

The Rangitoto Observer

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 65 – September 3, 2021

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

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a big step closer... p11

Shore schools, theatre caught in Covid scare

Celebratory performances at a school and theatre in Takapuna have led to tense count-downs in Covid-19 isolation for hundreds of locals who attended.

The extent of the scares in the North Shore community has emerged since shows at Rosmini College and the PumpHouse Theatre were first listed by the Ministry of Health as 'locations of interest'.

Carmel College confirmed last week that some of its pupils were also at the Rosmini College Filipino cultural night attended by 450 people on Friday 13 August.

A person who subsequently tested positive for Covid-19 was there, sparking the alert on 24 August. Both Catholic schools were quick to pass on to parents the instruction that attendees get tests for the virus and stay isolated

pending results. Rosmini headmaster Nixon Cooper, who was at the cultural night, was still in isolation and awaiting his own test results when he spoke to the Observer.

Health advice had been clear, he said, and nobody had panicked when it was forwarded to them.

More than 200 people were at the PumpHouse Theatre on Sunday **To page 2**

Locked-down meat-eaters want fairer suck of the sav



Meaty issue... Milford butcher Todd Treadwell says customers are keen to return to his shop, for contactless pick-ups at least, but level-4 rules limit him to deliveries only. Story, page 3.

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Empty seats... It's deja vu for James Bell, manager at the PumpHouse

Thousands caught up in Shore alert

From page 1

15 August when the Foolish Wit company staged its final performance of a season of *The Crucible*.

Play director James Bell said the first he heard about Covid-19 being so close to home was more than a week later when people started messaging him about the theatre being listed as a location of interest. Later in the day he received official health advice. Thanks to good record-keeping implemented at the PumpHouse upon reopening after the first 2020 Covid lockdown, he was able to pass on full contact details for audience, cast and crew to contract tracers.

“As every negative test comes back there’s a quiet sigh of relief as we could have turned into quite a big cluster,” he says.

The same could be said for much of the North Shore, home to the first notified case in the Auckland community of the Delta variant, when a Devonport tradesman tested positive earlier this month.

A connected cluster involving a work colleague of the Devonport man grew to become the second biggest of the current outbreak. Although the spread has become much wider across Auckland, the North Shore was initially the centre of most places of interest, including multiple retail outlets, pushing thousands into isolation and prompting a run on testing centres. North Shore Hospital was forced to close its emergency department for 48 hours after staff exposure.

Some supermarkets are still struggling to

cope with limited staff numbers. A number have reduced their trading hours.

The PumpHouse, where Bell has his day job as business manager, now faces worries about again having to bounce back from lockdown. Before staff can return to the theatre, it will also need to find around \$2000 for a deep clean. The theatre had been fully booked until the end of the year, said Bell, including a show from Rosmini that was meant to have proceeded at the end of August, and counted towards the boys’ assessments.

Cooper said the alert had been handled calmly. He waited for detailed advice from the Ministry which came within a few hours so he could quickly pass this on to parents. Around 150 people were in the audience, with 300 students participating in the show, he said.

Carmel Principal Chris Allen said it had four staff attending and 31 girls performing, but learned later that more of its students were in the audience. An information letter she sent out in the late afternoon had been seen by 85 per cent of parents the same evening, and by nearly all by the next morning. Just one person contacted her to clarify the non-public site for testing the school had been asked to pass on.

Cooper says as the days have gone on he greets news of each person testing negative with a “yippee”. “And I’m hoping for a similar response for myself.”

His take on what had otherwise been a very successful show, well attended by local Filipino parents and residents, was: “We were probably tempting fate having it on the 13th.”

Clinics deal with testing rush as hospital boxes on

Doctors on the North Shore have been busy under Covid lockdown conditions, many managing appointments remotely through audio or video calls to keep clinic visits in check.

Two patients with Covid-19 were in North Shore Hospital as of early this week, out of a total 32 cases in hospitals across Auckland.

“There are appropriate isolation and infection prevention and control plans in place at all hospitals where these patients are being managed,” the Ministry of Health said.

The general manager at Shorecare Urgent Care at Smales Farm said the clinic has been “really busy” with testing. This had peaked from 18-25 August, after which more pop-up sites opened, making things more manageable.

“Now we are seeing some testing in our urgent care setting and also some booked appointments.” These were mainly in the evenings and at weekends. Patients should go to a community testing centre for standard testing unless they felt unwell, she advised.

At Sunnynook Medical Centre, some consultations were happening remotely. Flu jabs had been minimised, with appointments spaced out and vaccinations given by a nurse in the car park. Consultations at The Doctors Fred Thomas clinic are also via phone or video, but some urgent in person-appointments may be available after phoning.

North Shore Hospital’s emergency department was closed for 48 hours in the first week of lockdown after it was confirmed a person with covid-19 had been on-site, with 102 staff stood down for testing. Paediatric cases were diverted to Waitakere Hospital. The ED re-opened on 21 August. Urgent surgeries and outpatient appointments are going ahead.

Visitors are not allowed at the hospital under alert level-4 with a few exceptions on compassionate grounds. These include one support person for the birth of a baby and the mother’s post-natal stay, and one parent or guardian in the paediatric ward. Up to two visitors can see terminally ill patients.

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Observer

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Butchers constrained while supermarkets busy



Bare shelves... Supermarkets, including Sunnynook Countdown (above), have some days struggled to keep up with demand for meat

North Shore butchers say they are getting strong support from customers who want to be able to shop in-store.

“Our customers would ideally like to see us open, or at least offering the option of contactless collection,” says Milford butcher Todd Treadwell.

“This way they can collect their meat at the same time they pop out for their other grocery staples, and it will reduce pressure on our delivery network, meaning we can help serve more people, more quickly.”

Butchers – along with greengrocers and bakeries – are restricted under alert-level 4 to offering only contactless deliveries, through online or phone ordering.

North Shore MP Simon Watts says the regulations should have been revisited.

Treadwell says his permitted Well Hung delivery service is “frantic”. It did not have enough time slots to satisfy as many customers as it would be able to over the counter.

Frustrated Hauraki butcher Ray Crawley took matters into his own hands last month, opening his Village Butcher for several days in breach of regulations. Police visited on 24 August and told him to shut his doors, which he has done. He was warned, but not fined. So was a fruit shop.

“Why not let the small shops open?” he asks, echoing calls made by his customers online and during lockdowns in 2020.

These allow supermarkets and dairies to trade, but are designed to limit person-to-person contact by keeping other stores shut for pick-ups until level-3.

Crawley says he has received a lot of community support. “It’s disappointing that someone felt the need to do us in,” he says.

The Hauraki situation is exacerbated by the temporary closing of the Countdown supermarket next door to Crawley’s butchery



No-go area... Frustrated butchers like Ray Crawley of Village Butcher in Hauraki (above) have been warned they cannot open. Their only option is to deliver phone or online orders.

to divert staff to other bigger supermarkets, where staff have been required to isolate after Covid-19 exposure.

This “herded” locals up to the struggling bigger supermarkets to queue, he said. “We’re trying to look after ourselves and look after everyone else as well.”

Even police, whom he had no issue with, had seemed sympathetic, he said.

Crawley said he had supported the first lockdown, but thought authorities had dropped the ball. He has not set up an online ordering system, but is taking phone orders.

Well Hung at Milford has been more pro-active, even marketing meat packs for Father’s Day through its website.

Executive butcher Treadwell said staff were working hard to distribute orders. But he would like to be able to open.

“If I look around Milford, where we are based, there are a number of supermarkets, greengrocers and mini marts open and serving customers, yet our doors are closed.”

Support from local shoppers was amazing and staff were working extremely hard under challenging circumstances. Suppliers were also keeping goods coming.

Police told the Observer they were doing “reassurance patrols” in the community. They did not supply details of numbers of infringements. (Details of the regulations are on [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)).

- To support local stores check if your favourites are able to deliver or consider ordering a voucher or gift card to use later. Takapuna Beach Business Association has compiled a list of its members doing this, see www.ilovetakapuna.co.nz

Antiques shop victim of attempted break-in

Police responded to an opportunistic break-in at Molloy’s Antiques in Takapuna in the first few days of lockdown.

A police spokesman said officers were alerted to the attempted break-in in Anzac St about 9.20am on Friday 20 August – the third day of level-4 lockdown.

“Two offenders were chased off by a person inside the premises

at the time,” the spokesman said. “Police attended the scene shortly after and carried out area enquiries. Unfortunately no persons of interest were located.”

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact Police on 105, quoting event number P047606661, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Briefs



Bridge left up

Walkers are getting extra exercise walking around the Milford Marina, due to the raising of its pedestrian drawbridge during alert-level 4. Auckland Council has left the bridge up to allow boats to pass through in an emergency. Like other playgrounds, Milford Reserve is closed.

Marathon effort

The Sunnynook 'Marathon' will go ahead this month. A variety of trails in the large local park allows for social distancing, with people able to set their own times to reach 42km of exercise over September. Community association deputy chair Melissa Powell said the event was created to be flexible for all Covid conditions and although it could not now begin with the planned community get-together, it still provided people a safe focus for exercise. "We wanted to continue it, because there's enough gloom and doom," she said. The association's social-media channels would help connect and encourage participants. Before lockdown around 50 people had already registered.

Library fines ditched

Booklovers will no longer be charged overdue fines by Auckland public libraries. Current and historic fines were wiped from 1 September. But fees for lost or damaged books will still apply.

Simon Watts
MP for North Shore

**Stay safe,
North Shore**

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Schools quick to switch to online learning

Schools have welcomed news that NCEA examinations have been put back for two weeks, saying it gives students some certainty in uncertain times.

Many North Shore students were preparing for mock exams when lockdown was imposed. Now mock exams have variously been delayed or cancelled, with students grappling to keep up with their studies remotely.

Some are also dealing with the disappointment of cancelled winter sport and arts and cultural events. These include the AIMS games held in Tauranga for intermediate pupils, Big Sing chorale finals in Christchurch and secondary winter tournament week, run at venues across the country for top teams in netball, football, hockey and other sports.

Schools told the Observer the transition to remote learning had been smooth, based on previous experience.

"We were teaching by 8.45 the morning after the announcement," said Westlake Boys High School principal, David Ferguson.

The principal of Westlake Girls, Jane Stanley, said the school gave its students the day off after the sudden lockdown "to process the fact" and ready their learning schedules at home, while teachers prepared online lessons. Using Google Classroom as the primary teaching platform helped, she said, because students were already familiar with it. It could be accessed offline as well, reducing pressure on families with limited access to the internet.

"Our students have told us they prefer the flexibility to be able to spend more time on subjects they find most difficult, or to continue to complete a task. As a result, adhering to a fixed timetable is not a requirement," Stanley said. Advice on time planning helped students manage this.

Carmel is also taking a relaxed approach, with a four-hour daily study programme, with regular breaks.

Principal Christine Allen said the idea was "to maintain a routine but not make it onerous, because you don't know what is going on in people's bubbles."

Student-led ideas around fun activities,

including cooking and dance classes, were being incorporated into the school days to encourage engagement.

Because Carmel had a bring your own device policy, students were well set up, with only 10 devices needed for loan.

Stanley said mental and physical wellbeing was a focus. A less rigid time-table allowed students to go for walks with family and to connect with friends over Zoom or social media. It also helped teachers with children at home to have a more flexible day.

Ferguson said he particularly felt for Year 13s, with lots of them also impacted when events were cancelled in August 2020. Allen echoed that. "It's really upsetting so close to tournament week and they've done all the fundraising," she said.

Stanley said the Westlake Girls approach had been to "remind students that we are very proud of their achievements – despite the fact they were denied these opportunities to shine." Instead, they should focus on the achievement of having been selected and the fun times they had had, along with friendships made from their activities.

Rosmini College headmaster Nixon Cooper acknowledged the additional load on parents and teachers of keeping students engaged. The quick decision by the Qualifications Authority to reschedule NCEA from starting on 8 November to running from 22 November to 14 December was welcome. "Everybody is doing their best at a stressful time," he said.

Challenges were the need to focus on staying positive, said Ferguson. "I say to the boys often 'Positivity is a choice you make every day'."

Staff were doing all they could to keep students engaged and motivated. "We are keeping in touch with parents, asking for on-going feedback and responding to what they are telling us."

Westlake Girls was also focussing on communication to the school community. "We've proven in the past that we have the ability to get through lockdowns – not just surviving but thriving" said Stanley. "This gives us confidence despite the uncertainty of when we will be back in the classroom."

New valuations revealed next month

Auckland Council property valuations, which will impact rates paid from 1 July next year, should be notified to householders in October (unless Covid further delays this).

The three-yearly revaluations, already delayed by a year due to Covid-19, will reflect the surge in house prices across the city.

Valuations, broken down into capital value, land value and improvement value, are based on the likely selling price if the

property had sold on 1 June 2021, taking into account the land size and zoning, property type, consented renovations and recent sales in the area. From this, rates are calculated.

The council has already decided on a total 3.5 per cent rise to fund operations and services, but each property's rates change will vary. Those recorded with a higher than average rise across the region will pay more. A lower rise than average may see a rate cut.



Castor Bay home a winning build

This Castor Bay home (pictured, left) has been named in the top 100 nationwide as part of the Registered Master Builders House of the Year competition.

Built by Glover Homes, the house was in the Resene New Home over \$2 million category. It also won the Plumbing Worth Bathroom Excellence Award and the Outdoor Living Excellence Award for the Auckland, Northern and Coromandel competition.

The home was built for a young family returning to New Zealand. It includes a pool, five bedrooms and bathrooms, a separate guest wing with three bedrooms and four bathrooms, a covered deck and a cantilevered infinity pool with built-in spa. An automation system means almost everything can be controlled by device.

Changes coming to your suburb: Darby

Changes are in store for every area from government directives to intensify housing, says Auckland Planning Council chair Chris Darby

“It does affect all parts of the community... bar none,” Darby said. But only those areas within an 800-metre walkable catchment of bus and train stops on the Rapid Transit Network (which includes the Northern Busway stations at Akoranga, Smales Farm and Sunnynook) and the yet to be fixed 1000-metre zones from the edges of the city’s 10 designated metropolitan centres (which includes Takapuna) would be opened up for buildings of six storeys or higher.

Darby, one of two North Shore councillors, briefed the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board on council’s progress on the government’s directive to implement its pro-intensification National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS UD).

After outlining the timelines around a raft of “non-optional” planning changes that must be in place by mid-2022, he took a swipe at some speculation about the impacts of this.

Devonport Heritage was wrong in suggesting

Devonport was at risk of high-rise buildings, he said. “This is just a total fallacy.”

Devonport was subject to review as were other parts of the city covered by special-character overlay provisions in the current Auckland Unitary Plan. But of these areas, only Kingsland, with its rapid transport stop, might end up with six-storey development.

The extent of the overlays, which cover 20,000 houses in Auckland, were being reviewed, he acknowledged. This might see more intensification, but not to the extent of some claims.

Member Jan O’Connor tackled Darby about how much intensification was already consented under the Unitary Plan. She pointed to parts of the board area, including Hauraki where she lived, where multi-unit dwellings were sprouting up on sections in the mixed-suburban zone. These left children in a 16-unit development with only a shared driveway to play on.

Darby said in tandem with the council being forced to implement the government’s intensification directions, he was looking at the

design outcomes of greater density. However, he admitted these had been eroded under the current Unitary Plan.

Aucklanders expected “greater height and density with quality building and quality realm around it”, he said.

Darby said it was an enormous task to deliver the government’s directive. Board chairs had been invited to initial meetings, with workshops to follow from October to February, he said. The process would get into the “nitty gritty” next year, with public engagement in the mix as well.

Devonport Heritage spokesperson Margot McRae told a later board session by conference call that there was no certainty Devonport would emerge unscathed. Takapuna could also be affected. People should never be complacent.

Takapuna single-house zones weren’t safe, she claimed, raising the prospect of apartments blocks next door. “If there’s enough of a kickback from people in Auckland they will listen,” she said.

Board member Jan O’Connor said it would be “very very sad” to lose more character buildings.

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Asset-spoils wishlist may be whittled back

Library and community facilities have been put at the top of a list of Devonport-Takapuna Local Board spending priorities for an expected multi-million-dollar return on the sale of Takapuna's former library building at No. 2 The Strand.

"We're all really close, we've got projects we all agree on," said Devonport-Takapuna Local Board chair Ruth Jackson after engineering the juggled list, although the outcome did not reflect the preferred choice of half the board, whose first option was to secure a property to safeguard public access along an eroded section of the Takapuna to Milford coastal track.

That proposed purchase of the Firth property ended up second on the list, with the Francis St to Esmonde Rd cycle and pedestrian pathway in third place and a boardwalk for Wairau Estuary fourth.

The board recommendations will go to Auckland Council's Finance Committee for its approval on which project gets the proceeds. Panuku, the council's property arm, must return the money for local use after declaring No. 2 an unwanted asset in the face of community opposition.

Panuku has advised the board it does not

consider library facilities qualify for the money because planning on any upgrades are not advanced enough. The Firth property and its future is also clouded in uncertainty.

Should further council advice rule out those two top choices, that leaves the Francis St to Esmonde Rd pathway in pole position to net the proceeds.

Panuku picked the pathway as its preferred project, with the estuary boardwalk second and work on Takapuna Beach Reserve next.

In the face of Panuku's recommendations, Jackson put up her own motion to the board's August monthly meeting, throwing the library into the mix. Its future is a core issue for her Heart of the Shore team, which includes deputy chair Jan O'Connor and member Trish Deans. But as it and other community facilities are the subject of ongoing review, its inclusion took some other members by surprise.

Toni van Tonder said Jackson's motion had arrived just before the meeting and was hard to follow. She then put up her own amendment, favouring the Firth property. This won backing from both former chair Aidan Benanett and George Wood, who paired up last December to champion a board resolution calling on the

council to look at buying the property with No. 2 The Strand money.

"I'm flabbergasted that that property is not mentioned in the list of priorities," Wood told the Panuku officials at the meeting. "The people of this area will be pretty aghast if we don't get anywhere with that."

Without the money, the chance to try to secure the track access in perpetuity would go, he said. Developers would step in and "You'll never get it back".

Panuku officials cautioned against discussions getting into the value of specific properties, but told the meeting they could add the Firth property into their report to the Finance Committee. They also said they had received expressions of interest in No. 2, which has a rateable value of \$2.85 million.

Van Tonder's amendment to prioritise the Firth purchase was lost on the casting vote of the chair, allowing Jackson to proceed with her library-first list. In the end, the board, ended up voting unanimously in its favour, leading Jackson to claim something akin to consensus, while noting that some projects "may not pass the test at council."
• Cycleway's \$1.3m kickstart, page 11

Board agrees to business-case study on library options

Three options to combine and modernise Takapuna library and community facilities will go through an 'indicative business case' (IBC) assessment.

This follows proposals made last month by Auckland Council property arm Panuku, which could lead to the sale of at least one of the existing community buildings, and possibly all three, with the latter funding the development of an entirely new building on the lower floors of a high-rise in the Takapuna town square.

In agreeing to the IBC, the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board – in a lengthy motion drafted by chair Ruth Jackson – threw in a

number of conditions, including seeking a plethora of background information and space comparisons and a guarantee that all community groups now housed would continue to be accommodated.

It also asked for Panuku to re-present it with all relevant information about retaining the status quo option of keeping the Takapuna Library and the Community Services Building in The Strand and the Mary Thomas Centre around the corner.

Board member George Wood said local people were looking for modern facilities. He feared that instead of delivering a new library in the town centre that would be

magical, the opportunity could be lost if board members showed too much reluctance.

"We will end up with renewals of \$24 million and still end up with a 1980s building in 2050," cautioned Wood.

Panuku told the board it did not believe the current total of 5000sq m of space across three ageing buildings, with eight kitchens and 41 toilets, was necessary. Its experience in building other new facilities showed they delivered better community outcomes with reduced operational and maintenance costs.

Officials advised that Panuku could not meet the costs of new buildings with the old floorspace and would not do an IBC for this.

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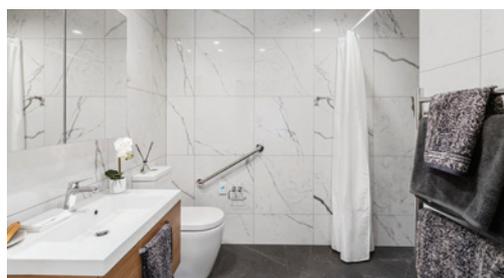
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Bid to add Becroft Park to bans on freedom camping

Freedom camping should be banned at Forrest Hill's Becroft Park, the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board says.

The suggestion came when the board last month discussed Auckland Council plans for a new city-wide bylaw on freedom camping, including bans on 44 nominated areas and restrictions on a further 19 places.

Queens Pde in Devonport, by the ferry terminal, was the only place in the board area listed, but chair Ruth Jackson wanted Becroft Park added. It is used for football and has limited parking.

The council's principal policy analyst Rebekah Forman told members that the council could only act on freedom camping if problems arose. The default position of the Freedom Camping Act, introduced by the government for the Rugby World Cup in 2011, was to allow the practice, "unless we can provide evidence that we shouldn't be".

Research showed that most freedom campers visiting Auckland behave responsibly, a council report said.

"However, the presence of large numbers of campers – even responsible campers – is more likely to cause community concern in Auckland due to pressure on limited public space." Freedom camping spots were also limited.

Under the proposal, vehicles in unregulated areas would have to be certified self-

contained, would be allowed a maximum stay of two nights on the same road or car park, would have to leave by 9am, and could not return to the same spot within two weeks.

The board requested several changes to the proposal, including no camping within 3km of a campground, and opposed the default position of camping being allowed on unregulated roads.

It also suggested a maximum stay of one night, a departure time of 8am and no return to the same place within four weeks, but some of these extra conditions were opposed by member Toni van Tonder.

"I feel like we're being a little bit of a fun police on this," van Tonder told the board meeting. "And I don't like being the fun police."

"I'm not sure why we've gone hard and fast here. I don't think that's recognising the right of people to travel the country as a freedom camper and enjoy the experience."

However, member Jan O'Connor said there also had to be consideration for the local camping grounds. "I think that we've got to face up. There's no such thing as a free lunch. I don't believe there should be freedom camping when people are trying to run a business."

If the proposed bylaw is approved following public consultation, it is likely to come into force late next year.

Letters

Members want town square scrutinised

Re Terence Harpur's letter (Observer, 20 August) about the progress with Takapuna Town Square: Members of the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board (DTLB) have raised matters of public interest concerning Eke Panuku's resource consent application with the expectation that it will be properly reviewed. The local board does not make the decision. We want fundamental issues to be scrutinised so that the long-term benefits of the town square can be secured.

We are still concerned that the application does not conform to Auckland Council's 'Open Space Provision Policy' which requires one large, spacious civic space of 3000-4000sqm, with new buildings supporting its purpose rather than dominating it. The subdivision of 40 Anzac St leaves only 30 per cent of the original area and divides this into narrow, awkwardly shaped and potentially unsafe spaces. There appears to be no room for an Anzac Memorial, large events or, realistically, the Sunday Market.

The subdivision pattern shows an 11-storey building is proposed only 3m away from Potters Park. Lake Rd bus shelters are located within the footprint of another building. This will put the bus interchange at risk as well as any future upgrade or expansion of the facility. Shelters should instead be included as part of a much wider public footpath. Council must protect public space and access to public transport as Takapuna transforms into a more densely populated centre.

The subdivision pattern also enables an existing access road to pass through the middle of the Town Square. This road will increasingly be used as new buildings around the square are occupied, inherently compromising the square's integrity and functionality.

Eke Panuku's application acknowledges that after completion of the town square, it may need to be dug up in order to cater for new developments. Wouldn't it be more sensible if construction of the square was undertaken when the design of these buildings is more certain?

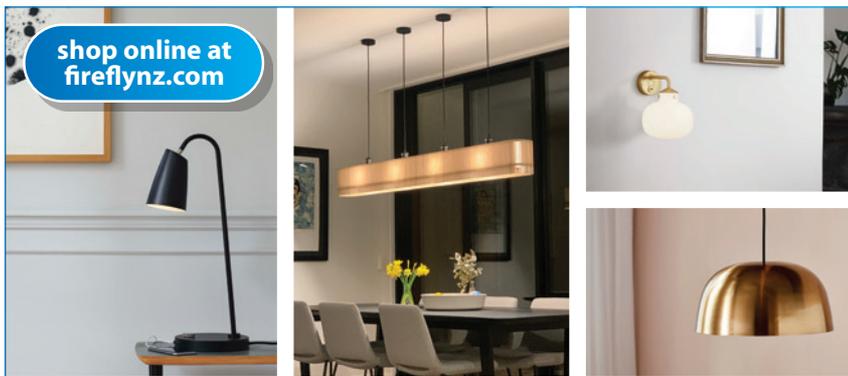
The public purse should not be spent blindly.

Trish Deans, DTLB member

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'Unfinished business' lures Eliza back to action

Rio pole-vault medallist Eliza McCartney had to watch the Tokyo Olympics on TV, but her sporting ambition still burns brightly. She spoke to Helen Vause.

Eliza McCartney sat on the sofa glued to the Olympic Games, along with the rest of the world. And to her surprise, she loved it all, including the pole-vaulting.

"I didn't think I'd want to watch it. But then I really got into it and I couldn't stop," says McCartney, who won bronze in the pole vault at the Rio Olympics in 2016, but missed selection for Tokyo after a long-running battle with a tendon injury.

She fell short in a last-ditch attempt in June to achieve the qualifying mark for Tokyo. Two months on, McCartney spoke to the Observer about returning to training and competition after a physical and mental break that's seen her quietly putting herself back together and hanging out with those she's closest to.

Watching the Olympics was a good indication that she was recovering from her own personal setback. "I loved watching the athletes. I felt like a kid, watching it all, flicking through the channels, and I felt the pole-vaulters were just fantastic. Weeks earlier, I might have thought it would be too painful to watch, but I'm so glad I could."

Looking back on battling the odds to get into form and recent experiences of pain as she struggled in her run-up, the Devonport resident recognises the value of having taken a break.

"Of course, I knew trying to make it to Tokyo this year was against the odds and I thought I was prepared for whichever way it went. But it turned out I wasn't really prepared for not being able to do it and I wasn't going to give up. I was going to go at it, until it was over.

"At some level, I still had a belief at that point that there was a good chance I could make it and qualify to get to Tokyo.

"What happened then hit me harder than I expected. I felt pretty devastated at the time and for a while there my whole world felt like it had crashed down. Sport has been my whole life and my livelihood."

But team McCartney swung into action and bundled its temporarily flattened member off on holiday. She headed south with her father, William, on a road trip and met up with her mother, Donna, and brothers Hamish and Finn for an outdoors break in Wanaka. They went hiking, biking and skiing.

"It was just fantastic and I know I'm lucky we were able to do that together," says McCartney.

"It was a very long time since we'd all been on holiday together like that."

When she returned from the family trip, McCartney went to Gisborne to spend time with an aunt. "I have a wrap-around family and a great partner and all round I know I have a pretty privileged life. But I have been working on myself a lot to move on from this and I have been able to listen carefully to the experiences of others who, like me, have missed out on selection at some point in their sporting careers."

Although McCartney is only 24, she's had more than a decade in high-level athletics, and



Time out... A family holiday helped Eliza McCartney recover from the disappointment of not qualifying for the Tokyo Olympic Games

was passionate about sport well before that.

"As a toddler, I'm told, I was never still. I must have been a handful, climbing up trees, running and jumping," says McCartney.

At school she had a go at most things, excelling at netball and high jumping. As the slender, 1.79 metre athlete puts it, she's "tall, springy and fast".

Things started to take off in 2011, when she was 14 years old and discovered the thrill of pole-vaulting. Within six months of taking up the new discipline, she was in Australia winning a national junior title.

"Not long after that trip my coach sat Mum and me down. He said he thought I could be heading for the world championships in 2013."

Everything shifted up a few gears for McCartney and her family. Her training regime took her to the Millennium facility every day after classes at Takapuna Grammar School.

The young athlete, who'd once described herself as a "gangly, uncoordinated kid", kept raising the bar, setting new international records. It quickly became apparent that she could make it into the team for the 2016 Olympics in Brazil.

After winning bronze there, with a vault of 4.80 metres, McCartney continued to improve, until she cleared 4.94m in Germany in 2018. But then came the injuries and uncertainty.

After one of the longest breaks from sport that she's known, she is aiming for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and the athletics world championships in the USA. After that, she hopes to be at the Paris Olympics in 2024.

For now, sport is her top priority. But McCartney says she's fully aware there's life and work after sports. She is studying environmental science part-time through Massey University.

"I know sport is a transient career and I'm lucky to have found another passion that will become my future," she says.

"I'm totally committed to that, although I have to work slowly at it. In my future I see myself being able to make a difference in the environmental space."

Meanwhile, she considers herself lucky to be surrounded by the conservation and restoration teams working all around the Devonport peninsula on a daily basis, and to be able to join them when she can.

But after a period of gardening, studying, hanging out in her close circle and sharing the cooking with her partner, kite-foiling champion Lukas Walton-Keim, McCartney will soon be getting back to what she's best known for.

"I couldn't leave it like this. I have unfinished business," she grins. "I'm a very optimistic person."

Generous Milford businessman's aid remembered

Milford philanthropist Sir David Levene, who died this month aged 91, is remembered for backing Outward Bound, the Halberg Trust and numerous other national charities, but he was also a champion of North Shore causes.

Soon after moving to Milford more than 60 years ago, Levene joined Rotary. He was active in the local community where he and wife raised their two children, supporting North Shore Hospice, YES Disability, North Harbour IHC, De Paul House in Northcote, and breast cancer charity, the Louise Perkins Foundation, among other locally based groups.

His contribution was acknowledged at the monthly meeting of the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board. Board member Jan O'Connor said he had been "an incredibly generous supporter of our local communities". Golfer Lydia Ko was in her early career another beneficiary of his financial help.

A celebration of the life of Sir David,

– who was knighted in 2010 for services to business and the community – was to have been held at Eden Park on 20 August, but could not proceed due to Covid-19 lockdown.

Levene was born in Ponsonby into hard times. His father, Lewis Levene, had immigrated from England in the 1920s looking for a fresh start and went on to build a family painting business with his brother Mark, which David later joined, becoming manager in 1952.

Levene & Co grew by opening more stores and selling supplies to contractors, then opening paint and wallpaper factories and diversifying into other home supplies.

At its height the business had a \$100 million-plus turnover, employed around 1000 people and had more than 50 stores.

After Levene sold the business to the Skellerup Group in 1994, it ended up going into receivership in 1997, something he was very saddened by.

Sir David went on to set up a successful

property business and to invest in start-up companies, while bankrolling the David Levene Foundation to help others.

O'Connor said around 300 charities a year received support from the foundation.

In the early 1960s, Sir David helped establish Outward Bound. He continued to sponsor students to attend its courses, serving as trust director and patron.

He also backed medical and biotech research and supported a chair at Auckland University and a scholarship fund at Massey University, receiving honorary doctorates from both universities.

The North Harbour Business Hall of Fame gave him a lifetime achievement award.

Sir David was also involved with the Neurological Foundation and the Parkinson's Society. His wife, Billie, had the disease, dying from it in 2010.

He died peacefully at home on 11 August and is survived by two children, Elizabeth and Mark, and five grandchildren.



Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri is a surgical registrar at Waitemata DHB

Grant awarded for Maori training centre work

A North Shore Hospital surgeon has received a grant of nearly \$30,000 to help encourage Maori to go into medicine.

Waitemata DHB surgical registrar Dr Jamie-Lee Rahiri, of Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whātua and Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi, will work with other Maori clinical leaders towards building a research and training centre. Work will include a review of kaupapa Maori health interventions and focus groups with medical students, junior doctors and Maori health organisations. They will also build relationships with iwi.

Rahiri said fewer than one per cent of surgeons in New Zealand are Māori. "Māori health workforce development is essential to eliminating long-standing Māori health

inequities," she said. Recent policies within several surgical training bodies had been established to support Maori patients and whanau, but more work was required.

Waitemata DHB chief executive Dr Dale Bramley, of Ngapuhi and Ngati Hine, said the work will play an important part in ensuring equity in the public health system.

"Māori have a higher disease burden and are disproportionately worse in social and health statistics. We need a workforce that better reflects the community we serve in order to improve health outcomes for Maori."

The number of Māori reported in the Waitemata DHB workforce increased by 83 per cent between June 2016 and June 2021.

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Board approves \$1.3m for cycleway link

The long-discussed Francis St to Esmonde Rd walkway and cycle link has been thrown a funding kickstart by the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

The board's allocation of just over \$1.3 million will allow work to begin in earnest on providing the final missing link in the existing 'Greenway' route up the peninsula through Bayswater. This will provide cyclists with an alternative path, away from busy Lake Rd, to travel to Takapuna and beyond.

Ultimately, the peninsula route will connect to the Northern Pathway at Akoranga, running parallel to the motorway both south towards the Harbour Bridge, and north, with branches to other North Shore suburban cycleways. It will also link to the Patuone Reserve walkway, which is in the mangrove area on the northern side of Esmonde Rd. Work on upgrading the reserve's pathway from Auburn Reserve in Takapuna, across to Barrys Pt Rd, is now under way.

A final concept design for the connection from Francis St to Esmonde Rd, including proposed timelines and costs, will be presented at a future board meeting. The cost was estimated at \$5.1 million in 2020.

The decision by the board to commit all but \$30,000 of its Local Board Transport Capital Fund to the Francis St project – ahead of other contenders, including the Bayswater ferry terminal and Vauxhall Rd safety measures – came after council officials also identified it as a priority.

The measure was passed without debate on 17 August, at a meeting still in session shortly after the government announced the imposition of the Covid-19 Level 4 lockdown from later that evening.

Earlier in the meeting, however, more time was taken in consideration of whether the cycleway or other projects should benefit from proceeds of the sale of the former Takapuna Library building at 2 The Strand. This is being sold by Auckland Council's property arm, Panuku, as an unwanted asset. The money from the sale is required to be spent in the area, with the local board asked to nominate where it should go.

Takapuna Library and purchase of the Firth property (which the Takapuna to Milford coastal walkway passes through) were ranked ahead of Francis St. But officials advised these projects may not qualify to get the money as plans are not as well ad-

vanced; meaning the walking and cycling link, which the board universally agreed was its local transport-funding priority, may end up as the beneficiary.

If there is a shortfall in funding – especially if the old-library proceeds are not available – the project would likely be completed in stages, with more money allocated in future years.

The cycleway will pass through the new Amaia apartment development on the site of the former Harbourside Church on Esmonde Rd. Developer Kingstone Group has indicated a willingness to partner with the council on delivering the section passing through its land. (A selling point of its marketing has been the site's connectivity with passive recreation routes and to public transport.)

Bike Auckland representatives spoke during the meeting's public forum to urge the board to back the project. "We want to close all the missing links," said spokesperson Mary Margaret Slack.

Sixty per cent of Aucklanders surveyed said they would ride a bike if they felt safer, she said. Encouraging transport-mode shift was also vital to combat climate change.

Petition shows support for Sacred Grove boardwalk

A petition seeking a restoration of access through the Sacred Grove / Te Uru Tapu at Takapuna Beach drew 2513 signatures.

The Save Takapuna Boardwalk petition was presented to the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board last month, with calls to Auckland Council to repair and reopen the boardwalk and make safe the ancient pohutukawa trees. These sit in front of apartments at the northern end of the beach.

The boardwalk was closed "for maintenance" more than two years ago. Officials are now recommending it be removed for the health of the trees and in deference to the site's historic use by Maori for burial preparation purposes.

Two of a group of residents involved in organising the petition, Tony Lewis and Alan Morris, said they wanted to work with the board and local Maori on a win-win solution for the community.

"Are we going to close the beach?" asked Morris, saying if the pohutukawa posed the stated health and safety risk to those using the boardwalk, then surely the risk also applied to those passing on the beach under the trees.

The men told the board that 2158 signatures were gathered in person and a further 355 online through change.org. The bulk of those who signed were local beach users, they said. Of the total, fewer than 300 were apartment residents.



Tree twister... Sacred Grove at Takapuna Beach

Board member Toni van Tonder asked if the petition's signatories fully understood what the petition was about. She pointed to some feedback online from people who thought it covered the Takapuna to Milford coastal walkway route, rather than the boardwalk which provides a high-tide pathway to the lookout area over the road from the Takapuna Beach Cafe.

George Wood wanted to know why it was taking so long for officials to report back to the board, after it earlier asked them to look again at options presented in May.

This included advice that even if keeping the boardwalk was the board's preference, work on it was unlikely to win planning consent given the advice of an independ-

ent arborist and the area's cultural importance.

Aidan Bennett, who has been outspoken in favour of fixing the boardwalk, repeated that the community wanted it to stay there.

The matter was signalled to be on the board's agenda in June, but then removed. The board's senior adviser, Tristan Coulson, said at the latest meeting that iwi engagement was being organised, with October being the earliest a report back was likely.

"This has just gone on too long," said Wood. The board needed to be in a position to make a decision.

Van Tonder said times had changed in terms of iwi engagement since the boardwalk was built 20 years ago. The board also had a duty to respect mana whenua, she said. It was her understanding that three local iwi were engaged in the matter. "I still have some doubts about this," she said of reopening the area.

Morris said he understood there had been iwi engagement originally. The boardwalk both protected the tree roots and respected the sacredness of the ground beneath it, he said. He said it was awful that the matter was becoming an "us and them" situation, when a negotiated outcome should be possible.

Board chair Ruth Jackson said the current board had not had the benefit of meeting with iwi and would like to find an acceptable outcome for all.



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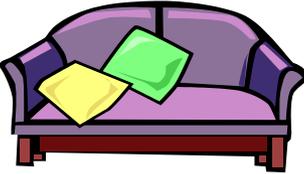
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Portrait unveiled of Takapuna VC recipient Sanders



Depiction of a hero... Artist Craig Primrose and William Sanders' great-niece Glennys Adams at the unveiling

A painting of Takapuna war hero William Sanders now takes pride of place at the Ryman retirement village named in honour of the First World War sailor.

Residents of the village, including Glennys Adams, a great-niece of Victoria Cross recipient Sanders, gathered to see the striking work of him in naval uniform revealed at the Devonport village last month.

The painter, artist Craig Primrose, unveiled the work. "My grandmother's sister would have been so proud," said Adams.

Ryman Healthcare's chief operating of-

ficer, Cheyne Chalmers, said the idea of naming the villages for people rather than after their geographic locations came from company co-founder Kevin Hickman, who also suggested commissioning Primrose to paint portraits for each village.

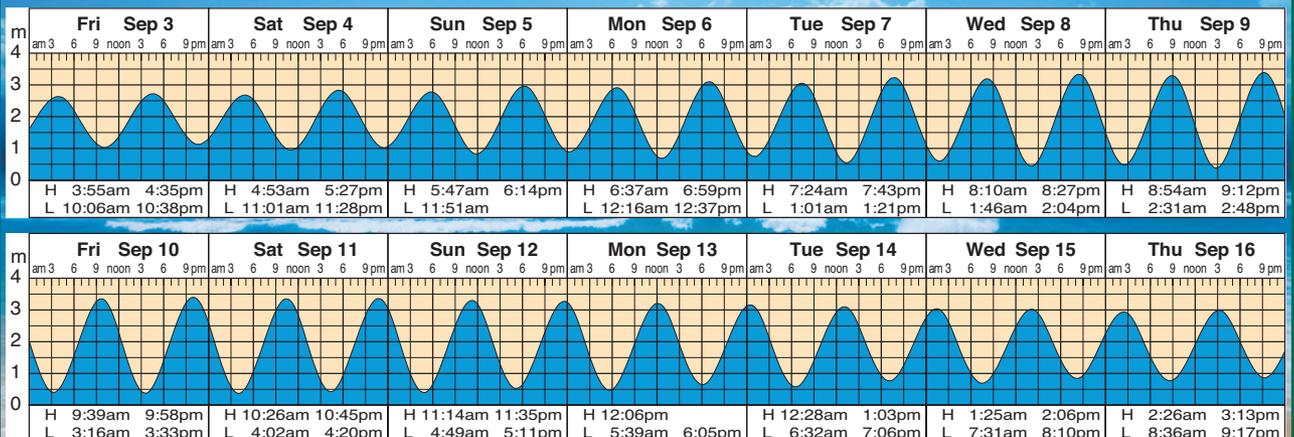
Sanders also has a street named after him in Takapuna, where he grew up, before going to sea as a cabin boy, aged 16.

Village residents heard more of Sanders' story from Royal New Zealand Navy historian and World War I specialist Michael Wynd, including how he rose through the ranks.

Described as a man of iron nerves, Sanders received the top military honour for his "conspicuous gallantry, consummate coolness and skill in command" while in action in 1917. He was killed, aged 34, just four months later, when his ship was attacked by a German submarine.

Sanders was also awarded a posthumous Distinguished Service Order for his bravery in another attack that had taken place in June 1917. "William Sanders remains the most highly decorated naval officer in our history," Wynd said.

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Matariki sculpture stolen from Lake House



Taken... the disappearance of four-piece sculpture *Matariki Kaitiaki* was noticed during lockdown

The Lake House Arts Centre is confident thieves who took a four-piece sculpture from the centre grounds will be caught.

Lake House Arts manager Grae Burton said whoever had taken the *Matariki Kaitiaki* sculpture would not be able to sell it or display it.

The sculpture was unveiled to the community in 2019 as part of Matariki celebrations.

It was a funded commission from the Lake House, designed by its whaikarō/master carver Natanahira Te Pona.

Burton said the work's disappearance was only noticed in lockdown via security cameras. The theft had taken place prior to 11 August.

"It didn't seem like a spur of the moment thing," he said. "It would've taken some time – a good 20 to 30 minutes – to have uplifted everything."

The pieces were staked into the ground quite deeply, he said. "So someone must've had some assistance to wedge them out of the ground."

No vehicles accessed the site, so the pieces were probably carried across to the car park, he said.

"It's very disappointing. It has been in place for two years without any of us being concerned about its security.

"Of all of the statues on-site it's the one that could be managed without any equipment off-site."

Burton said someone did not steal a statue to put away, and so it appeared to have been stolen to sell or to display.

"I think the message I'd like to put out there is if you've stolen this sculpture you will get caught.

"You've stolen something that you can't display, you can't sell. Just bring it back."

Campervan parked up till next year

A small Takapuna theatre company has retained its world premiere rights for a play cancelled due to the Covid lockdown.

The Campervan by Kathryn Burnett, which was due to open at the Pumphouse on 9 September, will instead be staged in May next year.

Tadpole Productions said that with rehearsals having been in full swing for the cast of five and set design and construction also under way, the decision to cancel or postpone had been extremely difficult.

"We are looking at a considerable loss

on what pre-opening ticket sales indicated would have been our best-selling show since our formation in 2012," the group said.

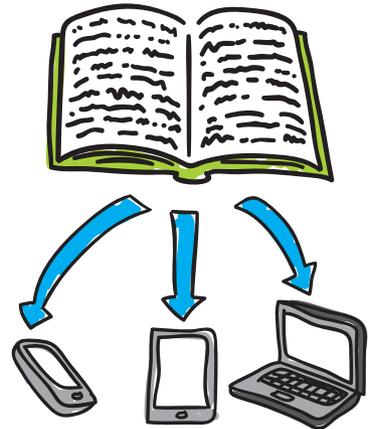
But after discussions with the New Zealand playwright and her agent "we are delighted to announce that *The Campervan* will now be staged at The PumpHouse Theatre in Takapuna from 5th to 15th May 2022".

The show had assembled a top director and cast, with former McLeod's daughter star Lisa Chappell among them.



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