

The Rangitoto Observer

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 63 - August 6, 2021

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

Ruictions reignite over town-square plans... p2

Prime bowls club site up for grabs... p10

Witch-hunt! PumpHouse hosts The Crucible... p14

Sell-off mooted to fund new town-square facilities

Selling the Takapuna Library and two other community buildings to fund a move into new premises in the town-square development is among options proposed for a major council facilities shake-up.

The library, Takapuna Community Services Building and Mary Thomas Centre would all be sold under the most radical plan floated by officials. This would see residential development rights sold above the new combined facility to generate some of the funding required.

Options presented by Panuku officials to Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members this week were to:

1. Retain the status quo.
2. Renovate the library and the Takapuna Community Services Building on The Strand (which incorporates the War Memorial Hall, Senior Citizens space and local board offices), funded by the sale of the Mary Thomas Centre (which houses offices and rooms for hire).
3. Build a new library and services building

on two levels of the existing sites of both, with mixed-use and residential development above. This would be funded by selling development rights for the proposed residential component and the sale of the Mary Thomas Centre.

4. The most extreme option: Develop a relocated integrated facility over three lower levels of a mixed-use development including residential, adjoining the town square.

Officials recommended exploring options 2, 3 and 4.

To page 5

Lights, sabre, action... in weekend of colourful fun



Bright idea... Five-year-old Logan Nicholson's father works in Takapuna and brought him across from home in Grey Lynn to join in the fun at the Winter Lights event. More pictures, pages 8-9.

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Hostilities flare again over town-square development

Politicking around Takapuna town square development plans has again laid bare the deep splits in the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

Three of the six board members recently flew in the face of advice from officials in pushing through a call for public notification of planning consents recently lodged for the site – a decision which will anyway rest with an independent planning commissioner.

Passed at the board’s monthly meeting on chair Ruth Jackson’s casting vote, the same motion raised a number of issues around the future of the Anzac St public car-park land, for which design proposals had already been accepted by the board, on an earlier split vote under former chair Aidan Bennett.

The Heart of the Shore team of Jackson, board deputy chair Jan O’Connor and motion mover Trish Deans – elected on a platform of halting the sale of community assets – say too many unknowns remain about the ramifications of plans by Panuku, Auckland Council’s property arm, to sell some of the site.

“A number of these issues are valid concerns that board members haven’t had answers for,” said Deans.

This included lack of clarity about access and pavement space for bus-stop provision along Lake Rd, she maintained.

Local-board feedback on the consent application that was “out of scope” of its governance role would be rejected out of hand, members were advised by area manager Eric Perry. “This board doesn’t have a role to play,” he said. Only if the commissioner decided to notify the consents lodged by Panuku for initial site-preparation works starting in early 2022 for 30-38 Hurstmere Rd and 40 Anzac St might wider input be accepted.

Bennett and Toni van Tonder said the Heart



At odds... Trish Deans (left) and Toni van Tonder

of the Shore trio were simply relitigating issues already dealt with or not up to the board to decide. The trio opposed the project and wanted to stop it, they said.

“You didn’t get the answers you wanted,” said Bennett. The project had been extensively consulted on and many questions asked again and again, he maintained. “The project is going ahead.”

Member Toni van Tonder said: “It’s smoke and mirrors to be seen to be doing the right thing for people who you want to see you fighting on these issues.”

She said she had been blindsided by the notice of motion and the hijacking of processes. As one of the board members, along with Deans, delegated to provide board views on consents, van Tonder said they had been planning to discuss with other members the consent lodging response, recognising the project’s importance. Meeting times had been discussed with officials and then Deans put forward her motion.

“You have muscled me out of my job in order to put forward your own agenda on the town centre,” said van Tonder.

“Is it all right to just drop your shoulder and barrel on through?” asked Bennett.

Perry provided all members with a detailed written response before the meeting on why the scope of the notice was beyond the legislative role of board members. Their role was merely to give feedback on whether the commissioner should consider notifying consents.

Member George Wood said he did not believe the initial consent applications met the threshold for public notification.

Van Tonder unsuccessfully put up an amendment that Perry’s advice and other emails about the process, dating back to early July, be tabled. This was voted down after a 3-3 split, on the chair’s casting vote.

“I’m really quite shocked that three people who campaigned on openness and transparency won’t have emails tabled,” said van Tonder. It was embarrassing that what had been passed as the board view really was not, she said.

Jackson said she wanted the notification because of the size and significance of the square plans. “It’s not our decision – the public should get a say.”

O’Connor said members’ repeated efforts to get answers had been unsuccessful. Bennett disputed this, saying workshops had been held with Panuku and Auckland Transport. O’Connor repeated her concern about the inclusion in lots for sale for high-rise development of pavement fringe land occupied by AT’s Lake Rd bus shelters. The intention is apparently for shelters to be partially integrated into any new buildings.

With development deals not yet struck, O’Connor said there was a risk that if work began on public space, it might need to be dug up for services later.

Bennett said: “What’s being done today is in danger of compromising the development partners.”

Residents and business groups also at odds on way forward

The Takapuna Residents Association wants development on the central car-park site halted until after next year’s local body elections, while the Takapuna Beach Business Association says it’s past time to just get on with the town-centre project. The split of opinion mirrors that on the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

Residents association chair Terry Dunleavy

said a survey the group recently conducted showed 93.7 per cent of its 300 respondents wanted the car-park kept, with 85.7 per cent favouring it remaining as a venue for the Sunday market. Opinion was more evenly split about Takapuna’s designation as a metropolitan centre, which Dunleavy opposes.

Business association chief executive Terence

Harpur said the politicking over the long-planned town square was very disappointing.

“We need to continue through the processes in place and get a beautiful public space built for the benefit of our community and local businesses,” he said.

“Businesses and the community just want to get on with it – it’s been 11 years already.”

The Rangitoto Observer

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Memoir traces young widow's journey through grief

Castor Bay resident Emma Eaglen wants her readers to take hope and resilience from her memoir of being a young widow.

Eaglen's husband, Andrew Porteous, was diagnosed with Stage 4 oesophageal cancer in 2016, aged 33. After the cancer spread to his brain, he died in February 2018.

"When he was diagnosed, my son was just two weeks old," Eaglen said. "I started writing little bits at the time about how I was feeling, because it's such an overwhelming experience."

Three years on from Andrew's death, Eaglen has self-published a book, *Moonshadow*. The title comes from the Cat Stevens song, but also represents that the moon is a witness to all that takes place.

"The big part is that it's all about hope – it doesn't emit its own light. It sees the sun and lets us know dawn will rise."

Eaglen said the experiences of young widows are often foreign to the rest of society and she wanted to help others going through the same thing.

"It's [also] partly because I just had this yearning to get it out.

"It feels really vulnerable and it feels really scary.

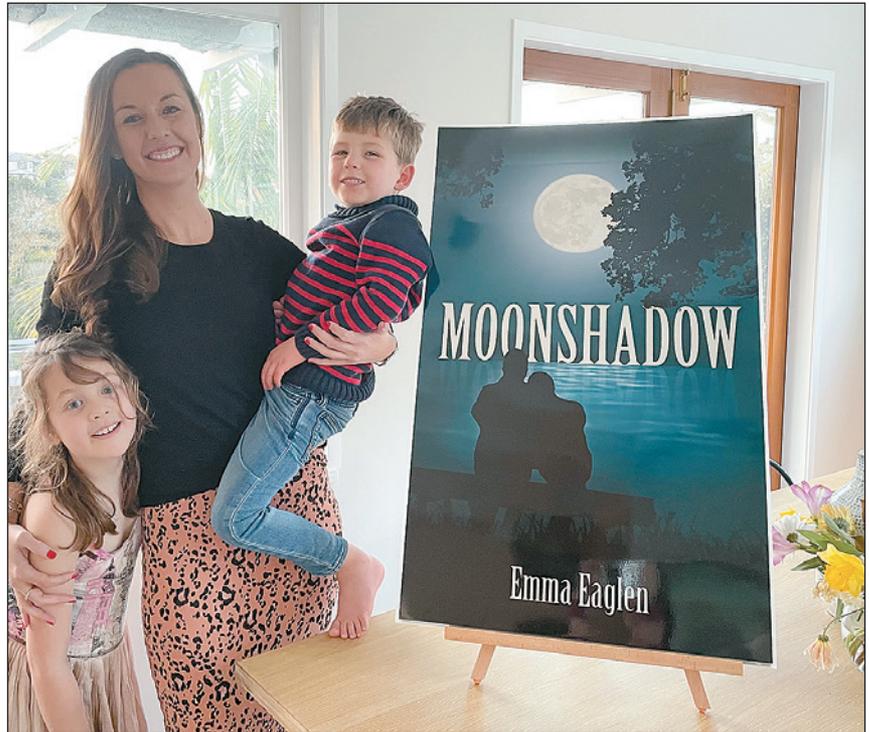
"I've had some really positive responses from other young widows saying 'Do it; our stories need to be told.'"

Losing her husband while raising her two young children – Lauren, now seven, and Martin, now four – was "very, very difficult", she said.

Eaglen who grew up in Devonport but has lived in Castor Bay for about 10 years, said the neighbourhood had been an amazing support through Andrew's illness.

"On one hand the book is, I guess, quite deep and difficult. It can be quite an emotional read." But she tried to be as honest as possible, and "I feel like it's realistic."

The memoir was not written to be



New chapter... Emma Eaglen and her two children, Lauren (7) and Martin Porteous (4)

published, but her family convinced her to do so, Eaglen said.

The experience was "so outside of the normal experience that people have" that it isn't talked about.

"I think that's a huge part of being a widow. It is so removed from the everyday."

Porteous, who died at North Shore Hospice aged 34, spent his last weeks battling for insurance so his wife and children could be comfortable after his death. It was a complicated case.

Porteous was made redundant as part of a

post-buyout restructure at his company. He delayed starting a new job as he tried to get on top of his health. The insurance company therefore argued he stopped working due to redundancy, not illness. The case has since been settled.

Eaglen held a launch for friends and family that boosted her confidence, she said. "I think it is about being able to move forward with hope, and about being able to move forward with resilience. I think that's what I want the takeaway to be."

• *Moonshadow* is available on Amazon.

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Library sell-off and relocation among options in facilities shake-up

From page 1

They noted this was timely given other development in the area, that Panuku, Auckland Council's property arm, is managing as part of the so-called 'Unlock Takapuna' project.

The proposals, revealed in a board workshop last Tuesday, are expected to be hotly debated in the coming weeks.

The report noted that the community may be reluctant to sell the existing facilities.

The board's business meeting this month will be asked for direction on which option or options to progress.

A community-needs assessment last year found the library was well-used and highly rated, but the other facilities had spare capacity and were less well-known. Feedback on their condition was mixed.

Officials flagged that the do-nothing Option 1, while initially cost-neutral, would bring maintenance costs to upgrade the ageing buildings. With stretched city budgets, this would be on a prioritisation basis.

A seismic assessment was also being prepared on the library and the services building, they said, with any remediation required being an unbudgeted expense. The results of this were expected by September.

After board input, an Indicative Business

Case (IBC) process will be done by April 2022 to identify a recommended option for further analysis. A Detailed Business Case will follow.

A workshop document emphasised the need for each option to support key service providers. Some onsite parking was required to allow for diversity of users. It noted the financial frameworks were based on "high level" assessment only, with more work required, hence the progression to an IBC.

Funding any change through property sales would assume a reduction in overall floor area for the facilities from 5825 sqm to 4600sqm (for Option 2) or 3400 sqm (for Options 3 or 4), the document said. Upgraded or new facilities would be expected to save energy.

For Option 4, eight "pro" factors were listed, ranging from the absence of disruption to services during construction to the financial sustainability of a new, smaller facility.

Among the five "con" factors listed were the possibility of the community's reluctance to sell existing facilities, the need for "a different parking model" and that property "optimisation is market dependent".

Under the council's "service-property optimisation policy", the proceeds of property sales or redevelopment are to be used to deliver facilities in a way that is cost neutral and will not impact rates.

Sherry's Shore service remembered

Tributes to Philip Sherry, who died last month, aged 87, were paid by Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members, focusing on the broadcaster's North Shore connections.

Sherry, who fronted television news bulletins for decades, also served on the North Shore City Council, the Takapuna Community Board, and the Auckland Regional Council, before moving to the Bay of Plenty, where he was also active in local government.

Before that, Sherry owned a retirement home in Takapuna with his wife Margaret, living near Takapuna Normal Intermediate School, where the busway later cut through.

Board chair Ruth Jackson said her mother was a resident and she remembered him fondly. "I have this abiding memory of Philip in a floral pinny taking a batch of scones out of the oven, when one of the regular ladies was away. He mucked in."

Former North Shore Mayor and current local-board member George Wood said Sherry had been a strong voice for the area on the regional council, especially around public transport.

Sherry was first elected to the North Shore City Council in 1992 as part of Mayor Anne Hartley's team, serving one term on both that and the community board. This was followed by three terms on the regional body, including a stint as deputy chair when the Northern Busway project was being pulled together.

In 2018, Sherry was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit. This, said Wood, recognised his local body work as well as his better-known and highly esteemed broadcasting career.

The board acknowledged Sherry's passing and offered condolences to his family and friends. The earlier deaths of Black Rock resident Paul Firth and Milford resident Hank Jacobs, previously reported in the Observer, were also acknowledged.

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Art students sell creations at Takapuna Library



Artists on show... (from left) Stephen Dean, Emily Smith, Michael Dunn and Amy McCollum displayed their creations at Takapuna Library



Piha in paint... Amy McCollum with her favourite artwork

Amy McCollum’s favourite artwork is her painting of a walkway near Piha Beach (at left), where she’s going for a holiday.

Amy is one of several artists who are part of Art+Soul, a small alternative-care business in Milford that aims to bridge the gap between schooling and adult life for young people with disabilities, and includes an art and craft programme and radio studio.

In the last week of July, several artists had an exhibition, *Dancing Meadows*, in the Takapuna Library. For this, Amy had also painted a red flower. “We saw the picture in the back of the cafe, and then we drew it and painted it.”

Michael Dunn has done several works for the exhibition and enjoys the feeling of accomplishment. Stephen Dean has produced several paintings and also works on the Speakeasy radio show, which airs on Planet FM, 104.6, on Fridays at 6pm.

Emily Smith is also on the course but hadn’t finished her painting before the exhibition. “I just enjoy getting lost in a painting process,” she said. “It’s sort of a mix of relaxing and self-critical.”

The paintings are for sale – except Amy’s Piha favourite – and the goal is to one day have the artists earn money from their work, art director Selena Peacock said. For now, any money raised goes back into programme costs such as rent and materials.

* The group have an art sale coming up on 12 August at the Milford Centre, where Art+Soul will be selling paintings, soaps and cards.

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Takapuna in a new light

Thousands of people came out in the dark to see the lights in Takapuna. The Winter Lights event (30-31 July) saw installations set up around Hurstmere Green, with dancers in neon suits slinking through the crowd.

Work by light designer Angus Muir, whose pieces included green UV spaghetti and alternating coloured bobble poles and triangles, also stood out. "UV spaghetti is probably one of our most popular pieces." Muir said there was not a lot going on in light art in Auckland this winter, so it was good to be involved in a festival. "Hopefully it can grow in the years to come."

Terence Harpur, chief executive of the Takapuna Beach Business Association, said the event was hugely successful, but declined to say what it cost. "There were thousands of people there from all over Auckland."

This is the event's second outing after it was cancelled last year due to Covid-19. Harpur said the plan was to definitely run it again.



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Weekend wonderland... From Vospertron's illuminated robots (above and far left) to brightened buildings and spotlit trees on Hurstmere Rd, the Winter Lights event was a crowd pleaser, including for (below from left) Nella Kovachev, 4; Clara Winstone, 4, with Alexia Rosie, 3; and Darius Hunt, nearly 2



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1. Strutt, et al (2019). Hearing Loss & Dementia Incidence in Australia Findings from the Sydney Memory and Ageing Study



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Queueing up for quality play time



Stepping out... Children are loving the new playground behind the Sunnynook Community Centre

Site up for grabs as rub of the green goes against bowlers

Expressions of interest will be sought later this year for a new community use of the site soon to be vacated by the Takapuna Services and Social Bowling Club.

The club's lease was not renewed by Auckland Council due to dwindling membership, although the few remaining bowlers were keen to stay on. They have been told to vacate the site by the end of October.

Council officials told a Devonport-Takapuna Local Board workshop last week that the availability of the bowling green at 2 Mary Poynton Cres – next to the former RSA, now youth hub Shore Junction in Northcote Rd – would be advertised in October or November. Once the bowlers packed up, prospective new users of the site would then be able to inspect it. Recommendations would then come back to the board to approve a new leaseholder, probably in March 2022.

Member Jan O'Connor asked why the bowlers could not stay on, month by month, until a new tenant was chosen. "Why not leave them there? About a dozen guys are using it three times a week."

She pointed to the situation in Devonport, where the old bowling club has been left empty for several years. Trish Deans said it would be

good to avoid a gap in tenancy in Takapuna.

The officials said it was tidier legally to move on, with notice having already been given. They pointed out that the board had decided in April to call for expressions of interest. (This was a split decision, made on the casting vote of the former chair, Aidan Bennett. Members O'Connor, Deans and current chair Ruth Jackson had called for the bowlers to have more time to explore expanding their membership in the club, which was formed in 2007.)

The officials indicated discussions on the Devonport site's future were well in train, and likely to be reported back to the board this month. In recent years, nine bowling clubs across the North Shore had closed, they noted.

After closures, improvements made by club members were meant to be removed. If they were not, they reverted to the council which was not ideal, given on some sites this required a considerable clean-up.

Several members wanted to know how this left club members who had installed costly floodlights, if these had to be removed before prospective lessees inspected the site.

Officials indicated a clause could be added to the expression of interest document, indicat-

ing that floodlights on site might be available for sale if the new occupant could agree a deal direct with the bowling club.

The site contains a small building used as a clubroom, but this lacks toilet or kitchen facilities.

Adding these, if wanted, would be at the cost of the new occupant, the officials said, with a suggestion made that a shared facilities arrangement might be possible with neighbouring Shore Junction.

George Wood asked if the land might be used for development, with any funds being returned locally, but was told it was zoned for community use. Any planning changes to match the surrounding mixed-use zoning should have been contemplated earlier in the process, before the expressions of interest process was approved, officials said.

Jackson said she wanted the land to remain a community asset. She also called for expressions of interest to be advertised in the Rangitoto Observer and Devonport Flagstaff newspapers to deepen the reach with local residents.

Officials had indicated advertising would be placed in another publication and on the council website.



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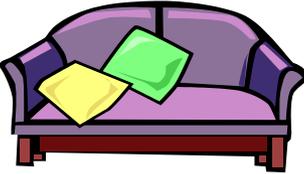
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Rainbow seats pass with flying colours

Seating outside the Milford Shopping Centre mall main entrance has been brightened up after being vandalised.

The tables and chairs in the Village Square have been painted in bright colours by the Milford Rotary Club.

Rotary will next repair cobblestones beside the tables left damaged by a truck.

The service organisation is also set to get an electric cart to transport a water tank, to make tending the plants beautifying the central streets easier.

President Alison Waugh said: "We like our village looking good... and the satisfaction of the response that we get from the people when we're working."

Rotary paid for the paint, using some of its budget left over from the last financial year.

After getting a deal at Resene, this cost just over \$400, Waugh said.

"It's taken us a while because of the weather. It would've taken two sessions of three hours with four of us."

They had had a "brilliant" response to the new rainbow coloured seating, she said.



Brushing up... Milford Rotary's Raewyn Jesson at work on a table outside the mall

Briefs

Safety issues probed

Young democracy advocates want feedback on safety. YouNite, an expansion of the Devonport-Takapuna youth board, is asking local young people to identify areas where they feel unsafe, and make suggestions for improvements. "It's things like lighting around public-transport waiting areas," chair Amy Usherwood said. The group might set up a stall at the Takapuna market, and has a feedback form online. Findings will be presented to the Local Board this year.

Cheers to that

Fantail and Turtle is a finalist in the Hospitality Awards for Excellence. The Smales Farm venue is up against four others from around the country to be named best bar next month.

Close loss in rugby

Takapuna Rugby Club's under-21 side was beaten by East Coast Bays, 12-8, in the North Harbour Championship final.

Cyclists commend board backing for bridge-use trial

The Devonport-Takapuna Local Board has been urged to continue its commitment to improving bike links, especially over the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

Speaking on behalf of Bike Auckland, Mary-Margaret Slack, a former Takapuna Grammar head girl, said: "Right now, your constituents are the people who are missing out most of all because of a crucial missing link in a cycle network of Auckland."

From her time at TGS, which she left in 2016, Slack said she knew climate change was the issue worrying young people the most. "Reallocation of road space is one of our most crucial tasks during a climate emergency."

She spoke at the board's July meeting in support of a notice of motion, put up by member Toni van Tonder, backing in principle one or more events to open up the Auckland Harbour Bridge for pedestrians and cyclists as a trial or demonstration.

Slack told the board that although the government had announced a second bridge across the harbour would be built for bikes and pedestrians, the project had no practical timeline. Bike Auckland had campaigned for a trial in summer, devoting one lane of the bridge to cyclists, due to booming demand, she said. By being open to a trial, the board was taking a "step in the right direction", she said.

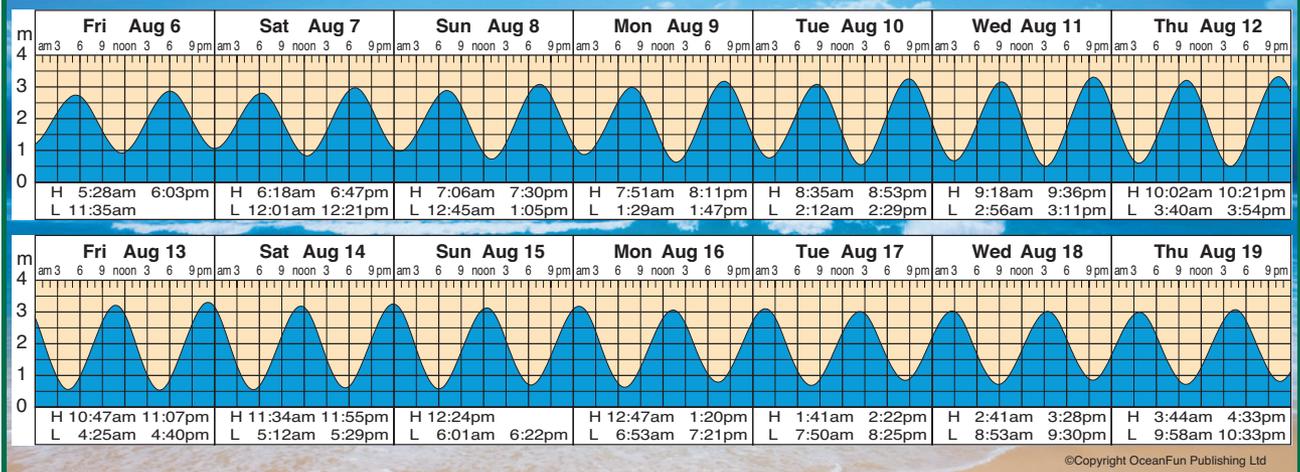
"The existing bridge is a joy to ride, as thousands of people discovered back in 2009, and rediscovered on May 30."

Van Tonder said a trial was a way to prepare for a shared path, and could help in its design. Chair Ruth Jackson said the board would continue to plug its own idea of clearing space on buses or designating some to carry bikes across the bridge.

George Wood said he had real concerns about a trial, given the bridge was an economic lifeline for the North Shore. "The primary reason of the bridge is to get traffic across the harbour - it's State Highway 1."

The board backed the trial idea, 5-1, but asked for more detail from Waka Kotahi.

Milford / Takapuna Tides





Classic still relevant in age of

A Takapuna-based theatre group that likes to tackle challenging plays is soon to stage a 1953 classic with contemporary relevance.

The Crucible by Arthur Miller dramatises the hysteria surrounding the Salem witch trials of the late 1600s, in an allegory for McCarthyism's persecution of suspected communists in the United States mid-20th century.

The witch-hunt messaging translates to today, says director James Bell, of the Foolish Wit theatre company. "It could be happening now, it wouldn't take that much," he says, pointing to the likes of social media backlashes and cancel culture, and to stories such as *The Handmaid's Tale*, in which particular groups are vilified.

Bell, who co-founded Foolish Wit several years ago, says he learned on overseas travels how witch-hunts were common among many different cultures. He was told of women in Sweden being labelled as witches, and of witch trials in the UK. On a visit to the United States, he found himself being taken to dinner in Salem itself. "I realised how universal it is."

In preparing for *The Crucible*, he learned that one family was behind a lot of the accusations in Salem and they stood to benefit, because some of the women accused of being witches forfeited their land. The way a small vocal group could skew events was still relevant, he said.

The play – which has a big ensemble cast of 19, ranging from teenagers to an octogenarian – is suitable for actors of varied experiences.

This, says Bells, fits in with company's original aims of providing opportunities "to do theatre that other people weren't doing". Last year, the group staged *The Vagina Monologues*, a play other more commercially focused groups tended to shy away from.

"We started Foolish Wit because there were younger actors in the community who wanted to tackle more contemporary works and classics like *The Crucible*, as distinct from Roger Hall, etc, for older people."

Bell, who lives in Forrest Hill, discovered his love of drama helping backstage when at Wairau Intermediate. He went on to join Shoreside Theatre in the early 1990s, and has been directing since 2007. He now produces shows as well. Bell's day job is business manager at the PumpHouse Theatre, where *The Crucible* will be performed. He works with Foolish Wit co-founder Mags Delaney, who is the PumpHouse community engagement co-ordinator. His flatmate, Aria Harrison-Sparke, is the third co-founder; they met doing Shakespeare in the Park, on which she was a costume designer.

The trio aim to do two productions a year as a way of giving more people the chance to give theatre a go. "We're trying develop an audience for good-quality performance that people down the road can go and enjoy."

• *The Crucible*, at the PumpHouse, 11-15 August. Tickets from \$25 at pumphouse.co.nz

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THE ROSE CENTRE

Back on the boards

Marie Mills, who began acting as a child in Melbourne, has taken it up again as an 80-year-old.

Mills has a long history with *The Crucible*. In 1960 she won a drama award playing the key role of Abigail. This time around she plays the elderly Rebecca Nurse.

After appearing in a number of repertory roles on the Melbourne stage, Mills gave up acting in 1969 to take care of her young family. Seven years later they moved to New Zealand, in time settling in Devonport where she is still active in the community, teaching tai chi and being involved in the Devonport Senior Forum.



Theatre comeback... Marie Mills returns to acting after 52 years

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online abuse and cancel culture



Accusers...
The Crucible cast members (above, from left) Sadie Yetton, Sarah Robinson, Aria Harrison-Sparke, Mary Warren and Gabrielle Dally play key characters who prompt the witch-hunt at the centre of the play

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Old (M) 109min	NEW
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Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory (1971) (G) 96min	50th Anniversary

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Free Guy (M) 115min	12 AUG
Stillwater (M) 139min	12 AUG
The Man in the Hat (PG) 96min	19 AUG
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Tuesday, 10th August 2021,
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Heartbeats is a community-based, cardiac support group sharing heart disease information and encouraging improved cardiac healthcare in the community. Join us for a special health presentation on recognising heart attack symptoms, learn what support is on offer for you and your whanau and gain a better understanding of what heart disease is and how it can be managed.

TAI CHI DEMONSTRATION

Sunday, 22nd August
 10:30am to 11:30 am

The New Zealand Tai Chi and Martial Arts Society will be holding a demonstration in the library to promote the healthy benefits of Tai Chi in the local community. Come along and see how Tai Chi is performed and learn how it may benefit your wellbeing.

STEPHEN HOADLEY ON GLOBAL POLITICS

Wednesday, 18th August, 6pm to 7.30pm

The rise of China seems inexorable, so will Western interests in East Asia be displaced soon? Stephen Hoadley, Auckland University Associate Professor of politics and international relations, will be discussing how the US and other Western powers have responded to the challenges of China. He will investigate why China's domination of Asia is possible but not inevitable.

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