close to home



Sunnynook Primary School students were excited to pitch tents and camp out on the school grounds, after the annual year-6 camp was cancelled due to Covid restrictions.

The school originally planned to have the camp at Carey Park in Henderson but Level 2 restrictions at the time meant only groups of 10 people could gather.

“The kids were gutted,” said teacher Monica Duffield. “It has been a tough year for them, so I thought we could have a camp at the school and we are really grateful that we still have the opportunity to do this. The kids are really excited about the activities we have planned.”

Camping at school cost parents less than a quarter of the price of heading off-site.

Families provided their own tents, sleeping bags and some of the food. A go-karting experience for the kids was also supplied by a family.

“We’re really making use of the resources we have to hand and the kind offers of help from our school community to make this happen and keep costs down,” said community liaison Nicole France. “We do work hard to ensure camp is as affordable as possible and always ensure that the cost is not a barrier to all of the children attending.”

She said it was encouraging to see the students put up their tents so fast and still get excited about camp despite it being on school grounds.

The school is tucked away near Sunnynook’s Lyford Reserve and surrounded by enough greenery to feel like a camping location.

A treasure hunt around Lyford Reserve and an evening bush walk with torches through some of its tracks were on the camp programme.

Happy campers... Above: the assembled year-6 campers at Sunnynook Primary. Below: teacher Rebekkah Hagen helps out with a tent peg. Bottom: (from left) Reya Vashani, Laela Higgins and Zac Lampard



Rosmini Dux helps next generation perform

Rosmini College prefect Anthony Pita spent this year paying it back to his old primary school, taking kapa haka classes at St Leo's Catholic Primary School in Devonport. Last week this culminated in his his young charges making him "proud" performing with other local schools at a kapa haka festival.

Seventeen-year-old Anthony, who was named Rosmini's Dux for 2020, was not just the top scholar, but also a Maori leader at the college and a keen football player and team captain.

Taking kapa haka was a first for him: "It was a new learning experience, especially in terms of teaching the girls, what with going to an all-boys school and also having to learn what they could do in cultural terms of kapa haka." He found them good students in weekly sessions he ran before going to his own classes.

After leading the St Leo's group of around 30 students at last week's performance of two waiata and a the festival held at Hauraki Primary School, Anthony headed off to an afternoon statistics scholarship examination.

He would like to continue with kapa haka next year, if he can manage it with university.

Anthony won an academic scholarship to the University of Auckland, where he plans to study English, Law and Psychology.

Writing is another thing he enjoys, and he used lockdown as a chance to finish and publish his first novel, *The Harder they Try*, which he said was "about a kid who had cancer and was chasing a dream about playing pro rugby."

"It's really important to do something creative as an outlet," he maintains.

His own kapa haka journey began at St Leo's when he was in Year 6. He performed throughout his college years, with the exception of the Covid-disrupted 2020. "It's something I really enjoy connecting with my culture with," says Anthony, who links to Ngati Wai and Ngati Ranginui.

Another former St Leo's student, Veronique Simmonds, was this year's co-head girl at Rosmini sister school, Carmel College.



Model student... Anthony Pita, Rosmini's Dux and prefect.

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Intermediate's new principal graduates from primary

Wairau Intermediate will start the 2021 school year with a new principal who comes armed with insights into the local community from her current role as deputy principal at nearby Sunnynook Primary School.

Yolanda East says she is looking forward to making the move after 11 years at Sunnynook, where she teaches senior classes.

She is keen to continue working with students and parents she knows already and to build relationships by working closely with Wairau's other feeder schools.

"It's an exciting opportunity at a good school with so much potential," says East, who is keen to build the roll over time. "One of the benefits of being a small school is there is room for growth."

She will officially take up the new job in late January, replacing long-serving principal Grant Murray, who is retiring. She is already easing into her new responsibilities, with budget briefings and attendance at a Board of Trustees meeting.

The chair of the trustees, Nicolette Hansen, said the board was thrilled to announce East would be joining Wairau. Her work representing Sunnynook on the local community of schools group, Pupuke Kahui Ako, which takes in early childhood to high school representatives, meant she was familiar with the wider educational picture and personalities.

"She's got energy, vibrancy and passion," said Hansen.

East was chosen from 24 applicants as someone who could build on the strengths of the school.

Her strengths in community engagement stood out, said Hansen. "It was a major selling point for her coming into the school, knowing that she knows the community."

East credited Sunnynook's principal, Virginia Montague, with encouraging her into the Pupuke Kahui Ako role, which was



Warm welcome... Wairau Intermediate's new principal, Yolanda East (centre), flanked by two of the schools Board of Trustees members, chair Nicolette Hansen (left) and Michelle Webb-Atkinson.

a step into the world of principalship. It will be the English-born teacher's first time working in an intermediate after moving to New Zealand in 2008 with her husband, Martin, and two now-adult children.

Roles she has held here include being a Year 5 & 6 team leader and as a special-needs co-ordinator.

Her first focus will be getting to know Wairau's students, staff and the community before building a picture of development opportunities.

"It's not about sudden change, it's about valuing what works and building on that."

East, who is in her 50s, believes opportunities exist to spread the word about what Wairau offers. This includes "re-marketing" it to families in the wider catchment looking to choose between sending their children to Wairau or to Murrays Bay Intermediate to the north or Takapuna Normal Intermediate School to the south.

The school has the capacity to take up to 400 pupils, with its roll currently sitting well under 300.

"We need to be the school of choice for our community," she says.

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Sites eyed for Takapuna rail station

With rail now odds-on favourite for a second harbour crossing, local talk is turning to where a Takapuna station may be sited to cater for future growth.

North Shore councillor and Auckland Council Planning Committee chairman Chris Darby is looking to the west of the town centre, saying this is the area where most of Takapuna's development and intensification will occur.

Coincidentally, it is also where council-controlled organisation and development arm Panuku is trying to sell surplus land around its new Gasometer public car-parking building off Auburn Avenue.

Darby – who emphasises that decisions around a second harbour crossing rest with Waka Kotahi the New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) – says he has messaged NZTA to make sure the agency knows the council land is for sale. “I suggested to look at it and maybe buy,” he told the Observer, adding he considered it best he convey the information so NZTA might potentially talk to Panuku.

“I have to leave it to them, but I say to them, ‘Have a look at this’.”

NZTA this month released a business case done in conjunction with the council and Auckland Transport (AT). It recommended stage two of its preferred harbour crossing improvements be a rail-only tunnel under the Waitemata Harbour to Takapuna and on to

Smales Farm. Stage one, already under way, will upgrade the existing Northern Busway. Longer-term plans are to link road and rail rapid transit networks, possibly taking the train up the busway to Albany.

“This is the most definite course I’ve seen on the harbour crossing ever,” said Darby of the plan.

In discussing the business case last week, members of the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board said the rail plans were exciting and would enhance Takapuna's status as a metropolitan centre.

But they raised a number of issues, including where any station would emerge and how provision for it would be made.

Acting chair George Wood noted that high-voltage Transpower cabling sat underneath the Northern Busway. NZTA had not commented on how they would circumvent that if rail was one day extended up the busway, he said. Such issues were among those he hoped to raise with NZTA.

The board wants to co-ordinate with neighbouring board Kaipatiki to provide common feedback after they hold joint discussions with NZTA in early December. Both boards cover the lower North Shore and areas with feeder routes to the Harbour Bridge.

Member Jan O'Connor said it was a pity Panuku was attempting to cash in on public assets now. “One day there will be another

10,000 people in Takapuna and they need a station near them,” she said.

“I worry it [rail] won't go to the Gasometer site now – there's only one place to go to, the centre,” said O'Connor.

Council-owned land around the fringes of the existing central car-park is being turned into a civic square. Blocks around the fringes are also currently being offered for sale by Panuku, for high-rise development.

Darby said although a train exit shaft need not take up a lot of room, he favoured looking inland from Lake Rd. This would provide a more direct loop to Smales Farm. “The centre of activity of the future is moving progressively west.”

Rail might one day extend to Milford or Glenfield, he suggested. “There's a lot of permutations in this, but you need to get the spine in place.” Although a tunnel might be a decade or two away, extensive design work was needed first. “I'm seeing an incredible amount of skill going into this,” Darby said.

A key decider in where trains surfaced would be if heavy grade or light rail was chosen. Light rail could potentially exit nearer the harbour and run up existing roadways, whereas heavy rail would eat up too much land and require more tunnelling. Such decisions would likely need to dovetail with earlier calls being made on extending rapid transit elsewhere in the city, including to the airport.

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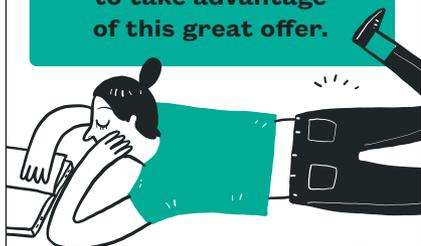
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End in sight for Takapuna upgrade

At long last, there is light at the end of the tunnel for the completion of the Takapuna Metro Centre upgrade. This project certainly hasn't been easy, due to the imposition of Auckland Council's Covid-19 Emergency Budget.

I thought an update of the main projects would interest the Takapuna community.

As the local board's representative on the Takapuna Beach Business Association, I know of the utter despair being experienced by Takapuna businesses through the delay in the completion of the Hurstmere Rd ZUpgrade. The central area of Hurstmere Rd, which links the Anzac St car park to Hurstmere Green, is due for completion in the next few weeks. The contractors will clean away the orange cones and make the street presentable. Drop by and take a look at the progress being made.

The contractors return in May 2021 to complete the upgrade of the two remaining sections.

The Hurstmere Rd intersections with Lake Rd and Anzac St have been completed. I hope that you are happy with the improved efficiency of the Lake Rd traffic lights at Halls Corner. Traffic coming out of The Strand is now able to disperse quickly on the left-turn

traffic-light arrow.

The new Huron St parking building, with 420 car parks, opens in the first weeks of December. Auckland Transport (AT) hasn't advised of their opening deal for this car park but hopefully charges will be similar to the Anzac Street carpark.

It's also great to learn that the Killarney St car park is now under the control again of AT. You can now park there using your AT Park App at \$1 per hour, with a maximum of \$8 for each day. These parking charges apply seven days per week.

America's Cup activities are planned on the Takapuna beachfront reserve next to the Takapuna Boating Club. Council and local board staff are working with ATEED, the council-controlled promotion agency, to ensure that this event is a success. A local promoter has been given the rights to hold the event in this reserve. I am certain this event will be a wonderful spectacle for the Takapuna area.

**George Wood, CNZM
Deputy Chair, Devonport-Takapuna Local Board**

Board backs emission-reduction moves

Auckland Council proposals to, over time, make its community facilities more environmentally friendly and with lower emissions have won Devonport-Takapuna Local Board support.

Buildings and open spaces managed by the Community Facilities department made up 68 per cent of the council's carbon footprint,

a report to the board stated.

"The council is working hard to be a leader in this space," said member Toni van Tonder. Acting chair George Wood noted that buildings such as Devonport and Birkenhead libraries were good examples to the public of how design could be adapted for better outcomes.

'Big powers' going to central government

The Government's move to fast-track planning consents under the Covid-19 Recovery Act are "sweeping", said Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member Ruth Jackson.

The likes of Kainga Ora could override Auckland Council's Unitary Plan, she said. "Some very, very big powers are going over," said member Jan O'Connor.

The Northern Pathway was mentioned as another area where the Act might hold

sway. Because new legislation may not leave enough time for board members to discuss issues at scheduled meetings, authority was delegated to members Toni van Tonder and Trish Deans.

They will provide local-board views on resource consents to council staff. For O'Connor and Deans to provide any local input, the council's Planning Committee might require a working party on the Urban Development Act.

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Diwali brings a taste of Bollywood to Takapuna



Getting into the groove.... Ash Deepa demonstrates how to dance Bollywood-style

Diwali celebrations have been going off with the bang of fireworks in the last few weeks, culminating with a free outdoor event in Takapuna earlier this month.

Bollywood dance music filled Hurstmere Rd as Glenfield-based Aaja Nachle School of Bollywood dancer Ash Deepa wowed

onlookers with her upbeat dance moves.

“It is fantastic to have a cultural festival celebrating Diwali in Takapuna. This is a really great event for the community,” said Takapuna Business Association Chief Executive Terence Harpur.

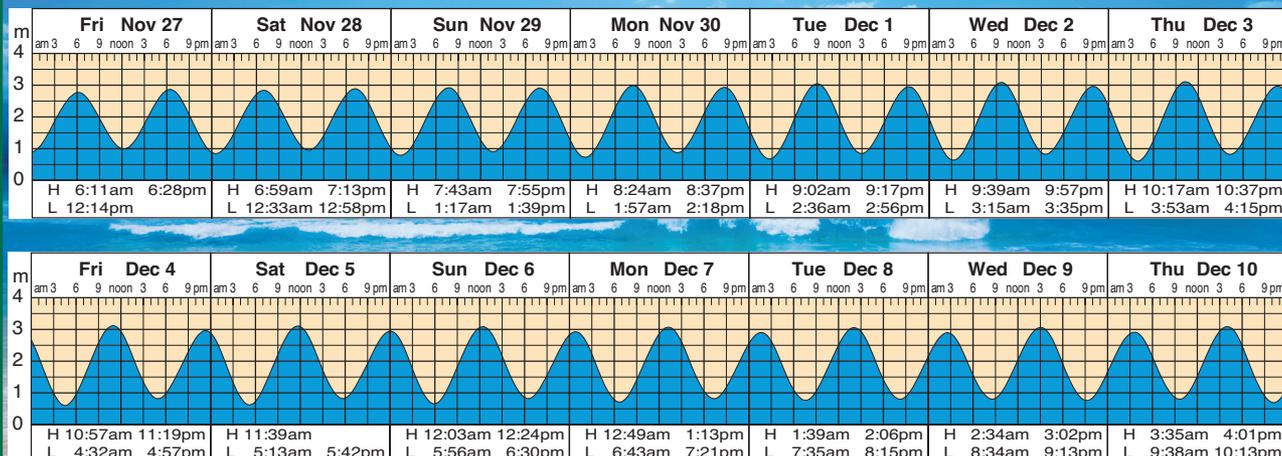
Diwali is one of the most important cel-

ebrations in India.

The week-long “Festival of Lights” is also celebrated by millions around the world.

The Takapuna event was held in conjunction with a series of celebrations across Auckland.

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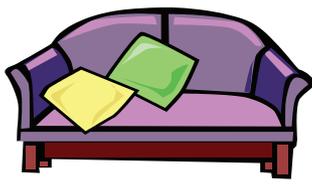
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Tag playing catch-up at Sunnynook Park

Summer Kiwi Tag at Sunnynook Park is proving popular, with 31 teams signed up, and more looking to join the competition in the New Year. Participants range from teams of five-year-olds up to adults.

Organiser Simon Watson said schools had been a little slower to join this season than usual, after such a disrupted year, but it was hoped they would be back in bigger numbers after the Christmas break and until the season ends in March. Wairau Intermediate and Carmel College won \$500 prizes for being early to join up, with Carmel saying it intended to spend the money on sports gear.

“The main focus for us is on participation,” said Watson.

Kiwi Tag, originally designed as a feeder sport into rugby league, is one of two official tag organisations in New Zealand. Both play by the same rules. Teams can be mixed.

Watson, who is president of the Glenfield Greyhounds Rugby League Club, based at Sunnynook Park, said with winter sport now wound up, the facilities were still in good use, both for sport and social functions.

On Monday evenings, seven-a-side-soccer is played at the park, with Tuesday for senior touch and Wednesday and Thursday local touch. Kiwi Tag is on Friday evenings.

The Covid-19 disrupted year had been challenging, he said. League prize-giving under Level 2 conditions had seen junior teams file

through the clubrooms one at a time.

The Greyhounds had been boosted by the recent news that former player Christian Ma’anaima had had his contract with the Newcastle Knights extended. He played at Glenfield for nearly a decade from a young age and the forward was talent-spotted playing under-17s, prompting a family move to Australia to join the Knights development system. The Knights say he has premier team potential and have signed him for another three years.

“He wears his [old] jersey to club days,” says Watson and gets ribbed by the Australians who don’t recognise it and want to know where it comes from.

Helping hand for Covid-hit sport and recreation groups

Local groups have benefited from Sport New Zealand’s Community Resilience Fund set up in the wake of Covid-19.

Big beneficiaries included Milford Cruising Club, Takapuna Boating Club, Pupuke Golf Club and Forrest Hill Milford United AFC, with grants of or near \$25,000.

Smaller groups received amounts of just over \$1000 and up.

In all, \$15 million of government money has been distributed nationwide through Regional Sports Trusts which decided the final amounts. This helped more than 2000 organisations bridge fixed and operational costs from 1 July to 30 September this

year. Applications closed in September.

Groups funded included: 1st Devonport Scout Group, \$1180; Belmont Park Bowling Club, \$2765; Belmont Park Racquets Club, \$15,267; Belmont Scout Group, \$5000; Calliope Sea Scouts \$3000; Campbells Bay Tennis Club, \$11,894; Devonport Squash Club \$6174; Forrest Hill Milford United AFC, \$24,017; Lake Pupuke Tennis Club, \$5000; North Shore Cricket Club, \$1000; North Shore Rugby Football Club, \$16,020; North Shore United AFC, \$25,000; Milford Bowling Club, \$2863; Milford Cruising Club, \$25,000; Milford Tennis Club \$5000; Pupuke Golf Club, \$25,000;

Stanley Bay Bowls and Petanque Club, \$4786; Sunnynook Scout Group, \$1631; Takapuna AFC, \$13,650; Takapuna Amateur Athletic & Harrier Club, \$3219; Takapuna Boating Club, \$21,680; Takapuna Bowling Club, \$4903; Takapuna Grammar School Rowing Club, \$25,000; Takapuna Rugby Football Club, \$1368; Takapuna Scout Hall, \$3191; Takapuna Tennis Club, \$5142; Wakatere Boating Club, \$12,501.

Regional organisations also benefited, including Harbour Basketball, Netball North Harbour, North Harbour Gymnastics and North Harbour Hockey, each to the tune of \$25,000.

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Spray and walk away – boards left to battle with budgets

A standardised road-edge spray policy across Auckland has been rejected by councillors in favour of council allowing its local boards to pick their own methods of weed control.

The catch is that spray budgets will now be standardised. This means those boards, including Devonport-Takapuna, that have historically spent more to use hot water rather than chemicals, face tough choices.

“It sounds like we will get a reduction in funding,” said local-board member Trish Deans, who attended the council’s Environment and Climate Change Committee, where the matter was decided this month.

Officials had pushed for all boards to use the same sprays, a cost-saving policy which, if adopted, would have halved the total use of the controversial spray glyphosate, but seen much more of it applied in central and North Shore areas.

Deans told the Flagstaff many councillors believed Devonport-Takapuna had the gold standard of weed management, but that the northern boards were being subsidised.

At the meeting, Mayor Phil Goff said extending North Shore methods citywide would require \$10 million to \$11 million, which was simply not available. Councillors also consid-

ered that legacy funding was not equitable 10 years after local-body amalgamation.

Local boards had been canvassed on their views. Those in the south and west, where glyphosate was widely used, had supported the standardised spray policy. Others, including Devonport-Takapuna, were opposed, saying it removed long-established local choice.

Committee chair and North Shore councillor Richard Hills, who personally opposes glyphosate use, brokered a pragmatic approach.

This sees each board being funded on the same per-kilometre basis for the roads they have to spray, meeting the council’s commitments to equity.

Hill’s recommendations made provision for locally selected spray methods to be used, provided that required additional funding be met from within each board’s own budgets.

The Community Facilities department was also asked to continue to investigate and prioritise weed-management options that include non-agricultural methodologies, the use of zero-or low-emission vehicles, and of non-potable water.

Committee deputy chair Pippa Coom, who seconded the motion, said it gave clear direction on outcome rather than being one-size-fits-all.

Earlier in the meeting, council officials came in for a grilling from councillors on not being able to provide requested information, including what the budget for weed management was, and around consultation with mana whenua.

Albany ward councillor Wayne Walker used the Official Information Act to obtain contractor spray costs that were considerably below those quoted by council staff to justify their recommendations.

Northern networking next step

“We now face the decision of whether we continue with the gold standard or not,” Trish Deans told other Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members.

Boards have until March 2022 to agree with the council on how weeds in their area will be treated.

Teaming up with other boards which prefer thermal methods to using glyphosate is an option to try to keep costs down and continue a North Shore method first adopted by the then Devon-

port Borough Council in 1986. Discussions with neighbouring board, Kaipatiki, seem likely in the months ahead.

Deans said she wanted the council to become more rigorous around communicating and notifying the public when chemical sprays were used and ensuring this was not done immediately before and after school hours.

“It allows individuals to make decisions about opening and shutting windows and keeping children off fields.”

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Park floods, but water drains to order

Sunnynook Park withstood a recent stern test of its dry pond drainage system, with the lowered main playing field awash with water after a recent downpour, but draining in less than an hour.

“It did what it was designed to do,” said community member Simon Watson. “It stopped all that water getting into the Wairau Stream system and stopped flooding into factories down the way.”

In the past, the park area has been plagued with flooding spilling out towards the Sunnynook Community Centre and overwhelming the stream. When the park and its drainage was redesigned, Auckland Council lowered the level of the No. 1 field with the idea that this would allow water to pool and then drain more efficiently and slowly than if water ran its former course.

Watson, who also chairs the Glenfield Greyhounds Rugby League Club which borders the field, said it was good news to see the system working during the downpour on 9 November. A culvert by the park edge could not handle the deluge, but water was able to flow out to the park, he said, reaching half-way up the lower step of its concrete seating. It took 45 minutes to mostly clear, he said. “In the past the community centre would have got swamped and the concrete pad of the league club.”

Although debris needed to be cleared from the field, the surrounding areas were



Awash... Sunnynook Park during the downpour on 9 November

not swamped. Watson said the clubrooms would have been flooded previously.

While scheduled soccer was not played later that day, the field itself would have been up to it, Watson maintained. Howev-

er, debris remained after the water drained. Council staff turned up the next day to remove logs and even a few stranded fish and to mow the lawns, he said. “It was good to see.”

Big Day Out this Sunday for a healthy Wairau Estuary

Water-quality issues are in focus at the seaside this Sunday 29 November, thanks to the Wairau Estuary Environment Protection Society (WEEPS).

The society’s event at Milford Reserve, dubbed the Big Day Out, will include environmental groups and council organisations outlining projects, such as Wairau Estuary restoration efforts, and offer expert tips on stormwater and wastewater systems.

Live music from local musicians, including Taisha Tari, will be performed. Fun and games for the little ones will keep everyone entertained from 11am to 3pm, with a sausage sizzle and food and coffee trucks providing food and refreshments.

Plans for the Milford Estuary boardwalk will be on display as will historic photo-

graphs of the area, at stands hosted by the local business and residents associations.

The event was delayed several times this year due to Covid-19 alert levels. It is part of WEEPS’ efforts to keep a focus on the need for work on the estuary and its catchment, to ensure water flowing through waterways and to the beaches is not contaminated.

North Shore MP Simon Watts will attend, speaking at noon about the importance of protecting waterways and improving infrastructure. He will multi-task as the event’s first-aid officer.

Groups to learn from include: North Takapuna Environment Network, Pupuke Bird Song Project, Forest & Bird, LegaSea/Rescue Fish and freshwater community conservation programme Whitebait Connection.



Dirty water... a plume of runoff from the Wairau Estuary stream shows as muddy discharge off Castor Bay after recent heavy rain

Tank you very much for your kind donation

Forrest Hill School has received a new water tank for its school garden.

The donated tank is a boost for the school’s garden after it was ransacked by thieves in September.

The garden was vandalised by two middle-aged women. They were recorded on

the school’s CCTV footage at 2am, stealing vegetables and uprooting plants.

Since then, parents of children at the school have provided new seedlings to restore the garden and save the Garden to Table programme in which students cook and create recipes from what they grow in the garden.

Tanksalot in Silverdale donated the water tank. “We will connect it up to the seedling shed roof as soon as possible as a sustainable approach to watering our garden over the summer break – and doing our part in the current water shortage,” said Forrest Hill deputy principal Angela White.



PHOTOGRAPH: MATTHEW DIESCH

Diverse voices... The cast of *The Vagina Monologues* (clockwise, from top left): Tracey Bohua Cui, Shannon Quinn, Monique Rabie, Jenn Onyeiwu, Jade Du Preez, Francesca Browne, Ciara Moynihan, Lauren Middleton, Gemishka Chetty, Emma Hilton, Rhiannon Hadlow, Ayesha Heble and Sofie Gabriel

Taboo topics given an airing at the PumpHouse

Thirteen women from diverse backgrounds will tackle the still-controversial play *The Vagina Monologues* in a local production, among them local actors who say preparing for it has been challenging but fulfilling.

Director Meg Andrews said the play, penned in the 1990s by American Eve Ensler, had been on her bucket list. "I wanted to direct this play to educate and inspire, empower and entertain," she said. "There is so much fear about talking about vulvas and vaginas."

Working with the cast had led her to discover that it took a lot to make her feel uncomfortable.

The play by the Foolish Wit Theatre group is being staged at the Pumphouse Theatre early next month. It was initially planned as being safe to rehearse and perform in times of social distancing, but producer James Bell said post-lockdown it was able to morph into a full-ensemble professional production.

The whole cast is onstage throughout the show, supporting each other and nodding to how each monologue reflects a universal experience. Issues of reproduction, vaginal care, sexual experiences, body image, menstruation, and everything in-between are explored, based on interviews the author conducted.

Forrest Hill actor Jade Du Preez said the script and subject matter were intimidating to start with. "I was going to skip the audition,

but one of my fellow performers posed it as a challenge. I can't back down from a challenge. It also looked like it was going to be fun working with an all-female cast," she said. The play had made her reflect on the need to get over worrying about saying something inappropriate and to think about who decided what was appropriate in the first place and whether those decisions served women and girls.

Ciara Moynihan, a university graduate who recently moved from Belmont to Mairangi Bay, said the play reflected life, which was what art should do. "It's the untold stories of millions of women from around the world being brought to life on stage."

The play still offered audiences a refreshing perspective. For her, being in a wahine-only show with a cast of mixed ages and cultures was a bonus. "I think everyone will get a lot out of it," she said.

Another cast member, Tracey Bohua Cui, from Takapuna, said she was willing to try any performance opportunity and reading the script was a "wow" moment thinking how the show would come to life on stage.

"To understand women, start with understanding their "vagina," that is the *The Vagina Monologues*.

Having rehearsed the play, she now felt very comfortable with it. "I hope our performance

will go smoothly and it can be carried out as scheduled (No more lockdown please!)

• *The Vagina Monologues*, from 2 to 6 December at The PumpHouse Theatre, Takapuna. Tickets, from \$24, from pumphouse.co.nz or ph (09) 4898360.

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New sculpture honours leading arts figure

The Lake House Arts Centre celebrated its 20th anniversary last week with an unveiling of a new permanent sculpture.

The sculpture *Her Hands Around Our Community* by New Zealand artist Bill Hayes celebrates Genevieve Becroft, who led the rescue and restoration of the Lake House 20 years ago.

"I thought the sculpture was quite fitting as it reflects how Genevieve has been helping to shape and form a close community over the years," said Hayes.

Hayes has been running his ceramics workshop at the centre for more than a decade, exhibiting some of his work at the Art by the Sea gallery in Devonport.

The new bronze sculpture has Becroft's hands wrapped around a ceramic bowl.

The sculpture was commissioned six months ago by the Lake House Trust, with contributions made by Lake House Arts life members. It will be displayed at the centre's front entrance.

Around 50 people attended the event to honour past managers and supporters of the arts centre.

On display in the Becroft gallery were a series of interviews with founding members.

A long-time resident of Takapuna, Becroft has been a patron of the arts, and helped save some of the North Shore's heritage buildings.

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Member Trish Deans said, "It is amazing that 20 years ago people had the foresight to keep this building for the arts and the community."

Members shared fond memories of the restoration of the Lake House

Becroft recalled having to sand down the doors.

In 1996, Lake House was moved to Barrys Point Reserve, which was operated as a landfill by Takapuna City Council from 1940 to 1970. The house was cut into seven pieces and stood on pallets for a year while a special platform



Ongoing legacy... Genevieve Becroft flanked by her daughters Tabitha (left) and Gabrielle

and base was built to meet landfill gas-mitigation requirements.

It was reassembled on its new site in 1997 and restoration began. It was opened to the public by then-North Shore City councillor Becroft in 2000.

Becroft was also one of the key people involved in the rescue, renovation and restoration of the PumpHouse.

She continues to support many local charities with her time and through the Becroft Foundation.

What's On

Vagina Monologues
2-6 December
Actors take the stage to tell real-life vulva related stories of people from all over the world.

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol
18-20 December
A staged reading in the spooky atmosphere of the Coal Bunker Studio.

Runaway Reindeer
11-23 December
Riley the Reindeer takes Santa's Sleigh for a WOF and goes on a joyride instead.

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Charlatan (R13) 118min	NEW
Made In Italy (M) 94min	NEW
The Secrets We Keep (R16) 98min	NEW
Open Mic Night at The Vic	26 NOV

COMING SOON

Misbehaviour (M) 106min	3 DEC
Oliver Sacks: His Own Life (M) 114min	3 DEC
The Bee Gees: How You Can Mend A Broken Heart (E) 107min	3 DEC
The Witches (M) 105min ADVANCE SCREENINGS	4-6 DEC
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