

The Rangitoto Observer

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 62 - July 23, 2021

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

**Police chopper sets scene
for crime meeting... p2**

**Petition numbers swell to
save beach walkway... pg 5**

**Bruce Mason tribute
staged in Takapuna... p14**

Popular Takapuna dairy victim of overnight ram raid

An overnight ram raid on a Takapuna dairy has left its shaken staff looking over their shoulders at the door.

The Rangitoto Superette on Lake Rd was targeted around 3am on Saturday 17 July. The managers were not on the premises, but they were phoned by the property owner who lives out the back and arrived to see the damage. A car had been driven through the glass front doors before the offenders took off with cigarettes, tobacco and vapes.

Manager Raj Kaur said it was the first break-in at the dairy in the three years she had been in the job. "We hadn't thought this would happen here, it's a very good area."

The break-in had left her feeling "totally blank on the day". After a big clean-up and the installation of temporary doors, the dairy reopened around lunchtime on Saturday.

"I want to keep my eyes on the door," said Kaur, who added that police had provided a smoke unit to deter future offenders. Bol-

lards would be put out front. Reaction from regulars had been sympathetic. "Customers said 'sorry'; they feel bad for us."

Security footage showed young offenders, including a female, she said. Police had spoken of similar burglaries that night.

Detective Senior Sergeant Ash Matthews of the Waitemata East CIB said the vehicle involved was found in the nearby area.

"At this stage our enquiries remain ongoing, including analysing CCTV footage."

Cheeky gull a cheery reminder of summer days ahead



Big picture... North Shore artist Chrissie Calvert took just a day to paint her mural on the back of the toilet block beside Potters Park in Takapuna. But it took determination to win the work. Story, page 3.



Open Night

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4pm and 6pm

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Police chopper busy on day of meeting on crime

Takapuna was buzzed by a police helicopter on the same day as a public meeting about crime, raising questions among attendees.

They ranged from how the police could afford to have the Eagle circling overhead for an extended time to why there weren't more police on the streets when house and car break-ins were on the rise.

"We need a police presence in Takapuna," said one Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator. "Why is the Takapuna police station not open – it closes at 4pm," she said. Yet on some callouts, 10 cars would turn out from all over.

Concerns about problems arising from emergency housing were also raised, along with worries about the general rise in gang and drug presence, prompting speculation some of these factors were involved in the Eagle callout.

The Observer established the helicopter was put up in response to a reported gun incident on Barrys Pt Rd. Police on the ground headed to a cul-de-sac near Countdown, where a motel used for emergency housing is sited.

The meeting was called by North Shore MP Simon Watts. Both he and Simeon Brown, National's spokesperson on police and corrections, spoke before an open forum

of around 30 people at the Rose Centre in Belmont.

Many were Takapuna and Hauraki residents, although community-support people from Devonport and Northcote also attended, as did four of the six members of the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board: chair Ruth Jackson, deputy Jan O'Connor and members George Wood and Trish Deans. Police were invited, but declined due to operational reasons, said Watts.

Watts outlined that he had met the community policing team three or four times since being elected last year. "I want to bang the drum – where are our police?"

One of the issues was they were being diverted to the Covid response, with not all their roles backfilled, he said. Community constable Jasmine Bundle had been promoted and the post now had a temporary officer in charge.

From his work as a volunteer ambulance paramedic, Watts said he knew the area was home to people living with serious needs and issues. Sexual assault and domestic violence were often hidden. As to drugs: "We're not immune to that on the North Shore," he noted. "There's challenges around the emergency housing and the

type of people that is bringing in."

Of 65 to 70 family groups, 80 per cent were not from the Shore, he said. Some people in motels had prior challenges from mental health or criminal backgrounds. "Gangs have been active around these motels as well."

Brown, the MP for Pakuranga, said: "One of the things that frustrates the police is they get more people repeating things on the local Facebook grapevine than to the police." Reporting crimes helped intelligence "match things up".

Brown outlined the national situation, including concerns around gangs and their access to illegal firearms.

Serious assaults were on the rise, he said. So too police callouts related to mental health and domestic violence. While burglary and other crimes against property had dropped in the last 12 months, this could be put down to more people at home due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With 4000 children in emergency housing, the question was: "Why are we putting gang members next to kids?"

Brown kept it short on what National might do if it were in power, but reiterated its tough-on-gangs stance. He acknowledged that Labour had delivered 1300 extra police, but said this was short of its pledge of 1800.

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Observer

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Bright spot... Rug up and head out next weekend to Takapuna Winter Lights, for entertainment for all ages. See installations such as this one by artist Vostperon, a recent semi-finalist in Australia's Got Talent. The free event runs on Friday and Saturday, 30-31 July, at Hurstmere Green, with lights on from 5pm to 10pm.

Briefs

RSV hits Shore

North Shore Hospital's emergency department is dealing with "very high numbers" of people presenting with Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)-type conditions. The hospital's special-care baby units and paediatric ward have also been very busy. To help ease the load, people should only present to the hospital in genuine emergencies, a spokesperson said.

Landmark felled

A landmark large Norfolk pine at the beach end of Milford Rd is no more. Auckland Council decided it was in poor condition and needed to be removed.

Play time

The new playground behind the Sunnynook Community Centre is already proving popular with families. The colourful addition to Sunnynook Park opened last Friday.

New Takapuna mural worth squawking about

When Chrissie Calvert saw "an ugly white wall" in Takapuna, she saw an opportunity.

"I thought there should be something there to brighten up the space, because there are not a lot of murals around the Shore," she says.

Now, thanks to the 25-year-old art school student, locals have a colourful coastal scene to enjoy as they cross Takapuna's central car park.

Painted on the side of the public toilet block by Potters Park, the mural shows a cheeky seagull with a haul of chips, with a backdrop of the sea and Rangitoto. It was one of several Calvert sketched as options for Devonport-Takapuna Local Board approval.

Having grown up on the Shore, Calvert wanted to create area-appropriate artwork. Judging by comments such as "This is so cool"

as she painted the mural in one day last week, she has succeeded. "I hope people will see it and ask me to do more," she says.

To help kickstart work opportunities, Calvert dipped into her own pocket to do the mural. Having tried unsuccessfully for a Creative New Zealand grant, she paid an Auckland Council application fee of \$500 to be considered to do a public art piece. When accepted, she had to pay for paint. Resene gave her 50 per cent off.

"I have to show I can do it to get more murals," is her reasoning. With a dream of being a full-time painter once she gains her degree through Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design, the final-year student plans to have commercial projects alongside her own art practice.

To that end she has set up Calvert Studio,

with a website selling prints and promoting her services. She has also been dabbling in a trend from America of couples commissioning a painting to mark their wedding. She paints portraits of the brides and grooms, either live on the big day or from photographs. Wine and paint classes, another trend, have provided her with work tutoring sessions in the city.

Calvert – who has just moved from Hauraki Corner to Hillcrest – sees murals as an enjoyable area to expand into. She has done several, including one for a Northcote gym and another for a little girl's bedroom.

Board member George Wood was impressed by her Takapuna work, saying: "I wish her all the best and feel that it is a superb painting depicting the scavenging seagull."

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How hard is it to adjust to hearing aids?

Have you been recommended hearing aids? Or are you considering taking action to improve your hearing ability? Whatever the case, you may be wondering, "is it hard to adjust to hearing aids?"

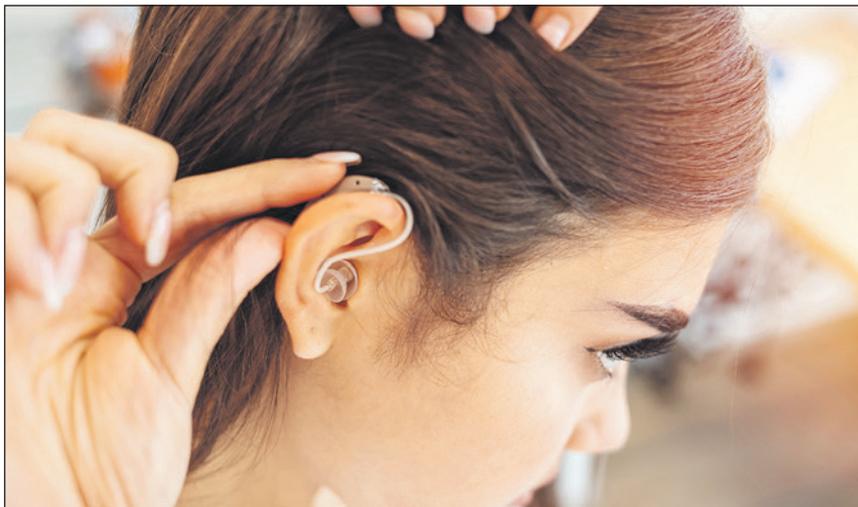
The World Health Organisation estimates that globally, 466 million people have disabling hearing loss. This number is likely to increase to over 900 million by 2050.

The prevalence of hearing loss was estimated to be 880,350 people in New Zealand in 2016 and represents 18.9 per cent of all people. Males are more likely to have hearing loss (472,961 people) compared to females (407,388).

If you fall into this category, don't despair because many organisations invest considerable sums in research and development (R&D) to manage and solve the problems associated with hearing loss.

R&D has also led to many technological advancements that provide increasingly comfortable and practical solutions.

With hearing aids, you might be hearing things you have not heard in a long while. Usually, high-frequency sounds like birds chirping, beeps from electronic devices, and even children's voices will be suddenly audible.



All of these "new sounds" and auditory stimulation may take some time to adjust to. There is no one-size-fits-all period of adjustment; everyone is different.

And with the improvement in hearing-aid sound quality over the past few decades, that period of adjustment has anecdotally reduced significantly. But it's essential to keep in contact with your audiologist to express any concerns you may have.

Your hearing aids may also need fine-tuning in the first few weeks or months to make them as comfortable as possible for you.

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Petition seeks retention of Sacred Grove boardwalk

Opposition is mounting to the proposed removal of the boardwalk through the Sacred Grove of pohutukawa at the northern end of Takapuna Beach.

A petition launched to save the wooden walkway drew 500 signatures in its first three days. By the Observer deadline a week later more than 1000 people had registered their opposition to a recommendation by Auckland Council officers that the boardwalk be removed.

"There is very strong community angst at the council officers who are overriding the community board and locals," said Tony and Rachel Lewis, who live nearby.

The petition will be presented to the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board, which had been expected to consider the issue at its July meeting this week, but it did not appear on the agenda. It is understood consideration of the matter has been delayed until August.

When Auckland Council closed the boardwalk two years ago, a sign was put up stating that it was "closed for maintenance and will be reopened". The Lewises said officials now seemed determined to keep it closed.

Most of those who had signed the petition were beach walkers, they said. It was also online.

The issue was discussed at a council



workshop meeting with board members in late May. Officials said that to protect the pohutukawa and recognise the grove's historic significance to mana whenua, the boardwalk should be dismantled.

The cost of this and tree protection measures was estimated to be around \$880,000.

Board members quizzed officials hard during the lengthy session, and several members, including former and current chairs Aidan Bennett and Ruth Jackson, said a compromise should be sought given community sentiment.

The board was advised that consents were unlikely to be issued to fix the boardwalk due to the sensitive status of the trees and the area it was in.

This puts board members in the difficult

position of either voting against official advice or facing community flak.

The chair of the Takapuna Sands apartment building body corporate, Graeme Markwick, representing apartment owners who live on land above the boardwalk, recently wrote to Bennett and member Jan O'Connor saying under the Reserves Act it was illegal to keep a reserve closed for an extended time.

"Under the statutes closure is only possible for six weeks whilst work is undertaken to ensure the area is safe for public use," he wrote.

Restricting access by citing danger from the risk of falling trees was misleading, Markwick said. If that was the case, the northern end of the beach, not just the reserve, would require closing given the size of the trees.

An emotive argument was being used to push board members towards official views, he claimed, with advice from the council's arborist that to guarantee safety six trees would need to be removed or others pruned to such a degree they might not survive.

Markwick said careful pruning of the trees would likely see their health recover. If limbs were reduced in height, this would mitigate risk to beach walkers.

This approach had previously worked with two trees within the grove, he said.

Simon Watts

MP for North Shore

Your local MP,
supporting you and
our local community

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northshore@parliament.govt.nz
09 486 0005

📧 simonwattsm



Authorised by Simon Watts MP, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.



Going dotty in name of pedestrian safety

Extra experimental traffic-slowing measures have been installed to make two central Takapuna streets more pedestrian-friendly.

Following the painting of dots on the road and pavement, trees in giant striped pots have been added to Northcroft St (at right), and a seating area with pergola installed in Huron St.

Some car parks have been removed. The Innovating Streets trial will run until summer, with public feedback being sought by Auckland Transport (AT).

Meanwhile, traffic issues on Belmont Tce, Milford, will be reviewed next year. Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member George Wood heard from AT this month after taking up the case of residents who in February called for action over congestion. School buses use the



road and other local streets. At times there has not been room for vehicles coming in the other direction, given parked cars also clog the streets near the Westlake High Schools, Carmel and North Shore Hospital.

Letters

Sunday evenings need later parking

Thankyou for your article highlighting the early closing times of the new Toka Puia car park in Takapuna.

While AT have now extended the Wednesday night parking hours to midnight, Sunday evening is also a popular night for Takapuna diners. AT are not yet relenting on the current 6pm closing.

This former gasometer site was originally bought by the former Takapuna City Council as an all day park for 500 cars. I well remember presenting a petition to Mayor Fred Thomas on behalf of the Takapuna Carpark Action Group asking for that project to begin.

Thirty-five years later it has been com-

pleted for 420 car parks and 84 cycle parks.

Meanwhile the 250 car parks in the Anzac St central car park are not coping with the popularity of Takapuna's nightlife.

Auckland Transport must urgently look at extending the other evening hours of Monday and Tuesday (now open until 9pm) and Sunday (now 6pm) also to midnight.

Jan O'Connor, deputy chair Devonport-Takapuna Local Board

NB: AT says it is constrained by both staffing resources and the few parkers using the facility after 6pm. Wednesday hours had been extended from 6 July until midnight in line with Thursday to Saturday hours, it said. Sunday hours were being explored.

More memories of brown-water bathing

I can concur with John Little (Observer, 9 July) about water historically supplied from Lake Pupuke. I was seven years old and living at Waterview Rd, Devonport, in 1953, where on several occasions we had brownish water

flowing into our bath tub from what would today be described as huge taps.

Along with the water would be bits of weed and the odd swimming thing.

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Te Pō

A lark in the dark to find Bruce Mason

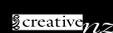
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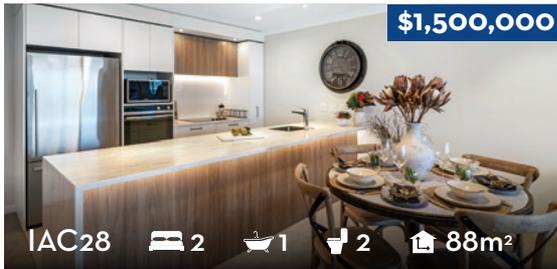


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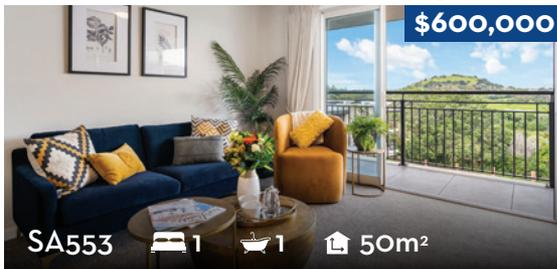
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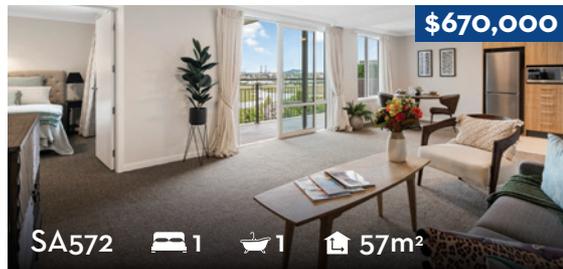
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Ocean Swim sale

The long-running New Zealand Ocean Swim Series is changing hands. The eight-event series has been sold to The Event Dudes Ltd, which owns the popular Beach Series, held weekly on Takapuna Beach, and the People's Triathlon Series.

Event Dudes directors are Dan Feisst and Jason Herriman.

The New Zealand Ocean Swim Series was formed in 2006 by Scott Rice and wife Natasha and this year introduced a mid-winter swim at Auckland's Waiheke Island. After 15 seasons, the timing of The Event Dudes offer was just right, said Rice.

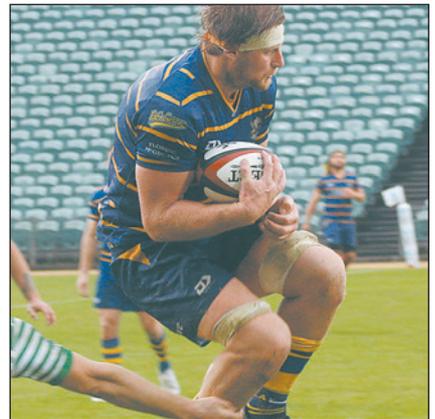
"It's been a fantastic series of events, but we feel we've done as much as we can do with the series." He had loved the job, especially meeting the entrants. "You only live once and we could have stayed with the series for a lot longer or taken this chance to explore other options."

Rice has, however, retained the Ocean Swim Fiji event which is set for 12-16 September 2022. He plans to take more time out with his family. But Rice still remains in the business world with his newly launched Puhoi Beer.

Takapuna goes down fighting in



Hard luck mate... North Shore's Jacob Pierce consoles Takapuna number eight Lotu Inisi after the loss



Captain's knock... Shane Neville

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sodden Harbour premier rugby championship final

Takapuna went within centimetres of winning the North Harbour premier rugby championship last Saturday – held up by North Shore on the line as they pushed for a match-winning try.

The 12-11 win to Shore reflected the closeness and intensity of the high-quality match – expansive and largely error free – despite being played on a rain-soaked and slippery North Harbour stadium.

Takapuna was up 11-0 at halftime, however the score slightly flattered the blue and golds. Shore had most of the attacking opportunities but were kept out by stout Takapuna defence.

Against the run of play Takapuna's Kade Banks scored an excellent try following a 60-metre break by Moses Leo. It was one of the few clean breaks in the game, such was the excellence of both teams' defence.

As the weather deteriorated during the second half, the balance tipped Shore's way as its committed and well-drilled pack started to take control. It went on to score two second-half tries, after long phases of rugged forward drives.

Takapuna would have loved to have had the services of powerful prop Karl Tu'inukuafe, who was unable to play as he was on stand-by duty for the All Blacks.

With two minutes to go and behind 12-11, it looked like Shore could run down the clock. But a penalty and a precision line kick by Bryn Gatland give Takapuna the chance of a line drive from five metres out.

The Shore forwards muscled up and prevented Takapuna taking what would have been its 13th championship.

The result was particularly disappointing for long-serving lock and captain Shane Neville, who is contemplating retirement and hoped to go out on a championship win in his 141st game.

- The Takapuna premier 2 side lost 29-13 to Northcote in the senior reserves final.



Top defence... Takapuna's Bryn Gatland (above) takes out winger Maui Hausia in the corner to keep Shore tryless in the first half, while (below) centre Moses Leo makes a break which led to a length-of-the-field try to Kade Banks



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Diploma Programme

Volunteers gather to wage war on pesky palms



Palm Saturday... Among those tackling the invasive Chinese windmill palms in Kitchener Park recently were (clockwise from left) Sienna Potvin (16) and Mia Meikle (9), Tabitha Becroft and Warrick Smith, Chris Brockliss, and mother and daughter Kris Ye and Zoe Liu (14)

After a big community effort removing invasive palms and replanting Kitchener Park with more native plants over two weekends, volunteers are hoping Auckland Council will step up and finish the job.

The park, tucked beside the Milford Tennis Club and running down to Lake Pupuke, is recognised as a critically endangered stand of puriri forest. Yet, over the years it has become overgrown with Chinese windmill palms.

"This puriri forest has become a Chinese windmill palm forest," says near-neighbour Warrick Smith. He has personally pulled around 300 small palms from the park, leading up to a recent Saturday when around 25 people joined him for a further session.

The volunteers were rallied by the Milford Residents Association and the Pupuke Birdsong Project.

"I'm so grateful – it's a lot of work," says Smith.

The volunteers ranged from school pupils to retirees. An international student from Carmel College came along as a school-service project, accompanied by her mother.

But with health and safety regulations preventing the group from chopping down trees over three metres tall, the large palms left standing will continue to seed. "If we get those out I can manage the little ones," says Smith, who also traps possums in the park.

He has lodged a request that the council remove about 50 remaining large palms.

Birdsong acting coordinator Tabitha Becroft says: "What we will do is keep nagging them."

She points out that like the larger, also infested neighbouring Sylvan Park, Kitchener Park is a recognised puriri forest eco-system which should be cared for.

Another issue is raising community awareness that windmill palms are a problem. They are not uncommon in Milford gardens and in other reserves along the lakefront. Birds spread their seeds.

Becroft says although the palms are a significant weed locally, they are not on the wider city hit list. "The more we get rid of the palms the more we get rid of the seed source."

She hopes that from starting in the parks,

conversations can be had with neighbours and we "get a halo effect".

Smith drew on Becroft's advice in sourcing the appropriate plants to fill gaps in the forest floor. A second smaller group of volunteers planted these in wet weather last Sunday. His employer, electronic-monitoring company Attenti, paid for the plants as a social good. They were sourced from Te Whangai, a charitable trust that runs nurseries to provide employment opportunities for young people.

Smith's trapping work has expanded from setting one trap to now having five, including some in Sylvan Park. In just a few months he has trapped more than 30 possums. A woman recently volunteered to help him. He hopes culling the possums will help reduce tree damage and see more native birds return.

"Because Warrick is doing such a good job they're flowering now," says Becroft of the kohekohe trees that are also in the park. Their flowers were an important source of winter food for tui, she said, but they were also "like chocolate for possums".

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Summer Events Coordinator (part-time)

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- is organised and a self-starter
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An opportunity has arisen for a skilled events assistant to join the team at the Devonport Peninsula Trust in a part time (9.5 hours per week), fixed-term capacity.

Key responsibilities are to assist with the Trust's popular, annually recurring events*, e.g. Summer Fun Tamariki Play, Kids Athletics, Devonport Christmas Festival and others, working closely with the Summer Events Coordinator and Devonport Community Coordinator.

The ideal candidate:

- has an outgoing personality and can relate well to children and their caregivers
- is a skilled communicator (both written and verbal)
- has an understanding of the Devonport Peninsula Community
- has experience with grass-roots, community events
- is able to work well in a small team and equally able to work autonomously
- is physically fit
- has clean drivers' licence and ability to drive a manual transmission van an advantage
- is a competent user of MS Office suite of programs.

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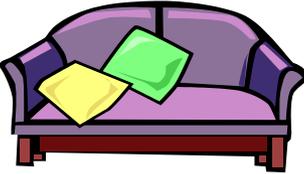
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Westlake Girls offers a taste of tradie world

Wanting to open up young women's eyes to the possibilities of working as tradies prompted Westlake Girls High School to hold an evening called Building Her Future.

The career night last term was designed to introduce girls to eight traditionally male-dominated trades they may not have considered as jobs.

The school recognises that with workforce demands changing, there is a need to introduce their students to new options.

"We were able to actively challenge the stereotypes that are often attached to the trades," says organiser Gemma James from the school's Careers Department.

"As a result of the evening, we have been impressed by the number of junior students who are now thinking about pathways beyond school, and are open to new ideas."

The trades night was a first for the school. It included talks and demonstrations by female apprentices, employers and training providers. Plumber Kellie Hinton and electrician Tori Colonna spoke to the students about their jobs, and a panel discussion involved female apprentices from a range of trades, including building, mechanical engineering, panel beating, electrical, plumbing, landscaping and line mechanics.

Participants then had the opportunity to visit a series of workshops around the school which offered hands-on experiences.

James said the evening had attracted positive feedback, from both attendees and participants.

"It was incredibly empowering to see other young women thrive in industries I hadn't considered before," said one student.

The evening will now become a regular on the school's calendar. "We want to encourage more young women into these trades where they learn amazing skills while they are earning," said James. "There are so many great apprenticeship opportunities out there and we want to make sure our students know about all of the career options available to them."



Cut-through... Westlake Girls High School students were given the chance to practise the skills required in various trades

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Through tinted glasses... *Te Po* writer Carl Bland (left) in an earlier cast featuring Andrew Grainger (centre) and Rawiri Paratene. Bland and Grainger are both back in the latest production.

Comedy sniffs out Mason's legacy

Characters inspired by the work of renowned New Zealand playwright Bruce Mason will be brought to life in a show at the local theatre named after the one-time Takapuna resident.

To mark the centenary of Mason's birth, *Te Po* is being staged at the Bruce Mason Theatre this month. Described as a surprising comedy, the play had its premiere at the 2016 Auckland Arts Festival, and won the excellence award at the Auckland Theatre Awards that year.

Though it is set in Takapuna, where Mason grew up, this is the first time it has been performed in the suburb.

Its characters – a policeman, a priest and a blind man – grapple with clues to lead them to a missing Mason, drawing on his legacy of plays, reimagined in a contemporary work.

Director Ben Crowder says: "There's something very special about paying tribute to Bruce Mason at the Bruce Mason Centre."

Mason, who died in 1982, used Takapuna as a setting for some of his groundbreaking works, including *The End of the Golden Weather*, part of which is performed on the beachside reserve each Christmas Day. The theatre named for him opened in 1996.

The *Te Po* ensemble includes noted actor and broadcaster Waihoi Shortland, taking a role previously played by George Henare and Rawiri Paratene.

Shortland's film career includes a role in Taika Waititi's *Boy* and serving as cultural consultant for *The Piano*.

In 2002, he played Shylock/Hairoka in *The Māori Merchant of Venice* – the first film made in te reo Māori – which saw him named Best Actor at the NZ Film Awards.

When he was approached to play the role of Werihe in *Te Po*, the writing appealed, but the clincher was the opportunity to sing love songs in a Māori showband style, live on stage. The songs punctuate the play, giving resonance to the story of searching for someone you have loved and lost and finding them anew.

Joining Shortland in the Nightsong theatre-group production are Andrew Grainger and newcomer Anton Falstie-Jensen. The play's writer Carl Bland also appears.

• *Te Po* runs on Friday 30 July at 10.30am and 8pm and on Saturday 31 July at 6.30pm. For tickets book at the theatre or see ticketmaster.co.nz.

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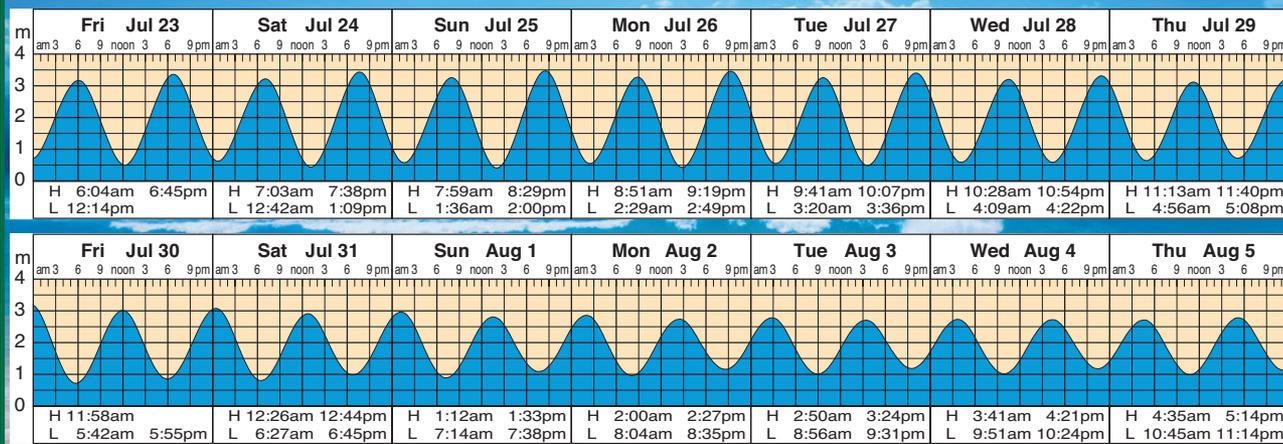
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Milford / Takapuna Tides





Enduring appeal of Agatha Christie a sellout for Shoreside



Cast run-through... (above, from left) Michelle Smith, Thomas Campbell and Ben Plummer with (far right) Adele Tunnicliffe and James Calverly

Selling out a show two weeks before curtain up is a rare thing for a community arts group, but for Shoreside Theatre it is just the ticket.

After a horror year of Covid cancellations and \$50,000 going missing from the group's accounts – a matter now before the courts – a lot was riding on a successful season. Shoreside had also outlaid \$2500 to secure the “closely guarded rights” to perform Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, hoping the lure of a classic would secure it good local audiences.

So it has proved, with the theatre's president, Catherine Boniface, saying early interest was so strong that an extra night and extra seats had been squeezed into the venue, the PumpHouse in Takapuna.

“I put it down to it being one of her more popular plays.” Movies had also led to a Christie resurgence.

Unfortunately, more nights could not be added to the season which runs from 29 July to 8 August, due to the PumpHouse being heavily booked. Boniface, who is directing *The Mousetrap*, says it has an ensemble cast with a mix of professional and amateur experience.

Shoreside is known for its seasons of Shakespeare in summer and Christie in winter. In 2020 it had to cancel the Christie season and the February 2021 lockdown its summer run.

Next up is a season of one-act plays in September. These are designed to encourage young actors and directors to try out their talents.



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