

The Rangitoto Observer

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 73 - April 1, 2022

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

Low-key Anzac Day in
Takapuna... p3

Identity's life of service
remembered... p13

Artist's work inspired by
environment... p14

Price of car-park land to be drip-fed to public

The price a developer paid for a big chunk of public land in the heart of Takapuna may not be known for a year,

Auckland Council property arm Panuku has struck a deal with Wellington-based company Willis Bond for the bulk of the nearly 1ha Anzac St car-park site, but neither party will reveal

the purchase price for its five lots of prime land that will surround the new town square.

Observer inquiries have established it could be 12 months before Auckland Council makes a price public. This is because the deal for the staggered development of the separate sites acquired by Willis Bond is reflected in its

payment arrangements. Devonport-Takapuna Local Board chair Ruth Jackson wants the price revealed now.

"The public has a right to know - it's public land," says Jackson. "Is it paid in full?"

While she understood the need for commer-

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Takapuna chase down big total to win Auckland comp



Nailbiter... Takapuna premier cricketers won the Jeff Crowe Cup one-day final at Onewa Domain last Saturday with three balls to spare. Story, page three.

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Man arrested after Takapuna bank raid

A 34-year-old man was arrested after a bank robbery on Hurstmere Rd, Takapuna, on Friday, 18 March.

Police said they responded “swiftly” in apprehending a man nearby, soon after the robbery of the Takapuna ASB branch at 11.30am.

He was to appear in the Waitākere District Court.

No-one else was sought, police said. Support had been offered to members of the public and bank staff who were caught up in the incident.

Police declined to provide further details, including how many people were in the branch at the time, because the case was before the court.

ASB told the Observer that no-one was hurt in the robbery and the bank was working with police. “The safety and wellbeing of our people and our customers is always our main concern,” a spokesperson said.

A team of support staff had assisted for several days, with the branch reopened to customers last Tuesday, 22 March.

Since the spread of Omicron and with it a fall in customers coming into branches nationwide, the Takapuna ASB has been open only on Tuesdays and Friday, from 9am to 4.30pm.

ASB said some branches had been closed, while others were on reduced hours. This allowed staff resources to be diverted to deal with more customers making contact by phone and online.

“We focused on keeping a smaller number of branches – including Takapuna – staffed and open during this outbreak,” the spokesperson said.

The reduction in hours was temporary. “We will continue to monitor the progression and impact of Omicron throughout New Zealand and will return our Takapuna branch to its normal opening hours as soon as we can,” the spokesperson said.



On the tongs... Chris Lang has sausages at the ready for a bangers-and-mash meal for seniors

Charity cooks back in the kitchen

Senior citizens are again enjoying tasty deliveries from charity organisation Kai 4 Communities, which has resumed meal distribution by its team of volunteers.

Among them is Milford’s Chris Lang, who not only cooked up onions for bangers and mash, but brought homemade marmalade to add to a bread-and-butter pudding other helpers were preparing last week.

“I first came along about a year ago,” said Lang, who has rejoined the cooking effort after the group’s Covid hiatus.

They prepare meals for residents of Haumarū housing and clients of the CMA elderly-support groups in Sunnynook and Belmont.

To mark Neighbours Day last month, the group also prepared meals to share in conjunction with the Takapuna Methodist Church.

Volunteers gather one morning most weeks at the Rose Centre in Belmont, using

its facilities along with a mobile kitchen the group received grants to buy late last year. This will also be used for activities such as community-meal get-togethers which are on hold for now.

Another volunteer, Leah Morgan, said the focus was currently on providing one to two meals and dessert fortnightly for seniors.

Efforts to do this are being aided by funding from the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board of \$7500. Deliveries will continue as long as the money lasts.

The group is increasingly having to buy more food, rather than rely on donated goods. While donations from businesses including bread from Wild Wheat and sausages from the Hauraki Butcher are still gratefully received, other donors are dealing with supply issues, and food-rescue groups have been stretched by demand from food banks.

Find out more at www.kai4communities.org.

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Covid cloud forces low-key Anzac Day

Public commemorations of Anzac Day have been scaled back due to concerns about large crowds while Covid rates remain high.

Invitation-only official gatherings of 20 people will be held at the war memorials in Takapuna and Devonport on the morning of 25 April. Brief wreath-laying services will be followed by another larger, invitation-only service, with speeches inside the Devonport Returned Services Association (RSA) building.

The wider public will be able to participate in the commemorations through a live stream from the RSA.

Individuals and representatives of schools and community groups can visit the war memorials to lay their own flowers and place poppies as they choose during the day.

At a Devonport-Takapuna Local Board meeting last month, chair Ruth Jackson said it was unfortunate that the services, which typically draw large crowds, could not proceed as usual. But the best options under the circumstances had been worked out in agreement with the RSA.

In Takapuna, the flag would be raised and the Ode read.

In Devonport, a piper and a bugler would play and a prayer would be read at the war memorial.

Invited guests would include North Shore MP Simon Watts, ward councillors, local-board members and RSA representatives.

Board member Jan O'Connor said she did not like the idea of a separated ceremony. "People will just turn up at the usual time."

Jackson advised board members that times would not be advertised, nor necessarily follow the same patterns as in past years.

"This is better than not doing anything at all," she said.

The scaled-back Anzac Day meant the \$40,000 budget set aside would not be fully spent with traffic management and other support no longer needed. It was estimated the cost for the 2022 services would be less than \$14,000.

The board backed a recommendation from Jackson that \$10,000 of the unspent money goes to the RSA for its welfare effort, as the organisation has not been able to run its Poppy Day fundraising appeal.

• The timing and access to live-streaming from the RSA will be advised this month.

Country's best buns sell like hotcakes



Winning combo... Forrest Hill baker Sameer Hassan (right) helped put the icing on the cake for workmate Lorenzo Romano (left), whose hot cross bun recipe for Belmont bakery Daily Bread was recently named the nation's best. Hassan concocted an orange glaze for the sourdough buns. Output has tripled to around 150 trays a day – 7200 \$4.50 buns – since Romano's success in the Baking Industry Association's annual contest.

Batsman's unbeaten stand the toast of Takapuna cricket

Tristan Van Ingen-Kal's 92 not out proved a match-winner for Takapuna against Cornwall in Auckland Cricket's Jeff Crowe Cup premier one-day final at Onewa Domain last Saturday.

Cornwall posted 301 and the visitors appeared in the box seat after dismissing Takapuna's in-form batsmen Will O'Donnell for 49 and Quinn Sunde for 5.

But then Van Ingen-Kal arrived at the crease. He kept the run chase ticking over in an innings which included five fours and three sixes.

Takapuna coach Neil Fletcher described the win as "pretty epic – chasing 300 on a good wicket was always going to be pretty tough".

But Takapuna has had plenty of practice at composure in 2021-2022, winning seven of its matches in the last over.

"Six of them we were chasing, so we are pretty good at crunching the numbers and keeping the runs going... we also bat pretty deep," Fletcher said.

Van Ingen-Kal, batting at five, was backed

by an excellent 57 runs by Cameron Neal, and a 21-run cameo from Fanie De Villiers.

Although Cornwall posted a high total, Takapuna's bowlers restricted them in the last overs. "At one stage Cornwall were looking at a total of 340 and should have got to 320," Fletcher said.

With a truncated cricket season due to Covid, the two-day competition was abandoned and the Jeff Crowe Cup elevated to be the top Auckland premier cricket trophy.

Developer's \$400-million plan starts with high-rise

The company

Willis Bond is a Wellington-based property development and investment company which has previously partnered with Panuku in the Wynyard Quarter and is also developing Catalina Bay at Hobsonville. Its Wynyard Central housing development won a New Zealand Architecture Award in 2019. Its managing director is Mark McGuinness. The company works with its associated building firm, LT McGuinness. In addition to long-term asset investments, Willis Bond has raised more than \$500 million in development capital over the last 12 years. Of this, \$361 million has been committed to 26 projects, with an end value calculated at \$2.3 billion. Projects that Willis Bond has developed in Wellington include the PWC Centre, Chews Lane and Clyde Quay Wharf.

The first project

To build stage one of Takapuna Central on Block A (see map), Willis Bond will use the team that it worked with on the Wynyard Quarter, its associated builder LT McGuinness and architects Architectus. Takapuna Central Apartments will have 115 premium apartments over 10 levels, bordering Anzac St and Potters Park. The 14,000sqm building will include up to 500sqm of retail on a 2760sqm lot. Resource consent will be sought by mid-year, with construction expected to take from the second half of 2023 until the end of 2025. It is targeting a Homestar 7 rating for sustainable design and building. Apartment prices will be detailed when the one-, two- and three-bedroom units and penthouses are marketed later this year. Parking will be included within the building. At this stage 125 spaces are envisaged, accessed from the service lane by Monterey cinema. But plans are subject to finalising and consents.

*Imagery of stacked wooden apartments published in other media is not indicative of the design, but showed Willis Bond's apartments in Wynyard Quarter.

The masterplan

For the five separate sites of Takapuna Central, comprising 5872sqm, Willis Bond is working with both Architectus and Cheshire Architects. The latter Auckland company led the masterplan for the Britomart Precinct and more recently for Catalina Bay. The masterplan for construction staggered over six years aims to ensure all buildings are cohesive and suit their surroundings. The development sites are located between 40 Anzac St and 30-34 Hurstmere Rd, fringing the town square. Expressions of interest in retail, office and hospitality are open for sites B-E, which are currently in their early design stages.

From page 1

cial sensitivity during negotiations, the announcement of the Takapuna Central deal last week meant the secrecy should end, she said.

A Panuku spokesperson said: "Negotiations considered all five sites, but they settle in stages. Once each individual site is unconditional we will disclose the sales price."

For the first site this was "expected to be within the next 12 months".

Panuku and Willis Bond describe Takapuna Central as a \$400 million mixed-use development. Willis Bond said the figure was based on its potential "end value".

To be completed over a six-year period, the development is central to Panuku's Unlock Takapuna strategy to regenerate the area. It will include high-rise apartments, retail space and offices. The first stage, a 10-storey building of 115 apartments fronting Anzac St and Potters Park, will begin in late 2023, when the development of Waiwharariki Anzac Square is completed.

Willis Bond told the Observer it expected the first block, to be known as Takapuna Central Apartments, to be finished by the end of 2025.

North Shore councillors Chris Darby and Richard Hills, business leaders and three of the six-strong local board have welcomed the controversial development. For years the future use of the land – bought by local businesses for car-parking – has been hotly debated. It has also gone through public consultation processes.

Darby said it was a great example of public and private sector collaboration with a successful partner. Hills said Panuku projects enabled

improved public facilities.

"What was once a soulless windy carpark is about to become a hugely desirable place to visit, live, shop and dine, with new homes, businesses and public space," said Darby.

Board member Aidan Bennett is also a cheerleader. During the first half of the current board's three-year term, when he was chair, he used his casting vote to approve the town square concept plans. This followed a 3-3 split, with Bennett backed by member Toni van Tonder and George Wood. Jackson and her Heart of the Shore team of Jan O'Connor and Trish Deans have long maintained too many unanswered questions remain.

The deal was announced on 21 March, the same morning an article about it appeared in the business pages of the *New Zealand Herald*.

Jackson, who took over as chair last year, said she was "very, very disappointed" that the local board had to find out through the media, rather than being informed first by Panuku. "It's our area, it's our land," she said.

Panuku acknowledged she and other board members would have found this frustrating. It was always the intention for key stakeholders to be advised before the media, it said. "In this case unfortunately a misunderstanding of the process meant this did not happen." Steps to avoid a repeat have been put in place.

"The selection of and negotiations with development partners is not something that local boards are involved in," it added.

Panuku said its responsibility was to get the best market price for the sale of the land on behalf of the council. An independent market valuation was done before negotiations with the developer to ensure this was the case.



Block by block... A site plan for Takapuna Central, highlighting Block A, bordering Anzac St, which is the first of five sites to be developed. The dotted line shows the pedestrian route from the beach through Hurstmere Green, into the town square, which will be surrounded by buildings. A link to Lake Rd, across from Shore City, will be retained.



Protesting for two... Dietitian Caryne McKeand felt so strongly about fairer pay for medical staff that she came out to demonstrate while on maternity leave

Health workers hit the pavement for better pay

Dietitian Caryne McKeand felt so strongly about fair pay that she came out to demonstrate at 7.30am while on maternity leave.

Allied health workers picketed across Auckland, seeking better pay and pointing out that healthcare was more than doctors and nurses. Among those making their case across the road from North Shore Hospital last week were social workers, pharmacy staff and a former anaesthetic technician.

They weren't on strike, just expressing their disgruntlement before work so as not to disrupt care for patients.

"Workers are prepared to put themselves on the backburner because of the needs of the hospital," McKeand said. "We had to

put the hospital and patients first."

Patients often thanked doctors and nurses, maybe the physiotherapist, but the people behind the scenes did a lot of work, McKeand said.

"We should be paid more fairly." That nurses were being topped up \$500 for shifts was "a bit of a kick in the teeth" for others.

Public Service Association (PSA) organiser Will Matthews said the protests were on behalf of 70 different health occupations. "They have seriously high numbers of vacancies in their departments. They're burned out; they're stressed."

Former anaesthetic technician turned PSA organiser Guy Jukes said the various professions had been historically underfunded.

Three days of negotiations between the DHBs and the union, facilitated by the Employment Relations Authority, failed to reach a settlement, and the Authority is set to release a non-binding recommendation.

Union members will also be balloted about striking for 24-hours in mid-May.

* Meanwhile, North Shore Hospital was caring for 141 patients with Covid-19 early this week. The Ministry of Health announced 2300 new cases in Auckland. Nearly 13.4 million rapid antigen tests had also been given out in the week to Monday.

The Northcote Community Testing Centre remains open, but a vaccination centre at Eventfinda stadium, Wairau, is now closed, leaving one at Albany and clinics for tests.

Path to beach pushes up to \$58k

Work planned for a path connecting The Strand to the sands of Takapuna Beach is expected to cost more than \$58,000.

The existing route, across the grassy area leading down to the beach ramp near the Takapuna Boating Club at the northern end of the beach, is in poor condition.

Auckland Council project manager Roma Leota told a workshop of the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board that the grass turf had eroded, gravel and shells were sticking through and the path was uneven.

Council staff recommended installing a 1.8-metre-wide concrete path down the 45 degree gradient, with 13 steps near the top.

The estimated cost of this is \$58,673, well over the approved \$40,000 in the budget, so extra funding is set to be put aside in the next financial year.

But board members said concrete steps would also require handrails which would then divide the reserve.

Council project manager Sarah Jones said staff would do further investigation.

Footpath work starts

Rebuilding of a footpath in front of the old Takapuna Gasometer site on Auburn St has begun. A timber hoarding around the vacant lot will be moved back from the roadside edge and a mural featuring designs by local schoolchildren will be removed from the fence and stored while options for its relocation are explored.

Six native trees are to be planted to replace trees removed during the building of the adjoining Toka Puia car park.

The land between Auburn St and the car-park is being sold by Auckland Council's property arm, Panuku, as surplus to the city's needs.

Road slow-zone wishlist grows

A list of roads where the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board wants a 40km/h speed limit will be submitted to Auckland Transport (AT).

Limits could be lowered under AT's Auckland Speed Management Plan, due to begin in stages from 2023-26.

The roads nominated at the northern end of the board area are:

Sunnynook and Forrest Hill: The area bounded by the Northern Motorway, Trisram Ave, Sunset Rd and East Coast Rd.

Castor Bay: Beach Rd between Peter Tce and Rahopara St.

Campbells Bay: Aberdeen Rd, between 63 Aberdeen Rd and Beach Rd (by Campbells Bay Primary School).

Sunnynook Community Association chair Melissa Powell was happy much of the suburb had made the list. But locals who had been campaigning for this wanted early action, she said.

"It's up to AT now."

Further feedback to the association, including from young people, was that safety was an issue. One young person had suggested footpaths be painted with dividing lines to allow for cycles as well as pedestrians. Another had told of nearly being run over by the Sunnynook supermarket, a spot where the Observer recently highlighted safety fears.

Board member Jan O'Connor said roads

around busy Milford were an omission from the list.

The nominated roads (and others in the south of the board area in Hauraki, Belmont, Narrow Neck and Devonport) are in addition to those covered in AT's plans to cut speeds to 30km/h in Takapuna and Devonport town centre streets and in zones around Sunnynook and Hauraki primary schools.

Those school-related zones have already been decided, although in both suburbs some residents and board members wanted larger zones. The inclusion of the extra Sunnynook streets on the board's wishlist reflects this.

While the first school zones will be implemented mid-year and the town centre zones by early 2023, lowering speeds on the extra roads nominated is not guaranteed.

The board heard that AT was seeking feedback from boards across Auckland and would then work through suggestions to come up with stage one of a 10-year plan. That would be put out for public consultation later this year.

More roads with lower speeds are a given, however, to fit with the government's Vision Zero road-safety policy and to meet AT's own goal of reducing fatal and serious injury road accidents.

AT has already made speed limit changes on 11 per cent of its road network, with changes to a further 27 per cent proposed.

Rugby veteran turns out for final year at Takapuna

Lock Shane Neville, who has played more than 140 games for Takapuna, is back in 2022 for a final season.

The 34-year-old wanted to "focus on himself a bit this year and also do some mentoring of young players coming through," Takapuna coach Aaron Katipa said.

Takapuna's first match of the North Harbour competition is against Helensville at Onewa Domain this Saturday, 2 April at 2.45pm.

Katipa said the side had been hit by two waves of Covid, "with about 10 guys going down with it each time". Pre-season preparation had been badly affected.

But the premiers had a strong 32-man squad, he said, selected from the 130 players turning out pre-season for inclusion in Takapuna's senior teams.

The first few matches gave Takapuna the chance to develop younger players, with a number of experienced squad members playing higher-grade football, Katipa said.

Moses Leo was with the national sevens side, first-five Bryn Gatland was with the Chiefs, Karl Tu'inukuafe was at the Blues, Fine Inisi with Moana Pacific, and Jack Heighton was playing in New York.

All could be available later in the season.

Urban green space will be sold

Auckland Council has signed off on selling 4 Blomfield Spa, a grassy area of land beside Club Lane service lane in Takapuna.

When the intention to sell the approximately 500sq m of green space was notified in 2020, it drew 20 submissions from people who wanted it kept. But last month the council decided to proceed, as part of its pursuit of a \$70 million return from disposing of unwanted land across the city.

Advice it received was that the Blomfield Spa green space was too small to be considered a pocket park, and that other places for recreation were provided nearby. A playground was not considered a safe option

due to the neighbouring service lane.

The block was bought from the government by the former Takapuna City Council in 1968 for the lane. What was left over was turned into a grassy area with trees and park benches. It was often used by smokers.

The vote to sell passed 12-7, with North Shore councillors Chris Darby and Richard Hills against. But they did not speak during debate at the Finance Committee meeting.

The fate of pockets of land the council wants to sell in Forrest Hill, at 2 Forrest Hill Rd and an access way to Linwood Reserve, are still to be decided, once submissions are reviewed.




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Record floodwaters flow through family home



After the deluge... Haden Kruger and his family had about a foot of water wash into the bottom floor at their Takapuna rental home in last week's storm

When Seth Kruger got an SOS text from his mum at the gym last week, he returned home to find his belongings afloat.

The Kruger family were one of the worst affected locally by last week's storm, with water creeping about a foot up the walls of the bottom storey of their Karaka St home.

A fridge and freezer in the garage were upended, items in storage damaged and Seth's bedroom in the downstairs rumpus room was under water, with personal belongings floating on the surface. A boat almost floated off its trailer.

Kruger took footage of himself wading through his room, the water up to mid-calf. "Imagine if I was having my sleep-in day."

Dad Haden Kruger, a plumber, had furniture

and other items spread out on the driveway as they cleaned out the garage. "It's been a testing day."

The Kruger family has since started looking for another rental due to the flood damage to the property.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand received around 300 flooding-related call-outs in Auckland on Monday, 21 March. The Albany weather station had its wettest hour on record – 76.88mm of rainfall – between 8am and 9am.

The next day, the northern end of Takapuna Beach was considered to present a high risk of illness from swimming, with all beaches from there up to Mairangi Bay showing a very high risk, according to the Safe Swim website.

The Milford Bowling Club was under water

on Monday afternoon, and steep driveways still had water flooding down them even a couple of hours after the rain had stopped.

Surface flooding was common around Takapuna, including in the central car park, and some traffic lights were also on the blink.

Several businesses in Takapuna were forced to shut their doors temporarily to mop up.

One of the hardest hit was the TSB bank branch, which stayed closed on Monday and Tuesday due to flooding. By Wednesday, the bank had reopened under its reduced red traffic light setting hours of 9am to 3pm weekdays.



Greens awash... Milford Bowling Club remained under water for several hours after the rain stopped

Simon Watts

MP for North Shore

National Party Spokesperson for Local Government and Associate Finance & Associate Infrastructure

Your local MP, supporting you and our community

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Authorised by Simon Watts, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.



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Devonport-Takapuna Local Board
 Auckland Council

i♥TAKAPUNA



CUT ME OUT START THE TRAIL!



Youth MP keen to hit the House

North Shore Youth MP Ivy Mitchell (pictured) is keen to have her say on a trip to Parliament to put the case for abolishing youth pay rates.

The Westlake Girls High School head girl will participate in a mock debate in the House in July.

Ivy says she is glad the Minimum Wage (Starting-out Wage Abolition) Amendment Bill was selected in a ballot, supervised by the Speaker of the House Trevor Mallard. It's a subject she feels she can contribute to.

"It was the one I wanted to be drawn. It's kind of a bit of a loophole that's unfair on youth."

Ivy, who has just turned 17, says she enjoys public speaking, civics and politics.

She hopes Covid rates will have fallen sufficiently to allow the Youth Parliament to take place in person over 19-20 July, with the



ballot having been held by Zoom.

The exercise, held every three years, is designed to give young people an insight into the workings of democracy.

Previous participants include five current MPs, among them Labour Cabinet Minister Ayesha Verrall and National Party No. 3 Chris Bishop.

Members of Parliament from each electorate around the country choose a young person to represent their area. Simon Watts picked Ivy after she and others made a video application for the opportunity. "Ivy was the clear stand-out," he said.

Ivy says she is passionate about the work of Amnesty International and Unicef, along with "youth in the community and sharing that youth voice".

She is interested in studying political communication and possibly being a diplomat.

Westlake Boys student wins essay contest

A Westlake Boys High School student who won a Holocaust essay competition says learning history is more important than ever.

Eden Li (pictured), aged 17, entered the annual Holocaust essay contest last year, and recently received his award at Parliament from Deputy Prime Minister Grant Robertson, on the UN International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The competition was founded and funded by the late Paul Seidemann, a Holocaust survivor who settled in Wellington after World War II.

Year 13 student Eden's essay looks at those who defied the Nazis, including the Jewish Military Union, and the Polish Underground resistance.



A deeper connection for Eden lies in him having heard relatives talk about how they suffered under the Japanese occupation of China.

Eden's essay won the year 11-13 category.

"What I admire so much about many of those who resisted the Nazi Party was their bravery," he said. Eden points to the Russian

invasion of Ukraine as an example of why his generation must learn about history.

"Learning history grants individuals the intuition to tell fact from fiction, which can have extremely tangible real-world consequences."

Eden, who is a youth representative on the Waitematā DHB's Consumer Advisory Council, has yet to decide on what career he will study for at university next year.

Bowling-club site applications closing

Applications to take over the site of the former Takapuna Returned Services Association bowls club at 2 Mary Poynton Crescent close on Monday.

The local board did not allow the bowls club, which had dwindling membership, to renew its lease of the approximately 1850-square metre Mary Poynton Cres site.

The decision about any future occupier will be made by the board from applications closing on 4 April.

Other new and continuing leases for use of council land were also on the agenda at a local board workshop last week.

Discussions covered new leases at Milford Reserve for the Wairau Sea Scouts and Young Mariners, for North Shore Playcentre on Auburn St, Takapuna and a renewal of the lease of the Lake Pupuke Tennis Club.

Many other leases for small community groups are set to be roll over. A monthly board meeting will make the final decision.

Meanwhile, a Lions Club lease for premises for members drawn from both the Takapuna area and the Devonport peninsula has been rolled over each month since a permanent lease expired in 2014.

Auckland Council leasing manager Yusuf Khan said this was not unusual. "Leases can be deferred where park improvements or management plans are in development."

But in the case of the Lions lease on 8 Empire Rd it had been rolled over longer than it should have been.

"This has primarily been due to resourcing and programming changes over recent years, which has delayed the process significantly."

Briefs

Street-party push

A scheme whereby quiet streets can more easily be temporarily closed for community activities should be looked at locally, says Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member Toni van Tonder. "It's a wonderful opportunity for our two community trusts to get kids and families out," she says. The Community Play Streets pilot would allow a neighbourhood to team up with the likes of the Takapuna North Community Trust to organise an event. Van Tonder wants the board to have a workshop on the concept, which has been promoted by transport agency Waka Kotahi as part of its Innovating Streets for People programme.

Cyclists raise nearly \$200k

Two Takapuna men who cycled from Cape Reinga to Bluff raised nearly \$200,000 for men's health charities. Bruce Cotterill says he and Paul Muir (pictured on the frontpage of the last Observer) covered more than 2600 kilometres in 22 days on their bikes. "We're very fortunate. We didn't have any injuries, we didn't have any crashes, we actually only had one had one puncture." North Shore supporters were a big part of their fundraising drive, Cotterill said.

Kiwibank closing

Kiwibank is closing its Takapuna branch on 1 June, citing the decline in in-person banking at Hurstmere Rd, quickened by Covid-19. It will retain an AT in the area. Customers who switched to digital and phone transactions or locations often did not return, the bank told North Shore MP Simon Watts who had queried the bank's future. Kiwibank said customers were to be offered digital education workshops. Mobile mortgage managers would remain operating in the area.

Better bike signs wanted

Lobby group Bike Auckland is seeking better directional signage for cyclists, prompting Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member George Wood to help set up a session on the subject with Auckland Transport (AT).

Cameras up and running

Drivers face a \$150 fine for sneaking into bus lanes during peak hours, after the recent installation of cameras on Forrester Hill Rd. Auckland Transport had said the cameras would be installed in May or June, but some are already in operation. Penalties also apply to solo drivers using T2 lanes between 6.30am and 10am Monday to Friday.

Leader of the Covid-coverage pack gets back on

Shore resident Michael Morrah has won plaudits for his reporting during the pandemic. He tells Helen Vause about holding authority to account – and going through Covid himself.

Michael Morrah won Reporter of the Year at the New Zealand Television (NZTV) Awards in both 2020 and 2021, but the acclaimed investigative journalist has lately been lying low at home in Belmont.

Early last month, he abruptly dropped out of the bright lights for a stretch at home, fighting the virus that's been capturing his professional attention for two long years.

Morrah has now recovered from Covid and was heading back to the Newshub office, when he had coffee with the Observer.

Morrah also won an NZTV award for best news coverage, with a series of critical stories relating to the management of the Covid pandemic as it was unfolding in New Zealand.

In them, he asked important questions about the use and availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) gear, a lack of swabs for frontline workers, and the testing of border workers. He uncovered holes in the government's management of the spread of Covid and MIQ, holding those in charge to account.

Just doing his job, Morrah says. And now he's back on deck, expect those Covid stories to keep coming.

As an investigative reporter for TV3, he takes seriously his duty as a watchdog, demanding answers to keep the public fully informed.

Not everyone liked him for it. He faced a social-media backlash from those who perceived his questioning to be off the national script that urged Kiwis to pull together as a tight team of five million. It's a criticism he's well used to battling off.

"Journalists are not on the job to be making friends. There were plenty of big questions to be asked during management of the pandemic and it's absolutely my job to be asking those questions," says Morrah.

He adds: "I think the country got into a self-congratulatory place about how well we were doing with Covid. And of course, that thinking can be problematic, certainly if it spreads to media too and they become less vigilant.

"It's not for me to say we're doing okay with this Covid thing and then just sit back and do nothing, to stop asking questions day by day. If you are not keeping on the case, you are not doing your job."

He cites the simple example of a call he took one day from an anxious bus driver. In the thick of the pandemic, the driver was worried no one had offered him testing. His call prompted Morrah to ask unpopular



Back on deck... Michael Morrah says the hardest thing about Covid was having to isolate his children

questions in high places about testing our frontline workforce.

Morrah laughs at the suggestion a committed sleuth would do it tough being home sick with the pandemic still raging and the stories of war all-consuming.

For him the work to be done that week was recovering and maintaining the vigilant isolation regime that kept the virus from reaching his daughters Lucia (5) and Bella (7) or his wife Sarah, who is a local GP.

"The hardest thing about it was the isolation, keeping the kids home and away from their lives," he says.

Morrah has made a career of bringing stories of those having tougher times in far worse places into the living rooms and consciousness of the nation.

"These are stories New Zealanders need to know about. We are so very fortunate here," he says.

Morrah's own story began growing up in Whangarei, where his father was a surgeon and his mother a physiotherapist. He has many memories of happy times spent at beautiful Northland beaches, swimming,

fishing and gathering shellfish with his family.

He completed a BA at Canterbury University and followed up with a postgraduate degree in journalism. From there, he found jobs back in Northland working in regional radio, chasing stories on his own across the region.

He got his start covering a wide range of provincial news, and he loved it.

But, as is sometimes the way in a tight industry in a small country, he got a break into television through an aunt with connections.

She knew someone in the business well enough to be able to speak up for her young newshound nephew and a door was opened. A lucky break, laughs Morrah, who has been in television now for 16 years and recently celebrated his 40th birthday.

Morrah has increasingly made a name for himself with his investigative work, uncovering uncomfortable truths at home and putting together longer, in-depth stories in countries where human suffering is unrelenting.

As Newshub's man on Pacific issues, he's

trail for truth

been on the ground where nature has wreaked havoc, turning lives upside down for small island nations.

And his work on the measles crisis in Samoa earned him an earlier news-coverage award.

Telling New Zealanders about these events is very important to him. "I feel a real duty to find and to tell these stories. It's part of my job to be able to educate people here and highlight the plight of others who may not otherwise have their stories told.

"I see it as part of my job and duty to give a voice to those who are voiceless or vulnerable."

This work has led him to some of the world's least fortunate people and among lives of unimaginable suffering in places like South Sudan, a country ravaged by war, famine and disease. A hell on earth, Morrah says.

Another series he made took him inside the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh to hear the stories of the Rohingya refugees who'd begun fleeing from their homes in Myanmar in 2017.

"These are the stories that I feel don't get enough coverage. And if my work can in any way, however small, improve the plight of someone less fortunate, influence laws or make others think differently about their own circumstances, then I've achieved what I set out to do."

He's working in an era when media and journalists are facing many challenges about the very nature of how they operate, the stories they tell and the complications of being alongside expanding social-media platforms where content is not produced by professionals bound by reporting ethics.

Sometimes the validity of news itself is being challenged.

"The need for quality journalism is always great and it's always going to be critical in a functioning democracy. In my view, we need brave, strong journalists today more than ever."

Morrah says he's optimistic about the future of the old-school journalist who does the job 'without fear or favour' and he takes his role of mentoring those coming up behind him very seriously. He's not in it for the awards, but says he finds the affirmation reassuring.

"You get so close to stories and afterwards it's easy to think you could have done better or done something differently. It's nice to have someone else say you are doing okay."

He's aware the job of a travelling television journalist like himself can be tough on families.

But with his youngest having just started school, Morrah says he's loving the chance to lighten up away from work and mix with the other families in the Belmont Primary School community.

"I tell the girls some children don't have what they have. But honestly, we're loving living around here."

Opinion



This cartoon from Rangitoto Observer freelance cartoonist Guy Body appeared first in our sister paper the Devonport Flagstaff, but we think it makes an apt point for beaches in the Observer circulation area.

Cheltenham beach residents were shocked to learn that Auckland Council draft planning changes threaten to remove the area from the partial development protection offered by Devonport's heritage zone. This is set to be reduced in size as the council responds to the government's housing intensification directives, which were supported by the National Party.

For other character beachside suburbs, such as Takapuna and Milford, that do not carry heritage protection, the reality of three-storey, three-unit developments being allowed as of right on any section is even more pressing. We need more housing, but do we want to change the character of beaches enjoyed by all. Is a coastal-ambience zone called for?

Letters

Have your Say a waste of time and money

Your article 'Have Your Say' a solo act' (March 18) featuring Ruth Ell of Friends of Takapuna Library as the only participant in the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Have Your Say Annual Plan "consultation" process and her frustrations with the inadequacies of the process is timely.

Having shared Ruth's greatly respected long journey as a community advocate, in my case on heritage and senior community issues with Grey Power, I completely agree with her comment that she "is getting completely jaded with the consultation process". She is being polite.

Nobody comes, because the Have Your Say process is an absolute failure, a complete waste of time, of intellectual input, and ratepayer money, and a patronising insult to both the community and the Local Board members.

Prior to the Have Your Say system, the consultation and submission process was for groups and individuals to prepare a written submission, then have the opportunity to speak to the council or local board in support for 15 minutes, and receive a specific response from the process. This was time-consuming but a meaningful democratic process of informing

council members of community concerns.

The Have Your Say system introduced a few years ago abandoned that and become digitally focussed with online submissions being dominant. Community contact became meaningless group meetings with white board scribbles. Key individual issues were lost in the process.

Three hundred Grey Power members made written submissions to the local board on the failing state of senior organisations on the Shore. It did not appear at all in the final consultation report, being counted as one in the digital assessment.

Ruth Ell is right – our local board has to step up and "shout" for our key local issues and not just add comment to the decision papers handed down from council.

The North Shore is one of Auckland's most dynamic communities – we deserve better

Our local board and councillors Chris Darby and Richard Hills should take the lead for change. Grey Power will once again be including reform in their core submission to Auckland Council.

Bill Rayner

Write to the Observer

We welcome letters. Please limit to 300 words on local topics. Noms de plume or unnamed letters will not be printed.

Email news@rangitoto-observer.co.nz or write to Letters, PO Box 32 275, Devonport.



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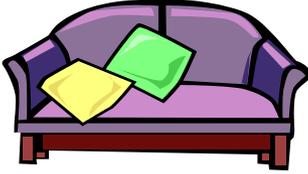
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Terry Dunleavy: Takapuna identity led vigorous life

Takapuna lost a tireless champion and powerful personality who lived a rich and varied life with the death of Terry Dunleavy last month. He was 93.

Terence John Dunleavy was a pioneer of the New Zealand wine-industry. In 1990, he was awarded an MBE for services to it and to the community, for whom he was a Justice of the Peace.

The proud father of 11 children settled in Takapuna 51 years ago with wife Margaret. He only stepped down recently as chair of the Takapuna Residents Association, a group he helped reactivate to campaign to prevent the sale of the Takapuna camping ground and less successfully to save the central car-park site.

Always opinionated, Dunleavy honed his communication skills as a journalist and editor before becoming chief executive of the Wine Institute for many years.

He was also a longtime supporter of North Shore Hospice and played an active part in National Party politics. At one stage he fell out of favour with the North Shore branch, so registered in the Papakura electorate to continue to have his say in its direction.

On Waitangi Day, Dunleavy attended an event at the Takapuna Boating Club, meeting up with old friends and sharing his satisfaction at seeing community figures come together. Although he had had brief spells in hospital, Dunleavy was sharp as a tack and more worried about his wife's health than his own, leaving acquaintances surprised to learn of his death, peacefully at home, on 14 March.

A requiem mass was held for him at St Joseph's Catholic Church the following Friday, capped at 100 people due to Covid conditions. It was also live-streamed.

Family, church and community service were the central pillars of Dunleavy's life. He had a strong connection to rugby, through Marist clubs and served on the board of Hato Petera College, being made an honorary old boy.

Former North Shore Mayor and current Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member George Wood paid tribute to Dunleavy,



outlining his history, before the board acknowledged his death at its last monthly meeting. Wood described him as "a larger than life figure who loved being busy in our community".

Dunleavy was born in Te Awamutu in 1928. His father worked for Dominion Breweries and, via Hamilton, took the family to Auckland. Dunleavy attended Sacred Heart College, did a welding apprenticeship, then a cadetship with the State Advances Corporation before joining the RNZAF. He then took up a reporting role at the *North Wairarapa Herald* in Pahiatua, meeting his wife there, and becoming the newspaper's editor.

It was while in the small town in the northern Wairarapa that he forged ties with the local member of Parliament, Sir Keith Holyoake, who became Prime Minister and later Governor-General. Dunleavy was later to use the many political connections he made to good effect in lobbying for the wine industry, but before that career path he continued in journalism, moving to Samoa for nine years to edit a newspaper there.

His part playing a small role as an American airman in the hit Hollywood movie *Return to Paradise*, starring Gary Cooper, was a talking point. He loved Samoa, as he did his Irish and Kiwi roots.

Five of the Dunleavy children were born

in Samoa, before the family returned to New Zealand, first to Wellington, then Hawke's Bay where his interest in the then fledgling wine business developed. He pushed for law changes to aid its development, acted as a mentor to many, and began writing columns about wine.

He also set up a vineyard on Waiheke Island in 1987, with the first vintage under the Te Motu label being in 1993. In 1996 he was a made a fellow of the Wine Institute in recognition of his work.

The family had settled in Auckland from 1971, choosing Takapuna as home because of its quiet seaside character. This was something Dunleavy wished to safeguard, especially with Auckland Council designating it a metropolitan town centre, subject to intensification. This led him to speak out publicly and then become the dominant voice of the residents group when it revived.

"I made the mistake of opening my trap and that led to me being asked to be chairman," he told the Observer early last month when he confirmed he had stepped aside. "We're stuck with the Super City, the Unitary Plan, and uncontrollable organisations like Panuku," he declared.

Dunleavy criticised the role of Panuku, the council's property arm, in its development plans and parking relocation for Takapuna and what he said was a flawed consultation process. "The result is they are strangling Hurstmere Rd to death as a commercial destination."

Apathy among locals about some of these matters was a disappointment, he added.

Yet, they were among the thousands who "woefully missed" the Takapuna market, which while now resumed would end up permanently reduced in size on what was left as a town square.

But Dunleavy always maintained that Takapuna was not just the best place on the North Shore, in Auckland and in New Zealand, but in the world.

He is survived by his wife Margaret and children: Mike, Erin, John, Paul, Teuila, Trisha, Anna, Tessa, Terry, Clare and Hera, 19 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

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Artist's intricate books inspired by love

Takapuna's rock pools and its rare urban remnant of kahikatea trees are among the environmental treasures that help inspire Toni Hartill to make little taonga of her own.

The maker of artist's books is passionate about the niche genre of crafted collectibles – as often stored safely away as seen on public display. But soon Hartill's examples will be able to be "read" at Takapuna Library.

"Instead of just looking at an image on a wall and looking quite passively – you're opening and exploring the work," she explains of what an artist's book is all about.

Printmaker Hartill's collected work from 2016 onward will be on display, safely under glass in the Angela Morton room, but in a way that allows its intricacies to be explored up close.

Folded sculptural paper pages known as snake or meander books will be spread to reveal their themes, while other less literal "books" will also be part of the *Artful Narratives* exhibition. One is a tin, into which stacks a series of lids featuring printed dioramas of sea vistas. *Vitamin Sea*, she labelled the can, fuel for heart and soul. "It's like a seven-day log book.

"There's a cover, chapters, it tells a story," she says. "I've never been worried by convention and rules about how you express something. It's the ideas you express that matter."

To come up with the imagery she has created for this and several origami-like pieces based on the content of rockpools, Hartill draws on her walks by the sea. The fossil forest at the north end of Takapuna Beach and the coastline around to Milford are special places to her.

For a new perspective on life beneath the surface of the sea, she has even put an underwater camera into rockpools. "I love the idea of mini worlds."

Hartill says she enjoys the playful nature of artist's books. "I don't think I've ever grown up. Since I was a kid I made little drawings



By the book... Toni Hartill with some of the work from her *Artful Narratives* exhibition

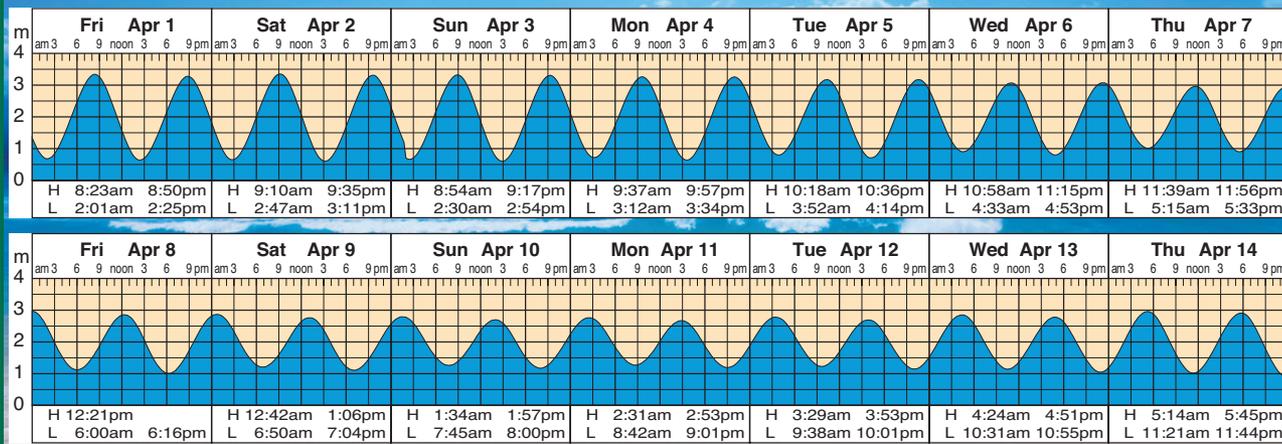
and fairy gardens."

From painting, she came to printmaking when she worked for a few years as a secondary school teacher and taught classes on it. With a press at hand to experiment on, she found herself drawn to the medium. "I just really loved all the processes."

Six years ago she learned about artist's books and became hooked on their intricacy and possibilities. "The exciting thing is I don't know where an idea is going."

The ability to use them to tell stories through a series of visual ideas allowed her to dig deep into interests, including historical research and

Milford / Takapuna Tides





of the local environment

the impact of man's manipulation of the land. One such story she tells is of the loss of the kahikatea forests, particularly on the Hauraki Plains. She later learned her grandfather was among those who had worked digging ditches when the land was cleared for farming.

Kahikatea pockets still exist, with that at Smith's Bush East, a reserve at the end of Karaka St, a place she has visited both as a child and an adult. "It's so important to respect these little patches of bush and look after them," she says. "Things like this if they're gone, it's just lost."

She mentions that another rare urban kahikatea that can be seen on the corner of Taharoto Rd and Shakespeare Rd, in front of the Poynton retirement home. "It's quite a sad little thing."

Hartill will talk about her work at sessions during the two-month run of her exhibition. It was meant to have opened in October, but Covid interruptions put paid to that. After being part of a group show at the Angela Morton room in 2020, she is thrilled to be back solo, explaining it is hard to find a suitable venue for artist's books. With its glass cabinets, the upstairs venue is ideal.

"It's cool to present all my work as a big body of work," she says, hoping the underlying environmental themes will encourage people to look more closely at what's around them.

On a residency next year, she hopes to explore the variety of artist's books further, saying that fibre artists and bookbinders also bring ideas and skills to their creation. "It does cross a lot of boundaries," she says. The often disparate groups can learn from each other.

"I've been weaving paper to create little kete to hold books," she adds.

Hartill was raised on the North Shore, in Northcote, but says: "This [Takapuna] was the local yacht club or down at Wakatere [Narrow Neck]." She had practical, creative parents and for a time she made furniture, which her husband still does from their home studio on the city side of the Harbour Bridge.



Sea view... The rockpool inspired There Be Treasure

She now devotes herself to printmaking – and revisiting the beloved places of her upbringing. "Anywhere along the East Coast beaches, there's beautiful rockpools."

**Artful Narratives* by Toni Hartill is open daily from 2 April to 2 June at Takapuna Library, upstairs at the Angela Morton Room. The artist is on-site for a guided tour of work on Thursday, 7 April, and Friday, 22 April, from 10.30am, with a talk commencing at 11am sharp. Further dates in May. For more see tonihartillart.blogspot.com

Workshops offered for rusty thespians

A new series for those in community theatre to brush up their skills after two years of Covid has launched at the PumpHouse Theatre in Takapuna. The MasterClass season includes seven workshops, ranging from best practice in intimate scenes in theatre to building characters and tackling Shakespeare.

"The overarching theme is we're offering a refresher for people involved in theatre, who might not have had a chance to perform or use their acting skills in the last two years," says Mags Delaney-Moffatt, who is teaching the Shakespeare class.

The season started last weekend with Forrest Hill's Jordan Henare presenting a workshop on including tikanga Maori in theatre. The next is a free workshop hosted by theatre legend Jennifer Ward-Lealand on 2 April, introducing best practice for performing intimate scenes, followed by theatre lighting with Julia Rutherford on 3 April. Shoreside Theatre president Cath Boniface will present a workshop on bringing theatre text to life through acting on 27 April, with a voice workshop with Linda Cartwright, building characters with Meg Andrews and the Shakespeare all-day class in May.

Ward-Lealand's class is free but the others have ticket prices dependent on the length of the class. Tickets are available from the PumpHouse Theatre website.



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