

# The Rangitoto Observer

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 66 – September 17 2021

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

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local shoreline... p3

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## Shore sites lined up for heritage downgrade

Only two historic sites in the Takapuna-Milford area have been given an A category heritage listing in an Auckland Council review.

Of 10 category A sites under the old North Shore City Council, eight should be dropped back to a B listing says the draft council

report, obtained by the Observer under the Official Information Act.

The proposed A-listed sites are the Frank Sargeson Cottage at 14A Esmonde Rd, Takapuna; and the Castor Bay Battery complex at Kennedy Park.

The landmark PumpHouse Theatre build-

ing on Lake Pupuke has been dropped from A to B.

The other properties dropped to a B listing are: the former St Joseph's Convent at 2 Taharoto Rd; Golder House, 14 Rewiti Ave; the Hurtsmere Estate homestead at 288

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## Access all ages as Sunnynook steps out



**Marathon effort...** From Forrest Hill octogenarian John Godfrey (left) to the Em family of Sunnynook (from left, Ami, 11, mother Soriya, son Narin, 9, and grandmother Sanith), the month-long Sunnynook "Marathon" has been a welcome and socially distanced way to exercise in their local park. Story, p5.

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From page 1

# Heritage listing downgrade surprises PumpHouse

Hurstmere Rd; Merkesworth Castle at 253 Hurstmere Rd; the War Memorial Gates at Takapuna Primary School; Lake House at Barrys Point Reserve, Fred Thomas Drive; and the former Duddings store at 335 Lake Rd, Hauraki.

The council review aimed to establish if the A listings under North Shore City met the higher thresholds for category A inclusion under the Auckland Unitary Plan. Under Category A, places have to be “of outstanding significance well beyond their immediate environs”. Category B includes places that are “of considerable significance to a locality or beyond”.

Frank Sargeson’s cottage has “outstanding national historical value”, with its link to Sargeson, the prolific writer of short stories and novels from the 1930s to the 1980s. It was also a regular meeting place for other writers, artists and architects.

The cottage took on even greater merit as it was preserved as a literary museum, the review said.

The Castor Bay Battery complex was considered to have “outstanding heritage significance” as the most extensive surviving example of the “architecture of deception” during New Zealand’s response to World War II.

The complex was built in 1941-42, at the height of fears of a Japanese aerial bombardment.

The battery’s buildings and structures were designed so they were camouflaged from the air, with military features disguised as civilian buildings, including an ice-cream shop, tennis courts and residential bungalows.

The PumpHouse building, which opened at Lake Pupuke in 1906, was of considerable local historical value but had nothing of



**B-lister... the PumpHouse Theatre building is among eight North Shore sites downgraded in an Auckland Council review**

national significance to warrant an A listing, according to the review.

Auckland Council is currently in consultation with landowners, mana whenua and “stakeholders”, so “these reviews may be revised”, the council told the Observer.

To implement the recommendations arising from the review, a change to the Unitary Plan is needed. This is being prepared by council officers to be put to a Planning Committee meeting in October for approval. Once the change is notified the public can make submissions.

Heritage A and B classifications play an important part in council decision-making on any planned modifications to buildings

or sites and can influence development on nearby properties.

PumpHouse board chair Peter Burn was surprised it had not been consulted over the B category listing, which was a “doubtful sword”.

With an A-grade heritage listing the PumpHouse could be “granted more favour” in terms of building grants and the like, Burn said.

But in practical terms a lower heritage listing made it easier to work through changes and improvements to the building, he said. For example the recent installation of a canopy took around two years, due to the regulatory hoops posed by an A listing.



**A-listers... The Kennedy Park battery complex engine room (above, left) and Frank Sargeson House (right)**

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# Seal sightings bring joy, sadness – and a rescue



**Fluid situation... Auckland Zoo staff tending to a malnourished seal pup found at Thorne Bay last week**

A spring spate of seal-pup sightings on North Shore beaches has provided both delight and some sad lockdown nature lessons for beach walkers.

At least one pup was found dead on the Devonport peninsula last week and another malnourished youngster uplifted from Thorne Bay, Takapuna, for treatment at Auckland Zoo. This came days after family groups gathered to watch a pup sun itself at Cheltenham Beach.

Several other sightings have also been reported along the coastline, which the Department of Conservation (DoC) says is not unusual at this time of year.

The female fur seal pup taken to the zoo was found to be extremely underweight but with no obvious injuries. She was stabilised at the vet hospital, the New Zealand Centre for Conservation Medicine. The zoo said the pup had been given fluids and a fish feed. "Assessment of her is ongoing, with further tests still to be done."

Remarks posted online that the pup had been snagged by a fish hook appear unfounded. The zoo said there was no evidence of a fish hook. DoC added: "The zoo said they could not find a hook in the seal's mouth, anywhere in its body or any sign that there ever was a hook in its mouth."

A member of the public was also said to have poured water on the animal, possibly to drink, at the bay.

DoC says if seals are seen injured or in obvious distress, the DoC hotline should be called. People should not

interfere with them. "Seals should be given a wide berth as they are wild animals."

It was not unusual for mothers to leave pups ashore when they went feeding at sea, sometimes for hours. "Keep your distance and keep dogs under control and well away from seals," a spokesperson said.

A number of people, some with dogs, have been getting much closer than the 20-metre limit. This has prompted Auckland Council's animal-management team to step up beach patrols and remind people that dogs should be on leashes under lockdown Alert Level 4.

The council manager of Animal Management, Elly Waitoa, said: "We will advise dog owners to be cautious of the seals."

DoC called in the zoo's specialist marine-mammal keeper to go with its staff to Thorne Bay around midday on Sunday 5 August after calls from the public. Police accompanied them in case crowd control was needed to ensure compliance with social distancing.

A few hours later reports of unleashed dogs worrying a pup at Narrow Neck prompted council staff to check that beach. They found a live pup on rocks.

"After closer inspection the officer could see minor cuts on the seal's back. However, it could not be established how these injuries occurred," said Waitoa. DoC was notified so that an investigation could be undertaken.

The same afternoon, a dead pup was seen by beachgoers near the cliffs at the south-east end of Narrow Neck.

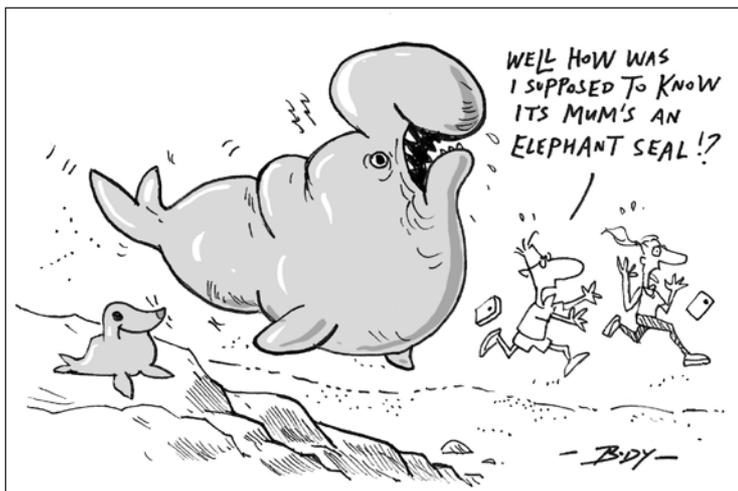
The animal team returned the next day, but could not find the body, which may have washed out to sea on the high tide.

The next morning, Tuesday last week, a dead pup was found washed up at Cheltenham. It was later collected by a member of the public, who had contacted DoC for advice. This was to wear a mask, gloves and gumboots and to bag the seal before disposal, because of the risk of it carrying disease.

The zoo said spring was when most pups were weaned, so they could be particularly vulnerable at this time of year.

DoC says that in Level 4 it cannot deal with dead animals, as only essential callouts will be attended. But it continues to respond to wildlife emergencies. Its hotline number is (0800 DOC HOT (0800 362 468).

General advice can be found on its website at [doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/marine-mammals/seals/nz-fur-seal/facts/](https://doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/marine-mammals/seals/nz-fur-seal/facts/).



## Briefs

**SOS sounds again**

A North Shore-born pre-purchase voucher system, which went national in 2020 to help businesses stay afloat in lockdown, is back in business. SOS Business (previously known as SOS Cafe) was the brainchild of Devonport man David Downs. It has paid out hundreds of thousands of dollars. "Our local businesses add so much colour and culture to our suburbs, it's now our turn to give back," said Downs. Go to sosbusiness.nz to buy vouchers.

**In the clear**

Rosmini College staff and students have all returned negative results after some required Covid-19 tests when a person later diagnosed with the Delta variant attended a school event last month. Among those who had to isolate was headmaster Nixon Cooper.

**Essential shopping**

Countdown supermarkets on the North Shore are opening one hour early, from 7-8am, for essential workers to get their groceries. Work ID is required for entry.

**Valuations postponed**

Property-valuation updates have been delayed until December, with Auckland Council citing lockdown difficulties in completing these for next month, as planned. The three-yearly valuations are already a year behind schedule after having been postponed last year, due to the country's first Covid-19 lockdown.

**Shore residents flock for Covid tests after August outbreak**

Around 9000 residents in North Shore's eastern suburbs have had Covid-19 tests in the last five weeks.

A Northern Region Health Coordination Centre spokesperson said that 15 per cent out of an estimated 60,000 residents of Forrest Hill, Bayswater, Takapuna, Sunnynook, Belmont, Milford, Devonport, Castor Bay, Hauraki, Narrow Neck, Stanley Point and Campbells Bay had been tested from 9 August until Monday, 13 September.

This five-week period started shortly before the Delta variant was detected in the community when a Devonport man tested positive on 17 August, triggering the current Alert Level 4 lockdown.

Sunnynook Countdown was added to the contact-tracing locations of interests this month. It was visited by a person with Covid-19 on 3 September and 30 August.

It, and supermarkets in Northcote and Albany, were the only North Shore sites on the Ministry of Health's Covid-19 list for testing and isolation at the beginning of this week. Attention is now focussing more on suburbs in the south and west of Auckland. (See health.govt.nz for more details on location of interests)

North Shore Hospital had four Covid patients in care earlier this week, with 21 in total in hospitals across Auckland.

North Shore Hospital has called for more ICU nurses and prepared more negative-pressure rooms as the lockdown continues.

As of 6 September, Waitematā DHB (which covers West Auckland and the North Shore) had just 14 of the resourced 133 ICU/HDU (high-dependency unit) beds across metropolitan Auckland. Auckland DHB had 94 and Counties-Manukau DHB 25.

Nationally, there were 326 such beds, a Ministry of Health spokesperson said.

ICU bed capacity in New Zealand changed daily, depending on local need, planning, and staffing. Surge planning is used to consider how to use available space. "Additionally, there are ventilators and ICU-capable beds that can be converted if required, to increase capacity, with an estimated surge to approximately 550 beds."

The ministry said 41 medical staff from around the country had been deployed to Auckland, 39 assigned to managed isolation and quarantine facilities and two to ICU.

A Waitemata DHB spokesperson said there were 10 negative pressure beds at North Shore Hospital. As of last week, Waitemata DHB had not brought staff from outside Auckland to its ICU.

"No Covid-19 patients have been relocated due to lack of space or nurses at Waitematā DHB, but patients have been moved to allow staff and patients to safely adhere to Covid-19 safety protocols and procedures."

Community testing facilities in Albany and the Hibiscus Coast have supplemented that at Birkenhead, providing more choice this side of the bridge for those looking to book vaccinations. North Care in Albany has also been allowing those within a 20-30 minute drive to be shortlisted to get a call for any spare daily vaccinations.

More smaller local GP practices are now receiving Ministry clearance to vaccinate, following an early focus on accrediting larger clinics.

An example is Med Plus at Devonport in Anne St. Practice manager Dr Heidi McRae said appointments for colds and flu had dropped off as people had been staying at home and not spreading germs. But Covid vaccinations were in demand.

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# Police hunt 'reckless' golf course pipe-bomber

Discovery of the remnants of an exploded pipe bomb on Pupuke Golf Club course appear to have solved the mystery of explosions being heard by Forrest Hill residents during Level 4 lockdown.

Waitemata East police, who called in the Eagle helicopter after the first reports of explosions, have slammed the "dangerous and reckless" behaviour of those responsible.

Waitemata East area commander Inspector Stef Sagar said the first reports of loud bangs came on 24 August. "The Eagle helicopter was immediately deployed to the area but nothing of note was located. Police also received reports relating to loud bangs on Friday night (3 September) and again on Sunday night (5 September)."

Inquiries indicated that the loud noises had happened occasionally in the area over several weeks, Sagar said.

Police were notified on Monday last

week that the remnants of a bomb had been found and were recovered for further examination. "The remnants of a small home-made pipe bomb was located on one of the fairways, which had some minor damage to the grass."

Follow-up inquiries were being made, including analysis of the bomb remnants the item and speaking to locals. No arrests have been made at this stage, Sagar said.

"While this may be some people fooling around, this is dangerous and reckless behaviour and it's even more disappointing that this is occurring during Alert Level 4, when everyone else in our community has been working hard to comply with the restrictions and is doing the right thing."

Resident Jennifer Hill, who lives down the road from the golf course, said she and her boyfriend heard loud bangs in the middle of the night, around the time of the New

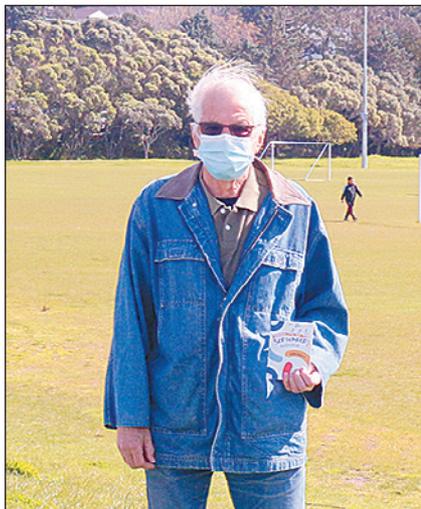
Lynn Countdown attack. "First he thought that it sounded more like a bomb and we were like 'What the heck is going on?'" They had looked on the internet to see if there were any news reports or information on the police website, she said.

"I think we heard three of them but on different nights."

Anyone with information is asked to contact police on 105, quoting file number 210906/1891, or to call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Linwood Reserve in Forrest Hill has been damaged again by hoon drivers driving a vehicle onto the grass during lockdown, cutting it up with tyre tracks.

Police are investigating the vandalism that happened overnight on Tuesday 7 September. Sunnynook community centre manager Bronwyn Bound suggested the council should install bollards.



**Lapping it up... John Godfrey is tracking his impressive tally of walks in a special leaflet**

## Sunnynook's marathon effort

From page 1

Sunnynook Park is proving the ideal attraction to get locals out of their homes during lockdown. Thanks to an initiative of the Sunnynook Community Association – to encourage residents to complete a marathon distance of 42km in September – many are also quietly achieving fitness goals.

One of the keenest regular walkers is octogenarian John Godfrey. With the month not even half way through, the resident of neighbouring Forrest Hill was already close to finishing his "marathon". Some days he has completed four laps of the park, a distance of around 4km, so it soon adds up.

On his walks he may be lapped by runners, cyclists, and people on scooters, but Godfrey is an example of slow and steady wins the race. He is one of around 100 peo-

ple officially participating in the event and recording their distances.

When Alert Level 4 was imposed, the association decided to box on with the long-planned event. People could do it safely in the large park as permitted daily exercise close to home.

One of its driving forces is association committee member Soriya Em. Her own young children and mother join her on the park tracks.

"I've never seen so many dogs," she says.

Em said participants were posting photographs of themselves and offering encouragement online. "One of them was new to the community and felt it was a really good event for them to get out and enjoy it."

With two weeks to go to the month's end, keen exercisers might still be in time to join the fun and achieve a personal milestone.

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## Takapuna businesses tumble in pandemic's wake

More than 40 Takapuna businesses have closed since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We've lost around 41 merchants," Takapuna Beach Business Association chief executive Terence Harpur told the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

Numbers going out of business would grow, he said in a separate statement issued before the Government extended Alert Level 4 lockdown. More Government financial support, including a rent subsidy scheme, was needed, Harpur said. Alert Level 3 was of little help to most traders and even Alert Level 2 would prove tough for some.

Data for the week to 5 September showed total retail spend in Takapuna under Alert Level 4 had fallen by 96.2 per cent, compared with the same week last year, which was then under Alert Level 2, he said.

Harpur wants Auckland Council to temporarily relax its outdoor dining restrictions

on restaurants, bars and cafe when alert levels fall, to allow more and safer eating outdoors. Outdoor licensing and other compliance fees should be waived, he said.

Reporting to the board in a remote meeting also addressed by the managers of the Milford and Devonport associations, Harpur told of Covid's "significant" impact on Takapuna and called for council staff based in Takapuna to return to their offices when the latest lockdown ended.

"We need to set the example from the get-go. 'Right, the danger's passed, let's get back to normal and support our local businesses'."

Milford Business Association manager Murray Hill was more upbeat, telling the board Milford shops had been performing well. He pointed to Milford's standing as the top town centre on the Shore (Takapuna is classified as a metropolitan centre).

Milford had had only one store close

last year, Hill told the Observer outside the meeting. There were few vacancies and demand for mall space was high. A campaign to encourage shoppers to support local businesses would ramp up soon, he said.

Devonport has had 10 "street-level" businesses close since March 2020, said its Business Improvement District (BID) manager, Shaulyn van Baaren. But it saw a slight rise in overall spending for the 2020-21 financial year, however, spend from overseas tourists was down 63.8 per cent.

The business associations receive board funding for community events. Harpur said if these could not be held, Takapuna's \$25,000 would go towards business support.

Van Baaren said businesses were trying to stay positive and build their online trade. A few new businesses had popped up.

"But it's bleak. It's hard. They did not by any means recover from last year's various levels and to go to Level 4 is a big, big hit."

## TNIS students talk about lockdown learning

Online learning in lockdown hasn't been easy, students say – but at least it can come with home-made biscuits.

With the experience from earlier lockdowns most schools transitioned quickly. But there are still big disruptive impacts on student life. Time out of the classroom from mid-August is mounting up. Term 3 finishes on October 1, but what Term 4 schooling will look like is anyone's guess.

The Observer contacted Takapuna Normal Intermediate School deputy principal Kate Watson last week and via her got the inside word from three of its Year 8 students (see right and below).

Meanwhile, Belmont Intermediate School's acting principal, Claire Janes, has noted in that school's newsletter that this generation of learners would be a case study in resilience.

"For our Year 8 students, they will come to associate their intermediate years with lockdowns and distance learning – the new normal of teaching and learning in the 21st century. It will be interesting to track how our youngsters will continue to adapt their lives in the years to come, as we learn to live in such tempestuous times," she said.



**EWAN** (above), aged 13, says: "The transition from regular school to online learning was a swift and simple action, but brought on a few different challenges.

"Online learning has forced students to become more organised and to adapt to coping with more home distractions as well as having the motivation to even complete work.

"Although online learning had brought on more challenges, it has some positives. Students have connected more with their family and improved their time-management skills in order to complete work on time and to a high standard.

"One of the biggest benefits of online learning is the abundance of home-made biscuits."



**DIYA** (above), aged 13, says: "Over lockdown, everyone has been forced to adapt to this new way of learning, making it a very hard time for some. For students this is extremely hard; the concept of childhood has practically been stripped from them.

"They can no longer get together with friends or go out, and most importantly they can't go to school.

"However the kids at TNIS have adapted really well to all these sudden changes.

They have managed to work around these new schedules and they just have really great mindsets around learning. They just get that it is the way it is, and they know what they have to do. We have all been here before so we have settled in quite quickly without fuss."



**MAYA** (above), aged 13, says: "Lockdown and online learning has been tough for many intermediate school students. This is especially true for those affected by the cancellation of many major cultural and sporting events – from BandQuest to the AIMS Games. For many Year 8 students, this was their final opportunity to represent intermediate schools at these major national and regional events.

"Term 3 is one of the biggest, busiest terms of the year... and I know many dis-

appointed students have been training and practising for all the events."

Many sports have also come to the end of their seasons, including two Auckland netball centres, and basketball's semester two has been delayed and many, many more. "Heaps of students must be disappointed during these tough times. But a rest and relaxation from these events have definitely inspired me and many other students to hang out with their families more, and possibly even train and practise hobbies with them!"



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# TV investigator uncovers Shore delights

David Lomas is well known for TV shows that fill in the missing pieces of people's lives. He talks to Helen Vause about his own life, including his enjoyment of beach life.



**Familiar face... David Lomas made a switch from newspapers to television in the late 80s, when he worked on the groundbreaking new *Holmes* programme – and survived a tragic fatal helicopter crash**

When David Lomas was a boy playing ice hockey in Wellington, he wondered if his sport could get a mention alongside all the others in the sports pages of the city's newspapers.

So the sports-mad 13-year-old thought he'd have a crack at making it happen. After his Saturday ice hockey game, he'd race home, write up the results, then whip into the city on his bike, story in hand.

His older brother was a junior newspaperman, so when young Lomas arrived at the front of the *Evening Post* offices, he knew what to do with his story.

He'd just pop it into the special box out front where all the other seasoned sports-report contributors would also leave their work.

The newspaper ran the first story he sub-

mitted – and all the others that he faithfully delivered after his weekend games.

Not long after that, the editor tracked him down and sent him a cheque for his efforts, encouraging him onto the first rung of what became a long media career. When they began putting his name on his ice-hockey reports, that really set the ink running in his veins.

"I was pretty tickled to see my name out there in print," he chuckles.

Decades later, sport and storytelling are still very much his passion. Lomas talked to the *Observer* about a media life that's in recent years made him a well-known name as the presenter of TV shows, notably *Lost and Found*, in which he applies his distinctive investigative style to resolving family mysteries and reuniting grateful people.

Through the show, many have been happily reconnected and discovered networks of new family relationships.

By the age of 15, Lomas was regularly out and about covering weekend sports for the capital's *Dominion*, dictating his stories from phone boxes and working out that he very much wanted to make a career as a sports journalist.

He kicked around university for a while, before getting a diploma in journalism and getting his first real job.

Lomas seized the offer of a junior reporter's job at the *Whanganui Chronicle*, turning away from the bright lights of bigger papers where his classmates hankered to work.

In the provinces, figured Lomas, he'd get the chance to "do a bit of everything" and

chase big stories that might fast-track his copy into the front pages of the paper, alongside the work of much more senior reporters.

His strategy worked, and before long he was back in Wellington, working for the *Dominion*, as an enthusiastic all-rounder.

His interests, beside sport, lay in crime-reporting, digging into stories and discovering information others couldn't seem to turn up. One way and another, in print and on screen, Lomas has since then never strayed far from his modus operandi of painstaking research and the assemblage of missing pieces into ripping yarns.

"Back then, TV journalism was in its early days and we all started in print jobs on newspapers. For serious journalists, a newspaper was the place to be," he says.

He had no thoughts of himself on camera – or as star of a TV show. He progressed to writing probing long-form feature articles.

But when the call came from contacts in television in the late 80s, Lomas took his chance to try working with sound and moving pictures.

"I loved it, the buzz of it all. And after life in newspapers, I was blown away by the resources we had back then in current affairs to just go and chase after stories, wherever they were."

It was just a few months after the 1989 launch of the new nightly current-affairs show hosted by the late Paul Holmes when Lomas, Holmes and crew found themselves in the middle of a terrifying story of their own.

They had flown to Gisborne and then choppered off to a remote marae, to shoot a story. Flying back at dusk over remote coastline in bad weather, the chopper flipped into freezing waters about a kilometre offshore. Never had Lomas – a triathlete in his spare time – been so pleased to be in top shape, helping him to cope with the ordeal.

Cameraman Joe von Dinklage lost his life, but the rest of the group scrambled to shore and staggered on in the dark over rough country to find help at a farmhouse.

Lomas's career in television developed through subsequent current-affairs shows such as *Frontline*, *Assignment* and *Sunday*, and making documentaries that included 2004's *The Real Mr Asia*.

But he took a major step into the limelight when he began hosting and directing the *Missing Pieces* series, launched on TV3 in 2009.

The hit series was later renamed *Lost and Found* and given a wider brief as *David Lomas Investigates* in 2020.

The show has evolved over the years, and its stories have taken Lomas all over New Zealand and to many different corners of the world.

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*"I loved [television],  
the buzz of it all.  
And after life in  
newspapers, I was blown  
away by the resources we  
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Thousands of people have applied to be part of the show and take the journey with Lomas, trying to find whoever they are searching for.

Of the stories he and his team decide to follow, only around one in five makes it to air, often because some family members want no part of such a public tale.

When a story stalls through lack of cooperation, Lomas says he will pass on his findings to whoever initiated the search – many times someone seeking a birth parent years after adoption.

"We pass on our findings because it's just publicly available information anyway that we've been able to dig out," says Lomas, adding that often people just don't have the research skills to make their search successful.

Lomas is enormously proud of his pro-

grammes. "We've made a difference to a massive number of lives. I believe we're been part of making an important social change too by normalising being part of a family with a split or members or who have been fractured in some way.

"There are so many of them out there."

He says in the era from the 1950s to 1970s, before the birth-control pill and more-available pregnancy terminations, around 80,000 adoptions took place in New Zealand.

He explains what that means: 160,000 birthparents, 320,000 grandparents and countless siblings and half-siblings, all part of the fractured families and 'family secrets' from that era alone – well over half a million people, without taking extended family numbers into account.

"When you look at the numbers," says Lomas, "it's no wonder the show has found such acceptance and that so many people have been inspired to come forward and tell their stories."

Over the years, Lomas has honed his research skills and use of technology. And advances like DNA testing have had a major impact.

But the heart-wrenching stories have the same timeless common thread.

"When we get on a plane to meet whoever we are looking for, we really have no idea how people are going to react. From years of experience, there are no easy answers when it comes to what might have happened in individual stories. It is full of surprises."

Lomas's own world was shattered when he lost his partner, TV colleague Sue Donald, to cancer in 2012.

Four years ago, he met Devonport resident Clarinda Franklin. The Hauraki Primary principal is now his partner, drawing him to the peninsula and a new community.

Now in his late 60s, Lomas is still as fit as a fiddle – running, swimming and kayaking around Devonport.

"I try to swim all year round, and over the years I've kayaked all over the country. I really enjoy it but it's also about health for me. I always want to be able to do what I want to do and not be restricted by my own lack of condition. I want to be able to live life to the fullest in the years ahead."



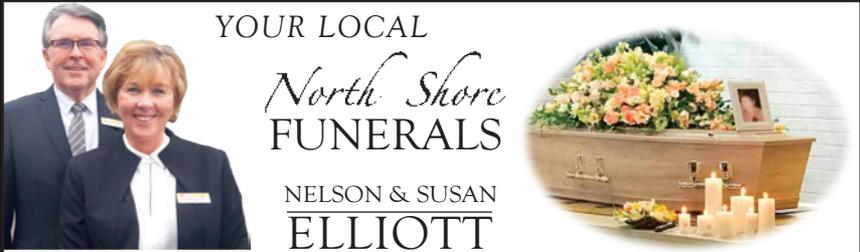
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## Shore's rubbish-charging system could be dumped

Rubbish-collection charging could change in the Devonport-Takapuna area as Auckland Council considers a one-size-fits-all approach across the city.

Currently, residents of the North Shore and West Auckland use a pay-as-you-throw system under which they use a bin tag each time they put their wheellie bin out. Tags cost from \$2.70 to \$5.70 per pickup, depending on the size of the bin.

The rest of Auckland pays a targeted rate for rubbish collection, currently \$150.06 a year (around \$2.88 a week). The council is now considering whether to make one of those two models the citywide system or to keep the status quo.

Around half of North Shore properties are serviced by private waste-collection providers, with the other half using the council-run

service, Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members were told at a conference-call workshop recently.

Data showing that pay-as-you-throw resulted in reduced waste was skewed, because of the number of people using private collection, the meeting was told.

But nearly two-thirds of rubbish collected in the local-board area could be redirected – such as via food composting or recycling.

Households generating the largest volumes of rubbish tended to be those with young children, due to nappies, or the very elderly, due to waste from incontinence and medical products. In Devonport-Takapuna, five per cent of households have occupants aged under-5 and seven per cent have over-85s.

Board chair Ruth Jackson said there was no evidence that the pay-as-you-throw model

reduced waste. “It’s not having a huge, really clear impact on the amount of stuff we chuck.”

Board member Toni van Tonder raised concerns about people making the adjustment. Whatever was done should be the best option in the greater scheme of waste minimisation. “I think communities often don’t like change,” she said.

Member Jan O’Connor said she did not want any more bins. “I could end up in my house with having four plastic bins in my yard. We’ll be having footpaths covered in bins.”

Feedback will be gathered and the proposal eventually considered for the 2022/23 annual plan.

Food-scrap collection is set for early 2023, having been delayed by Covid-related supply issues.

### Milford manager wants out of stalled boardwalk campaign

The Milford Business Association manager has washed his hands of the planned Wairau Estuary boardwalk. Murray Hill said he wanted to hand over to someone else the role of driving the project to connect the Milford shopping centre with Milford Beach.

Speaking to a workshop of the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board last week, he said: “It’s just disappointing that it hasn’t happened to date.

“I just don’t want to be involved in anything that’s not going to go ahead rapidly and doesn’t have support.”

Board chair Ruth Jackson said she was sorry his enthusiasm had waned. The project was still on the list for funding from the board, but not at the top of it. “The board was always aware it wasn’t going to have the money to fund the construction,” she said.

## Board supports move to Māori wards for Auckland Council

Auckland Council has taken another step towards Māori wards, and the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board is supportive in principle.

The council’s current stance suggests using the same formula that decides the number of Māori seats in Parliament – the number of Māori on the Māori electoral roll would decide the number of extra seats.

A council report says there are 114,900 voters on the Māori roll and 1.6 million on the general roll in Auckland, which would

equate to one seat on a 21 or 22-seat council or two of 23 seats.

Cabinet is set to remove the 20-seat limit for the Super City council.

The Devonport-Takapuna Local Board asked that recommendations made in the Auckland Governance Report 2009 be re-examined in relation to Māori representation on Auckland Council.

The board also endorsed the proposals for a Māori ward to affect only governing-body representation, not local boards.

## Plans remain for summer fun

Christmas events and a street carnival are on the agenda for local town centres.

Business associations presented their plans for using Devonport-Takapuna Local Board funding over the next 12 months, including repeating popular annual events.

Hurstmere Rd roadworks “will be definitely finished” in time for the Christmas carnival on 4 December, said Takapuna Beach Business Association chief executive, Terence Harpur. He said \$8000 of board money would go towards the event

and include market stalls, face painting, craft stalls and a visit from Father Christmas. The Summer Days Festival would follow on 22 January. About 12,000 people came to the Taka puna Winter Lights event in July and plan was to grow this next year.

Milford also has a Christmas event planned in November, along with a February festival. It hopes to bring back Food Truck Thursdays from next month, Covid permitting. Trucks will park this year at Milford Baptist Church, Dodson Ave.

## Don’t forget cenotaph in plans, board urged

The future of the Takapuna cenotaph remains up in the air, but it must not be forgotten, the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board has been told.

At a community forum meeting, held via conference call, resident Gavin Sheehan asked what would happen to the cenotaph in the future development of the town centre.

“We must not forget to take the important parts of our history forward with us also.”

The cenotaph should be at the forefront of any plans to move community services, the library or local government offices.

“It all needs to stay together,” said Sheehan.

Board chair Ruth Jackson said the memorial was a very important part of our history and shared stories helped make communities. “It needs pride of place”.

Senior board adviser Tristan Coulson said approved plans for the town centre included the possibility of locating the cenotaph there, but it also had the right to remain where it was – on private land – through a covenant. The council would liaise with the RSA and provide options to the board in upcoming meetings.

**Simon Watts**  
MP for North Shore

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Authorised by Simon Watts MP, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.



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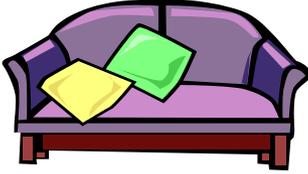
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## Locals lobby over use of building-sale proceeds

Proceeds from the sale of No. 2 The Strand should go into legacy projects that reflect its origins, say two community representatives.

The former library building is being sold as an unwanted asset by Auckland Council property arm Panuku.

Due to its origins as a building paid for by a community contribution, proceeds must be returned for local community use.

“It should be put into some iconic project,” Grey Power’s Bill Rayner told the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board. Plans for it to be restored and used as a satellite art gallery or museum had earlier come to naught and Panuku should not be allowed to divert the money to routine expenditure, he said.

The property has a rateable value of \$2.85 million and a Category B heritage listing.

In a separate submission about the current library’s future (see story below), Ruth Ell of the Friends of the Library also raised the question of No. 2, saying: “You should spend



**On the block... The former Takapuna library in The Strand**

the money [from it] on something more substantial than three walkways that the council is already building.”

The board later nominated its preferred projects, with proposed (but not already funded) walkways making up two of the four projects

and a property purchase to secure a section of the Takapuna to Milford coastal track also included. But the top choice for proceeds from the heritage listed former library was for the money from its sale to be put back into Takapuna library and community-service provision.

Ultimately, it will be the council’s Finance Committee that decides which of the nominated projects is chosen. The committee will consider officials’ advice, which has signalled that library and community facilities upgrades and the coastal track may not qualify, given plans are not as developed as the other contenders, led by the Francis St-Esmonde Rd cycleway.

Board member Aidan Bennett took a swipe at what has been a long-running but unsuccessful campaign to save No. 2, saying: “That building isn’t iconic.” It had seismic issues and would cost a lot of money to do up.

A sale of the site would fetch considerably more than with the building, “but people are all sentimental about keeping it”, he said.

## Library friends want space retained for collections

A stalwart of the Friends of Takapuna Library isn’t against a new building, but she wants to ensure its services aren’t downgraded and enough space is provided to house the library’s special collections.

Ruth Ell told the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board that the Friends group, which has been supporting library staff and events for around 30 years, was watching the debate around community service provision.

Options to redevelop or relocate the library and surrounding council buildings needed to keep in mind the future of Research North and the Angela Morton

collection. (These cover local history and visual arts repositories and research and exhibition space.)

Under questioning, Ell said she was not against change to community facility provision. “Certainly the Mary Thomas Centre is past its use-by-date.” But a central library and combined community building – under consideration in the new Takapuna town square development – needed to provide library staff and users enough room.

Parking, weekend and evening opening hours and the need for a mix of quiet spaces and meeting rooms also needed to be

factored into thinking, she said.

From what she had seen reported back from officials, one of the four options for community services had 41 per cent less floor space than was currently available.

Board members took Ell’s submission as a chance to express their own views on the proposals. They asked if the board’s offices, now in leased premises next to the Community Services Building beside the library, would be included in any integrated facility.

“Unknown at this point,” said senior board adviser, Tristan Coulson, of Panuku’s proposals. They are set for more study.

### Letters

#### Town-square design ‘a dog’s breakfast’

Firstly, I would like to compliment you on your coverage of the “Te Uru Tapu” Save the Boardwalk issue and the petition presented to the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board at their August meeting. Your journalism is always of a high standard and fairly presented. Thank you, Rangitoto Observer.

I read with interest the letter (Observer, 3 September) from Trish Deans, DTLB member. It was a very good letter and dwelt on the issues which are of great concern in relation to this Panuku-managed project.

Deans has drawn attention to a number of shortcomings in Panuku’s proposed design for the Takapuna Town Square: That it is not a town square; it does not conform to Council’s own ‘Open Space’ Provision Policy in a number of respects; it is NOT 3000-4000sqm and it is to be surrounded by overly dominating buildings; it has no room for the War Memorial and an inadequate area for Anzac Day services and

parades; the emasculation of the Takapuna Bus Station and the Sunday Market.

In other words, it is “a dog’s breakfast”, which like a bone is likely to be dug up shortly after completion for ‘further’ developments.

Deans has called for the fundamental issues to be scrutinised and satisfactory answers to be found.

There is no need to look too far. Over the past two to four years, local architecture and urban design consultants Richard Reid and Associates of Devonport have provided extremely good designs for the town square which would amply redress most of the shortcomings of the Panuku designs.

Dust the designs off and have them scrutinised again. They would provide what the residents of Takapuna and Devonport need and want: A town square of which we and future generations can be rightly proud.

**Tony Lewis, Takapuna**

#### Watts wins tax role as National rejigs

North Shore MP Simon Watts has picked up a new role focusing on tax. He has been appointed the Opposition’s Associate Spokesperson for Revenue (tax), following a recent minor reshuffle of responsibilities within the National Party.

Watts is already shadow ACC spokesperson and holds the Associate Health role as well. These align with his finance and health-management background.

“I am proud to be given the Associate Revenue (Tax) portfolio responsibility that includes the overall working of the New Zealand tax system, including Kiwi Saver, student loans, GST and income tax,” he said.

In his maiden speech to Parliament, Watts spoke of the importance of building an economy that empowers individuals and “shares the opportunities it’s creating”.

His background includes being a chartered accountant, with experience working at the Inland Revenue Department and Deloitte Tax, as well as investment banking internationally.

“This gives me confidence that we can look beyond what we’ve always done and act,” Watts said

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**Dropped home... The missing Lake House sculpture was mysteriously returned**

## Return of sculpture prompts call for creative responses to its theft

A four-piece sculpture stolen from the Takapuna Lake House arts centre has been returned under cover of darkness – and the centre wants to turn the crime around for good.

The *Matariki Kaitiaki* sculpture, unveiled as part of Matariki celebrations in 2019, went missing sometime before 11 August.

Its four pieces, designed by its whaikaro/master carver Natanahira Te Pona, were returned at 9.10pm on 1 September, via a member of the community who had been communicating with police constable Don Henderson.

“[There are] no hard and fast leads yet,” Lake House manager Grae Burton said.

“We have been in dialogue with someone and it has resulted in the return of the statue. We’re very grateful for the support of the police.

“If I had to speculate, I would say whoever took it probably realised it was

probably worthless, [with] no way to destroy it or sell it.”

The sculpture had been damaged, he said. “It will go through a restoration process but it is mostly intact.” It will be put back in place on a concrete base which will probably be coloured to simulate the water it’s coming in and out of, Burton said.

“I’m feeling very relieved. I’m hoping this will mean that we can get back on track with our other activities.”

It would also mean ramping up security. The theft had shown how existing measures could be breached, he said.

Now, the Lake House is asking for creative interpretations of the theft – artworks, stories and ideas on where the *Matariki Kaitiaki* went, who the guardian *taniwha* met, and what happened on its adventures.

People can message Lake House Arts through Facebook or email [info@lakehousearts.org.nz](mailto:info@lakehousearts.org.nz) with their ideas.



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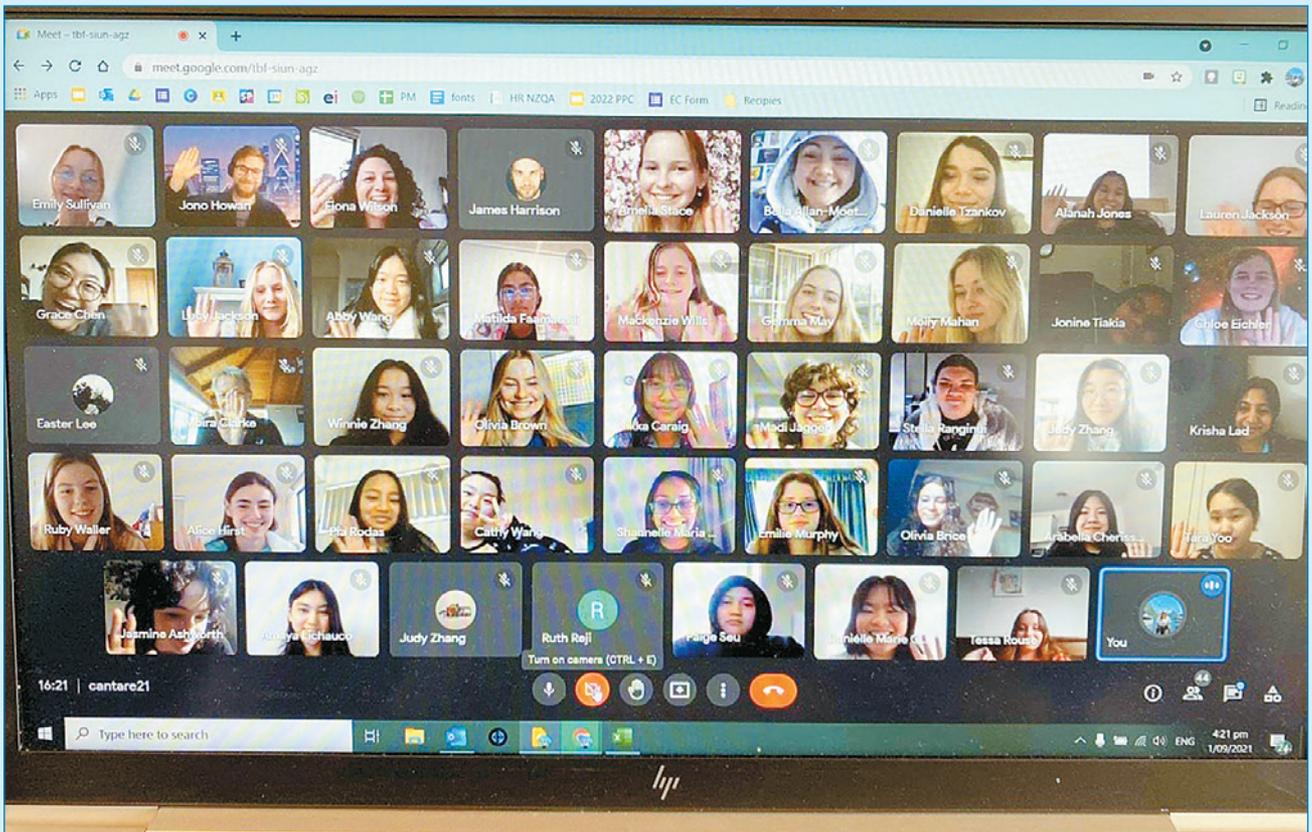
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# Choir members dress up (and down) for lockdown fun



## Morale booster... Cantare choir members got together for an online quiz on the weekend they should have been competing in the Big Sing

Members of Westlake Girls High School choir Cantare weren't to be silenced during lockdown, with members turning their attention from songs to an online quiz in a bid to boost morale.

The choir was one of several from the school that had gone through to the national finals of the Big Sing competition for secondary schools only to see the prestigious

annual event cancelled in the wake of the Delta variant outbreak.

Rather than mope, the girls glammed up in gowns and got together remotely for a dress-up quiz night on the late August weekend they were meant to be in Christchurch.

One wore her mother's wedding dress and another a tiara for the competition, for which around 50 participants competed in teams,

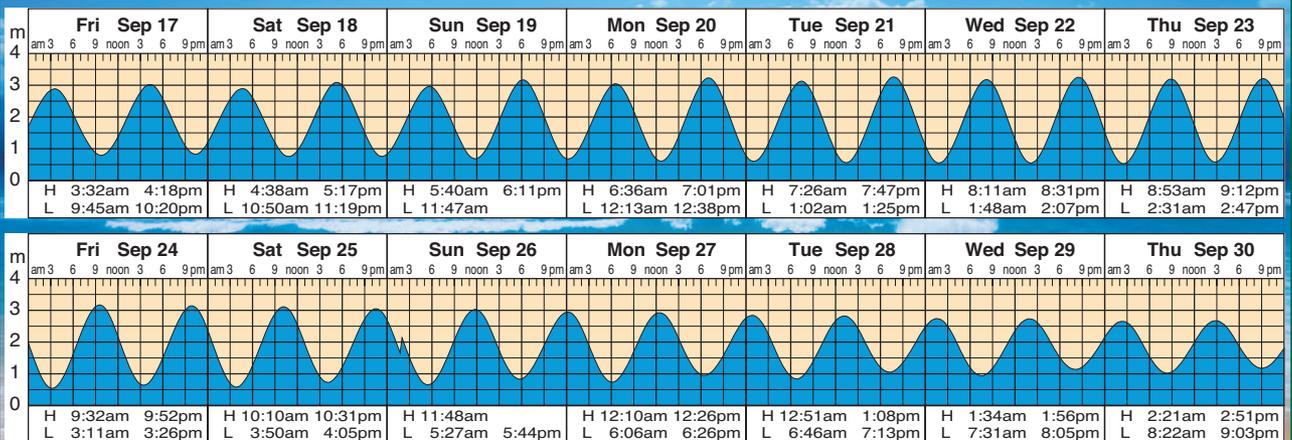
based on their choir sections.

A team of staff from Westlake's music department also competed, with teacher Jono Howan presiding as quizmaster in a tuxedo.

Round two of the quiz (pictured above) was held on a second night with a different dress code – pyjamas.

After a strong start, the staff team faded, leaving the Alto 1 team as victors.

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