

# The Rangitoto Observer

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 84 - June 24, 2022

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

Honoured netball stalwart  
brings financial nous... p3

Making a difference:  
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tree losses... p17

## Retailers on edge after third Hurstmere strip robbery

Retail workers fear for their safety after a third brazen robbery on Takapuna's main shopping stretch in as many months.

In the latest raid, about 4.20pm on Thursday last week, robbers used crowbars to smash jewellery cases at Michael Hill Jewellers on the corner of Hurstmere and Lake Rds, before

fleeing in a vehicle with bags of loot.

Kim Juan, who works nearby, said she was talking on the phone when she saw the robbers' car stop in the middle of Hurstmere Rd.

"The guys got out and they had these big massive crowbars," she said. "All I heard was the smashing – it was like gunshots, that's how

loud it was. "They got back in the car with bags and squealed off down the road."

Video footage shows a figure in black smashing into jewellery cases and then two robbers driving off in what is understood to be a stolen Mazda Demio.

**To page 3**

## Feast of K-culture laid on by high schools



**Face off... A mask dance performed by Ellie Park, Moe Tun, Hailey Kim, Jiwon Choi, Aileen Joo and Dohee Kim at a combined Westlake high schools' Korean evening. More pictures, pages 12-13.**



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**Briefs****Takapuna pool fees rising**

Prices are set to rise at the Takapuna Pool and Leisure Centre from 1 July. Among planned increases, the casual entrance fee for an adult swim, spa, sauna or steam room will rise from \$8.10 to \$8.50, and adult aqua classes from \$9.10 to \$9.60. Children under 16 remain free for casual entry. The prices are set for sign-off by the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board by the end of June.

**Watercare hikes charges**

Watercare has confirmed price hikes for water and wastewater. Water charges will rise seven per cent – about \$1.50 a week, or \$78 a year for the average household – on 1 July. Further hikes by about nine per cent a year will follow until 2029.

**Drowned man named**

A 26-year-old man who drowned in Takapuna's Lake Pupuke last summer has been named. He was Dung Nguyen of central Auckland. On 1 February, Nguyen and a friend were swimming in the lake about 9.15pm when he got into difficulty.

**Child hit by car**

A child was taken to hospital with moderate injuries after being hit by a car in Sunnynook last week. A police spokesman said a crash between a car and a pedestrian occurred about 3.15pm on Friday, 17 June, on Lyford Crescent near Tonkin Drive.

**Parks plan delayed**

Traffic-slowing measures for Takapuna that may see more parks lost on central streets will be made public next month. The Safe Speeds initiative, being developed by Auckland Transport, was due before the local board this month, but AT said the plans were running behind those being developed for Devonport. A 30km/h zone has been signalled but details of how speed-calming measures for pedestrian and cycle safety fit in are still being worked on.



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**NEXT ISSUE:** July 8

**ADVERTISING DEADLINE:** July 1

**Takapuna workers feel unsafe in wake of latest robbery****From page 1**

The raid follows two others in Hurstmere Rd – at Takapuna ASB on 18 March and jewellery store Fifth Avenue on 20 April – also during weekday business hours.

Juan, who only recently started working in retail premises on Hurstmere Rd, said she had been left feeling unsafe in the area. Recently, after coming across some unsavoury types in the alleyway at the rear of her workplace, she has started leaving from the front.

"It's going to happen again. What's going to stop them?"

"No, I don't feel safe."

Another worker at a nearby business, who did not want to be identified, said she and a co-worker closed the doors of their premises during the "very scary" Michael Hill robbery. "It has been going on too much," she said.

Lucas Ebbekie, owner of nearby jeweller Ebbekie & Co, said he was looking at extra safety measures. "I'm feeling safe after hours, but not during working hours," he said.

Takapuna Beach Business Association chief executive Terence Harpur said he planned to meet with senior police. The area had a community constable, but he said police could do little to stop these crimes while they were in progress, so they had to get to the root of the problem, which he blamed on young gang prospects.

"It's a very bad situation in the city and we're starting to see some of it on the North Shore," he said. "This is an Auckland-wide problem; it is not a Takapuna issue."

Harpur asked the community to rally around

the latest business to be targeted. "They're good people; they're good staff. Maybe drop in and just say a nice word to them."

The Waitematā East Area Commander, Inspector Stefan Sagar, said several glass cabinets were smashed and "a number of items" taken in the Michael Hill robbery. The car used was found abandoned only a short distance away. Enquiries were ongoing.

He wanted to reassure the community the police took the recent incidents "extremely seriously" and would be visible in the community.

"Police are working hard to investigate these matters. Some of these investigations are complex and it takes time to carry out enquiries," Sagar said. "We have no tolerance for some of the blatant violence on display across Auckland's communities, including some of those on the North Shore."

Anyone with information is asked to call Police on 105 or anonymously via Crime Stoppers.

North Shore MP Simon Watts said police on the North Shore were "extremely stretched". Crime was an increasing issue, he said. "This is a brazen, violent attack in terms of smashing the shop up, putting the staff at risk, in the middle of the afternoon with complete disregard for bystanders."

A spate of crime around the time of the Fifth Avenue robbery prompted the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board to seek a greater local police presence and longer police station.

Board chair Ruth Jackson renewed that call in the wake of the latest robbery.

"What we need is boots on the street."

**Repair project may have caused overflow**

A sewage overflow onto Takapuna Beach cost \$34,500 to fix and ironically may have been caused by the \$5.4 million repair project to the wastewater pipe that runs along the foreshore.

A Watercare spokesperson said the overflow alert after heavy rain came in at 12.28pm on 6 June – Queen's Birthday Monday.

The maintenance crew was on-site within 40 minutes. A diversion was put in place to pump the wastewater flows past the blockage



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# Team player lifts netball's numbers game

Netball has long been a family affair for Takapuna accountant Ann Tod, who has won recognition for her work to support the sport she loves.

Made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queen's Birthday Honours, Tod is the finance director of World Netball.

She is also a familiar face at the Netball North Harbour courts, having transitioned over the decades from club player to coach and umpire of her daughters' teams to convenor or the netball centre's umpiring committee.

It's the team aspect of the game that she most enjoys. Working collaboratively, combined with her auditing skills – honed in a 40-year career at KPMG where she rose to audit partner – turned out to be a good fit.

"I'm not an auditor who loves going to find mistakes – I like a good outcome so people can describe what is going on with their financial statements," she says.

Improved financial understanding has led sports organisations and charities she has worked with to better decision-making, and also helped members and supporters see where money was being spent.

Tod's netball and accounting strengths combined in 2011 when then Netball New Zealand chief executive Raelene Castle proposed the role World Netball role. Tod found she loved attending the governing body's board meetings three times a year, learning from "sitting with women of all different cultures".

Her third and last four-year term will take her to World Cup 2023 in South Africa. The timing of some meetings with pinnacle events is, she says, "a perk of the job".

Although Tod's Honours citation was for her governance and long community-netball work, it also mentioned her other contributions through Rotary and Harbour Hospice, which she has chaired since 2019.

The honour was celebrated with family, who all share Tod's interests in netball. "Everyone is very proud," she says.

Her three daughters, now in their 30s, all played through the age grades. Husband



**Hands on... Ann Tod's work for netball is a labour of love**

Alastair Tod was a basketballer, but got drawn into umpiring and is now teacher in charge of netball at Glenfield College.

Tod stepped down as a KPMG partner in late 2020, but is now back there three days a week. An outdoorsy "active relaxer" who likes to garden, attend live sport and sew, she found she wasn't ready for full retirement.

Tod preferred netball umpiring to coaching as it posed less of a time commitment around work hours, but was still a way of contributing – with the bonus of keeping her fit. "It's the job most people don't want," she adds. Now, as an umpire coach, she can draw on situations she has faced herself.

"I had a classic when I was umpiring Year

6 finals – a dad came up to me and said, 'I don't know the rules, but...' I said, 'I do know the rules.'"

Netball has a strength in its strong female-led foundation and community connection, she says, noting that women "generally" park egos when working collaboratively.

As with other sports and the arts, the challenge is to come back from Covid-disruption. Government wage subsidies helped, but the impact on revenues continues. "And as much as financially, it's sheer tiredness."

Tod is an advocate for getting off the couch, however. "Technology is a gift but in our lives we need to look for other things where we connect with people and use our bodies."

## Snubbed local board belatedly included in memorial talks

Officials mulling a new site for the Takapuna war memorial have irked local politicians by failing to invite them to talks and a walkabout to help settle the issue.

Auckland Council property arm Panuku invited RSA representatives and council events-team members to a session this week to determine where the memorial will be sited in the new Takapuna town square.

Left out of the loop, members of the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board had to invite themselves.

"The local board is the land-owner and you're creating this square on our behalf," said a furious board chair, Ruth Jackson.

The board needed to be integral to decision-making, she told the Observer.

It was only through a workshop debriefing on Anzac Day that the board learned from the council's civic-events team that a session in the square had been scheduled.

Jackson was blindsided by the news, expecting the board to have been involved. "I have invited myself," she said after the workshop.

She wrote to Panuku, telling it all board members should receive an invitation. Its project leader, Kate Cumberpatch, replied late last week, saying board members could attend. At publication time it was unclear how many would be able to be there.

Although board members have been split on many votes about the development of the town square, last December they were unanimous about wanting Anzac added to its official name,

which will be Waiwharariki-Anzac Square, and for the memorial to be moved there from The Strand. It hopes this will be by Anzac Day 2024.

Panuku has suggested reconfiguring the large sail-like structure. Jackson wants its original creator in on discussions, as the best person to advise on how it might be moved and placed. It had been designed to be relocatable, she said.

Panuku told the Observer it would involve the designer "as we move forward". The purpose of the meeting in the square was to bring impacted stakeholders up to date and hear their views, it said. On this and other project meetings the board would be fully consulted on feedback and options. This was expected in a few months' time at its regular meetings.

• What next for Anzac Day? Page 15

## Board wants six-storey zones curtailed

Permission to build six-storey buildings should not extend 800 metres all the way around central Takapuna, the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board says.

While extending the zones southward was acceptable, it was inappropriate north of the centre of Takapuna, on the narrow strip between Lake Pupuke and the ocean, members agreed.

They were discussing the matter at a board workshop, ahead of finalising board feedback to Auckland Council at their June monthly meeting.

The council has come up with its own preliminary response to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD). This allows greater intensification and will require Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP) changes, including extending existing walkable catchments – areas where people can live within walking distances to work, shops, and transport hubs – with these proposed for 800m around the edges of metropolitan centres, including

Takapuna. The walkable catchments allow six-storey buildings and the possibility to apply for a resource consent to go even higher.

Board members asked for more information from council planners on why the strip either side of Hurstmere Rd north to Kitchener Rd had been included in the catchment and what protections were in place for it.

“Applying 800m as a blanket rule is probably fraught with danger,” member Aidan Bennett said. He said he would support the concept, but it needed controls. Protections under the AUP should apply around the beach and the lake.

Member George Wood said the issue was contested during development of the AUP, with the coastal area limited to single-storey development. This should remain, he said.

In a public feedback process, 46 per cent of submitters agreed with 800m or more.

A similar catchment is proposed around transport hubs at Akoranga, Sunnynook, Smales Farm and Constellation stations.

This was supported by Bennett and Toni van Tonder, while other members wanted smaller areas.

The Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings (THAB) Zone is set to be applied up to 200m around small town centres, including Sunnynook and Milford, and would allow five-to-seven-storey buildings.

“The Unitary Plan’s done enough to Milford,” Bennett said. He was the sole dissenting voice with other members supporting the proposal for that area.

The board unanimously supported qualifying matters to protect special-character areas. Bennett suggested a special qualifying matter should be added for the board area to produce stepped heights – buildings slowly rising amphitheatre-style away from lake and coastal areas – while Trish Deans wanted a volcano cone view shaft.

A second round of council consultation will then allow for more board feedback in August.

## Simon Watts

MP for North Shore

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

**Wishing everyone \***  
**a Happy Matariki!** \*

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## New toilet block opens at Takapuna Beach

The new Takapuna Beach toilet block – including a new Changing Places room and toilet for those who cannot use standard facilities – has opened.

A ceiling hoist and adult changing table are among the Changing Places facilities, which were funded by Takapuna philanthropists, the Reeves family.

The rest of the cost is from local board funds.

The new block, sited uphill from the facility it replaces, also provides standard toilets, a family-sized toilet, and male and female changing rooms, each with a shower and toilet. An external shower, a drinking fountain and seating make up the rest of the project which features energy and water-saving fixtures.

Contractors have now moved on to knocking down the old toilets, with land reverting to reserve use.

## Watercare warns pipes need upgrade

Watercare says North Shore pipes will need upgrading to cope with proposed intensive development.

At a Devonport-Takapuna Local Board workshop, Watercare staff presented a map showing constraints – areas of the water network that would need work to handle the extra pressure. This included sections of Takapuna and Milford and a big chunk of Devonport.

Extra infrastructure, such as storage tanks, did not happen overnight, Watercare head of infrastructure, strategy and planning Priyan Perera said. “If this development happens in an uncontrolled way, we will struggle.”

Watercare would need to be kept informed of needs by Auckland Council which it was working with and to tap into more funding to get the infrastructure up faster, he said. Transport was another infrastructure planning need, he added.



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## Mighty Manu – the ultimate weekend warrior

After 22 seasons and 300 games, 51-year-old Manu Matuku, the captain of the Takapuna Mighty Guerillas president's-grade rugby team, has no intention of hanging up his boots.

"I just love it too much, mate," Matuku told the Observer.

"If any one needs any help on a Saturday, I tell them it has got to be before 12.30, because I've got rugby in the afternoon."

Matuku was honoured with a surprise presentation of a framed jersey from his teammates after his 300th 15-a-side match last Saturday, but he's actually played many more. The total doesn't include 10-a-side tournaments "where we were playing four games a day", he says.

The dedicated Takapuna club man's early passion was rugby league: he made Taranaki age group sides in the 13-man code as a teenager.

Moving to Auckland he played a bit of rugby for Glenfield but was recruited by the Guerillas after a workmate put up a flyer seeking players.

"Presidents is an over-35 grade, and I was only 29, but my mate said I'd be all right."

"I thought it was going to be easy, but those older fellas taught me a thing or two."

He started in the centres, but as the years went by, his speed dropped and weight crept on, Matuku progressed into the forwards. "When I started I was under 100kg and now I'm over 100kg," he laughs.

He reckons he's played every position for the Guerillas. "Now I'm running the fat man's track – I'm a prop."

He's had serious injuries, including a skull fracture and a broken arm, and has had to have knee surgery. But even when he was unable to play, Matuku always turned up every Saturday for the team's matches. "I've been a water boy and even reffed a couple of matches."

President's is a social grade, and Matuku has formed strong friendships with teammates and opposition players, many of whom have also had long careers. "I've turned out for most of the teams we've played as well at various times – some Saturdays a team turns up short of players and you make up the numbers as best you can."

Matuku, who has managed as well as captained the Guerillas, can't remember how many tries he's scored for the team, but concedes "not too many in the last five years – I've been giving the ball to the backs".

Life on the rugby field is unforgiving on an older body: "It just doesn't recover as quickly and the hits don't get any easier – no one wants to take second place once the whistle goes."

Matuku, who is in his 25th year with Chelsea Sugar, where he works as a warehouse supervisor, says he's been lucky his wife Shelley is a competitive hockey player.

"We're no spring chickens, but we love our sports."

"There's something about the camaraderie of turning up on a Saturday."

"Sometimes we will only have 14 or 15 players. You look over to the sidelines and there's no subs and everyone is playing for each other."



**Countdown... Manu Matuku ready to take the field for his beloved Guerillas side at Takapuna Rugby Club's home field, Onewa Domain**

### Teammates salute popular veteran

Teammate Byron Waring says Matuku is the complete team man, who turns up every week and does everything from drawing up shed-cleaning rosters to providing music for before and after the game. "He's pretty vocal – he's our voice on the field as well."

Matuku was a tough but fair player who steered clear of any 'aggro', but still hit the ball up strongly, Waring said. He recalled the veteran breaking his arm several seasons ago – and in true social-rugby style still taking time for a couple of beers before heading off for treatment.

Another Guerillas player, Simon van Der Heide, calls Matuku a "natural leader", who leads by example on and off the field. "He is always positive but from time to time feels that it's necessary to assist the ref in his decision making if he thinks he may have got the decision wrong."

Off the field, he always puts his hand up to help with team gear and to ensure the sheds are swept out after every game. "Manu's positive outlook on life makes him a pleasure to be around and we are blessed to have such an amazing leader turn up week after week."

*THE PLAN, LIKE IT'S BEEN FOR THE LAST 22 SEASONS, IS TO HAND THE BALL TO MANU MATUKU ...*



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## FLU 2022

To mark Volunteer Week, the Observer profiles a selection of locals making a difference

## Pair clocks up 40 years of ‘warm guidance’

Two women who have each volunteered at Citizens Advice Bureau on and off for over 40 years are winding up their service by recommending others give it a go.

“It’s good to help someone and see them walk out with a smile when they perhaps came in in tears,” said Ros Dolan, from Takapuna, who began volunteering in 1982.

Gabrielle Fraser, from Milford, who began helping at the Takapuna CAB in 1979 – just a year after it opened – said over time issues had become more complex.

Complaints about neighbours and how to deal with marriage breaks-up were hardy annuals, with immigration and tenancy matters a growing concern.

Some clients grappled with social and physical problems. All appreciated a friendly smile and a willing ear.

“Mostly people need to talk face-to-face when they’ve got a problem,” Dolan said. Frustration set in when people were dealing remotely by email with the likes of government departments.

This is something the two volunteers have experienced themselves when trying to help clients. “I do find the difference between then and now is you could give them phone numbers and they could get the right person on the line,” Fraser said. Navigating the court system is another challenge, Dolan said, especially since North Shore lost a helpful liaison person.

But the women – Dolan in her 70s and Fraser past 80 – say volunteering has kept them up to date, exposing them to a diverse range of people and training them in technology.

As volunteers, they have gone from being newbies nervously answering calls to confidently navigating information for clients. “Every time, I learned something,” Dolan said.

When Fraser began volunteering she sometimes had her youngest of four children in the next room, with the others at school. After a



**Retiring duo... Gabrielle Fraser (left) and Ros Dolan are winding up their volunteer work at the Takapuna Citizens Advice Bureau**

stint at the Takapuna CAB, the then Bayswater resident volunteered at the Devonport visitor information centre. She was a paid supervisor at the Glenfield CAB for around five years, but since 2014 she was back on the Takapuna CAB volunteer roster.

For Dolan, the youngest of her two children being at primary school was her prompt to volunteer, first at Browns Bay and then at Takapuna. “I just got to the stage I wanted something to do, but I didn’t want to go back to work,” she said. She has been on the CAB committee and helped with peer reviewing, as well as helping in her husband’s insurance-broking business. All up, she estimates her CAB time at 34 years.

Takapuna CAB manager Alison Jones and colleagues thanked Fraser and Dolan for their “extraordinary” service at a lunch this month. The women’s “gentle warmth and warm guidance” would be missed, said Jones.

Dolan is these days wanting to spend more time with family in the South Island. Fraser is staying put in Milford, but will have more time for helping the Foundation for the Blind, church and family.

Both women expect their CAB skills will remain handy.

“We can still help people in our own area,” says Fraser. “If we can’t answer we can tell them where to go.”

### How to get started in community volunteering

Organisations including Citizens Advice Bureau run training intakes for new volunteers from time to time. Contact a local group you would like to help to see if they are in need of assistance currently or when the next intake is. For wider ideas about volunteering opportunities go to [volunteeringauckland.org.nz](http://volunteeringauckland.org.nz).

### Daffodil Day call-out

The Cancer Society is looking for two volunteer convenors for Daffodil Day in Takapuna on 26-27 August. They will manage collection sites, replenish daffodil supplies and bank donated money. If interested contact [angela.nelligan@akcansoc.org](mailto:angela.nelligan@akcansoc.org)

Collectors are also needed. To register to volunteer go to the society’s website.

### Blood donors wanted

More blood donors are needed to keep up with demand, says the Blood Service. It is calling for people to help meet a national shortfall of nearly 40,000 regular donors in the year ahead.

The North Shore donation centre is at 441 Lake Rd. Find out if you are eligible to donate at [www.nzblood.co.nz](http://www.nzblood.co.nz).

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**Helping hands... John Godfrey (left) and Peter McNee in front of the Sunnynook Community Centre mural**

## Octogenarians leave their mark on Sunnynook

Notice a community asset in Sunnynook and there's a good chance John Godfrey and Peter McNee had something to do with it.

The pair, now in their early 80s, started the Sunnynook Community Association eight years ago and remain active members.

They've been involved in multiple community projects – playgrounds, the Lyford Reserve restoration, public toilets, safer footpaths for Sunnynook School's walking bus, and helping council staff with other initiatives.

They pick up rubbish, and report fallen tree branches.

"I've got a Gandhi statement – it says be the change you want to see," McNee says.

Seeing him picking up rubbish inspires

others to follow suit, he believes. "It's to be encouraging of other people to take care of our place."

"Our society wouldn't work properly without volunteers."

The pair have many tales to tell of picking up the slack for council projects – and injecting a useful dose of local knowledge.

"They haven't come and talked to people that know the area; they would've put things in the wrong place," McNee says.

The pair were among 25 volunteers honoured at an appreciation event in Takapuna this month, jointly hosted by Pupuke Birdsong Project, Takapuna North Community Trust and Auckland North Community and Development.

They're not new to volunteering. McNee first started when he was in the Middle East with the New Zealand Baptist Mission, rebuilding a village which had just been burned down, and setting up an orchestra and dance event for people in a refugee camp.

Godfrey served in the military for nine years and also worked with Civil Defence. "I was a radar expert and part of that was civil defence back-up for emergencies."

They got involved in environmental work "for the next generation", Godfrey says. McNee adds: "We've only got one planet, and if we don't look after it, it just degenerates. This is our home, and we've got to do our bit."



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## Hospice shop stalwart urges others to try volunteering

When Evelyn Auckram moved to the North Shore, the first thing she did was look for a Hospice shop to volunteer at. Fifteen years later, the dedicated helper has done a great deal more than her official role of pricing donated goods for sale.

Her efforts, and those of other long-serving Harbour Hospice volunteers, were recognised this week in a ceremony at Smales Farm in Takapuna marking national Volunteer Week (19-25 June).

Auckram says the care hospice gives people is her motivation.

The 78-year-old started at the Wairau store on Link Dr, then went to the Takapuna shop when that expanded. Then Milford opened.

"I go to Takapuna on a Tuesday and here on a Thursday," she tells the Observer in the Kitchener Rd store. She also makes items for sale there, including terrariums.

For five years, she made cushions from offcuts from her son's Guthrie Bowron franchise – raising more than \$10,000 for Hospice.

"I made so many cushions. I used to be called the cushion lady."

Husband John has also been pressed into service, repairing broken goods. "I'm always taking home jobs for him to do and he enjoys it; he really does."

English-born Auckram has been in New Zealand for 30 years. Her Hospice connection started when she was living in Napier and at a loose end after selling a ceramics business.

"My cousin died in Cranford Hospice and I thought what a wonderful place this is."

She set about creating vases to match the decor and doing floral arrangements there.

Two years later she moved to Auckland for family reasons.

"The first thing I did was look for a Hospice shop," she says.

Her artistic talents have in recent times been put to good use in sprucing up unusual



**Waste not... Hospice volunteer Evelyn Auckram in the Milford opportunity store with one of the terrariums she makes for sale**

donated jars and bowls. On their own, they don't sell. But with some sand and little succulents they are turned into terrariums. She's made \$3000 worth.

The Takapuna Floral Arts group she is a member of also creates bouquets to brighten North Shore Hospital.

Aside from volunteering, Auckram likes to walk the dog, read, turn her hand to Wordle or newspaper crosswords and keep up with grandchildren.

She and her husband live in Campbells Bay. They have been married seven years, both having married their first spouses in 1965 and lost them more than a decade ago.

"He plays bowls and he goes out and does that, and I do Hospice and flowers," she says.

Auckram enjoys the great friendships she's made through volunteering. "Give it a go. You get so much out of it."

"It's so rewarding; it really really is," she says.

- If you are interested in volunteering for Harbour Hospice in roles such as working in its 17 stores, driving patients to appointments or visiting them, or helping in hospice kitchens, gardens or administration, see the website or email Julie.Reid@harbourhospice.org.nz



**Westlake Girls High School**  
Te Kura Tuarua o ngā Taitamawāhine o Ururoto

## Open Night

Tuesday, 5 July 2022  
4pm and 6pm

**WESTLAKE GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL**  
2 Wairau Road, Takapuna

For more information visit [westlakegirls.school.nz/open-night](http://westlakegirls.school.nz/open-night)



**Assisted living means Vic has more time to spend doing the things he loves**

# THE BENEFITS OF ASSISTED LIVING ARE LIMITLESS AT WILLIAM SANDERS

Serviced apartment resident Vic loves life in his serviced apartment at William Sanders Village in Devonport.

Being one of the first residents to move in, he says it's perfect for him and his needs.

"I bought it off the plans and lived at Bert Sutcliffe Village in Birkenhead for a while, while it was still being finished off.

"I quite like living here, it looks out over the reception, and I can see what's going on."

William Sanders is perfect for Vic, who is a part of the village Craft Group.

"I like to make carpets. I buy the wool and the mats from craft shops and make them in my apartment.

It takes Vic about 50 minutes to stitch one line.

"I started making them back when my daughter was in high school, however, I have made a lot of them since moving into the village."

While Vic gives most of his carpets to friends and family, he has also given one

to Ryman, to raffle off for prostate cancer.

"I've made carpets with old vintage cars on them, I've made ones with flowers, multicoloured ones too."

While the cost of wool for a single carpet can sometimes fetch over \$200, that doesn't deter Vic, who finds it rewarding to make something to give to people.

"I try and find wool in the clearance bins and wait till it's on special too."

And while Vic makes his carpets, he has all the help he needs on his serviced apartment doorstep.

"I like getting my sheets changed and a cooked meal once a day. The housework is done, including my bins and I get fresh towels every day too.

"Also, my daughter lives two streets away, it's very handy for me living here.

"I know lots of people too. There are a lot of people here that have lived most of their lives in Devonport."



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[rymanhealthcare.co.nz](http://rymanhealthcare.co.nz)





**Kick start...** Students demonstrate their skills in the Korean martial art of taekwondo



**Reaching for it...** Dancer Jiwon Choi. Right: Part of a combined schools' nanta (drumming) group plays a mix of modern and traditional rhythms.



**Teaming up...** Dohyun Kim (left) and Sol Lee were among students who took part in a traditional Korean doll dance





**K-pop performers... From left, standing: Jessica Ro, Maria Lee, Iris Choi, Abigail Kim and Amy Seo. Kneeling: Rina Choi (left) and Erin Choi.**

## Westlake schools mix traditions in popular Korean show

More than 1600 people turned up for a combined Westlake Boys and Girls High Schools Korean Night early this month.

The evening included a stirring haka to open proceedings, a traditional Korean

couple dance performed by junior students, taekwondo, samulnori (folk music), mask dancing, and fan dancing showing off the Hanbok, traditional Korean dress.

The cultural evening, first held in 2009,

has become an annual event. The school is donating just over \$2000 from it to Lifeline.

About 180 Korean students attend each of the schools, drawn from the North Shore's sizeable Korean community.



**Fusion... A compelling haka opened the evening at the Westlake Boys High School auditorium**

# What's for Dinner IN TAKAPUNA?



**Bird on a Wire**  
1/40 Hurstmere Rd



**Madam Woo**  
486 Lake Rd



**Nanam**  
178 Hurstmere Rd



**Regatta Bar & Eatery**  
Main Beach, The Strand



**Tok Tok**  
129 Hurstmere Rd



**Tokyo Bay**  
Main Beach, The Strand



**Dante's Pizzeria**  
2/40 Hurstmere Rd



**The Burger Bach**  
1-7 The Strand



**The Elephant Wrestler**  
138 Hurstmere Rd



**Big Tikka**  
458 Lake Rd



**My Fried Chicken**  
4/40 Hurstmere Rd



**SmokePit & Buoy**  
The Spencer - 9/17 Byron Ave



**Flying Horse Takapuna**  
477 Lake Rd



**Winner Winner**  
16 Anzac St



**Sam's Mediterranean Eatery**  
86 Hurstmere Rd



**Burger Burger**  
7/40 Hurstmere Rd

For more inspiration, visit: [ILOVETAKAPUNA.CO.NZ](http://ILOVETAKAPUNA.CO.NZ)

# Changes suggested for Takapuna Anzac Parade

The route and timing of Takapuna's Anzac Day commemorations could be in for a shake-up.

Suggested changes to the annual event have arisen amid moves to determine a new site for the Takapuna war memorial in the new town square, and have been raised in an Auckland Council report and discussion following a scaled-back commemoration this year.

Parades have traditionally been held at 9.30am in Takapuna and 10am in Devonport but the Devonport RSA has suggested to the council's civic events team that this be reviewed to better allow participation in both events.

The suggestion was included in a report to the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board this month, prompting plenty of debate.

Board member Jan O'Connor backed better separating the parades, suggesting start times of 9am and 10.30am.

But when the workshop discussed parade routes she was firmly against any change from the traditional route from the corner of Sanders Ave and Lake Rd to the civic centre.

A total of \$48,300 has been set aside for both Takapuna and Devonport parades next year, compared with this year's reduced budget of \$13,250, which was underspent by \$5587.

Traffic management costs are a big part of the expense of staging parades, with around \$14,000 set aside for Takapuna next year.

Board members expressed concern at the costs and wanted a breakdown.

A shift was mooted by Toni van Tonder to take the parade down the upgraded Hurstmere Rd.

Local-board staff suggested possibly beginning a shorter parade from the war memorial gates at Takapuna Primary School, as a way to reduce steep transport management-plan (TMP) costs.

## Call to mark animals' wartime sacrifice

Devonport RSA says a special Purple Poppy Day service recognising animals in war and an enhanced Remembrance Day should be added to a joint calendar of commemorations it plans with Auckland Council and the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

RSA president Muzz Kennett added the suggestions to his feedback on Anzac commemorations this year.

The ideas were put before the board in a report by council staff, with civic-events organiser Genevieve Abrahams saying the RSA hoped for board support. She noted that while there was no budget allocated for extra events the team had asked for more detail of the proposals.

Board chair Ruth Jackson said there

was a growing trend to recognise the war-time role of animals internationally, which had led to Purple Poppy Day on 24 February. The animals ranged from carrier pigeons, to rescue dogs and donkeys which carried the wounded to the horses used in cavalry combat but shot or sold off because they could not be brought home.

The RSA's suggestion was that the animal service be a small one on Windsor Reserve, Devonport, in February. While for Remembrance Day – which falls on 11 November and marks the armistice that ended World War I – a larger commemoration at the Devonport war memorial was suggested for the Sunday prior to the day itself.

"That's the Devonport RSA," said board chair Ruth Jackson.

Bennett replied: "We need local people on the ground to help and to end up with a parade they are proud of."

Since the Takapuna RSA folded in 2014, the Devonport branch, which now covers the wider area, has partnered with the council and local board in delivering Anzac Day commemorations in both town centres.

O'Connor said the Takapuna parade had always been a community-based parade, while the Devonport parade was RSA driven.

Devonport RSA president Muzz Kennett said it was limited in what it could do in Takapuna due to the time clash, but was happy to help provide speakers. It was keen to keep collaborating with the board and council, rather than shouldering extra organising duties.

## Senior citizens forgotten in parking plan – Grey Power

Auckland Transport has forgotten its older users in its draft parking plan, North Shore Grey Power says.

Shopping zones in Takapuna, Milford and Sunnynook could lose streetside parking in the latest Auckland Transport (AT) plans to streamline the city's roads. As well as designated town centres, areas around the Northern Busway stations are also set for "proactive parking management", and charges for parking at park-and-ride stations are in the works, including Akoranga, Smales Farm and Sunnynook.

In its submission on the draft parking plan, Grey Power said the plan had a bias towards the younger demographic and "completely overlooks" the specific needs of the city's seniors.

"Seniors cannot ride bikes or e-scooters as a prime means of personal transport, and

cannot walk extended distances – for many a hundred metres is a stretch.

"They are major users of public transport already, but lack of connectivity, destinations not adequately served by public transport, and personal mobility difficulties make the use of cars essential and a social necessity."

Seniors' impact on traffic flow was negligible, Grey Power said. "Their vehicles tend to be small compacts, travelling at low speeds, used outside main commuter periods."

Seniors needed to be recognised as a major demographic and the plan overhauled to recognise that, Grey Power said.

The group provided a forecast for the growing number of seniors over the next 25 years. By 2043, seniors are expected to make up 18.6 per cent of Auckland's population.

"The expanding number of seniors in the

city must be programmed into the overall forecasts of the Draft Parking Strategy."

For shoppers going into Takapuna's Toka Puia car park, an option could be a shuttle running from there to the town centre, Grey Power said.

At Devonport, the ferry terminal is a special situation where free dedicated senior parking – allowing time for a visit to the CBD – must be included in the parking mix.

The group also called for free parking concessions for Super Gold cardholders in parking buildings and council street parking.

"Our needs are specific and real, very simple to put in place, and of minimal cost."

The parking strategy is set to come to local boards for feedback before being finalised later this year.

It is separate from the Takapuna Safe Speeds town centre project also underway.

# PUANGA MATARIKI CELEBRATIONS

DEVONPORT VILLAGE  
SATURDAY 25 JUNE  
11:00AM - 7:30PM  
LANTERN HĪKOI 5:30PM



**FREE EVENT!**

FAMILY FUN • ACTIVITIES • STORYTELLING • LANTERNS • KAPA HAKA • ART • MOVIES

#### MATARIKI TE WHARE - LANTERN MAKING

11:00am - 5:00pm

Make a lantern with the help of our tutors. It can be as big or small as you like, so long as it still fits out the door! Then join the LANTERN HĪKOI later in the day at 5:30pm to show off your masterpiece..

#### WAIPUNARANGI THE VIC CINEMA - MATARIKI ON SCREEN

11:00am - 5:00pm

Playing throughout the day What is Matariki?, Marcus Winter The Stars of Matariki in Sand & Miss Nicky Says The Matariki 9 Star Song. Pop in any time!

#### URURANGI FERRY TERMINAL KAPA HAKA PERFORMANCES

Belmont Intermediate Kapa Haka 11:00am  
Kaiako Māori Kapa Haka 12:30pm  
Whānau Rōpu Kapa Haka 2:00pm

#### HIWA-I-TE-RANGI DEVONPORT LIBRARY STORYTELLING SESSIONS

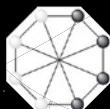
11:00am & 3:30pm

Bring your tamariki to our Puanga Matariki story times.

#### DEVONPORT LIBRARY - BOARDGAMES

11:00am - 4:00pm

Learn to play Mū Tōrere, a Māori board game. Loads of fun & easy to learn. Make your own set!



#### TUPUĀNUKU DEVONPORT COMMUNITY HOUSE HĀNGI COOKING

11:00am - 5:00pm

Come and be part of the team. How good are you at peeling veges? Help our cooks prepare a modern hāngi. No digging, but still lots of peeling! There'll also be fried bread on the go.

#### PŌHUTUKAWA DEPOT ARTSPACE - ART EXHIBITION

Matariki Tuhono ki te Talao

11:00am - 5:00pm

Multi-disciplinary ringatōi (artists) engage with te talao and Te Ao Māori through raranga/weaving, whakairo/carved objects, paintings and more.

Part of the Indigenous Ecology and Arts Wānanga, co-curated by Natawhira Te Pona, this exhibition looks to Māori conceptualisations of time, being guided by subtle changes and patterns in the environment. Puanga and Matariki appearing in the early winter skies signal a shift in the seasons; traditionally prompting harvests, hakari (feasts), kai preservation, and crop planting.

4:00pm Exhibition closing ceremony with live music, performance, hāngi and refreshments. All welcome.

#### DEPOT ARTSPACE - RARANGA/WEAVING

1:00pm - 4:00pm

Open raranga wānanga with exhibiting artist Kathryn Isla Middleton. Drop in for a relaxed session to observe the weaving process or join in and add to an ever-growing stunning artwork.



#### WAITĀ, WAITĪ & TUPUĀRANGI FACEPAINTING

11:00am - 5:00pm

Can you find our 3 facepainters somewhere in the village? Look out for Waitā, Waitī & Tupuā-rangi on your journey around the stars. Choose from many wonderful designs. Put on your best Matariki face for the LANTERN HĪKOI.

#### LANTERN HĪKOI 5:30PM

Meet outside the Library at 5pm, ready to leave at 5:30pm with your lantern lighting your path as we make our way together to the summit of Takarunga Mt Victoria.

This magnificent spectacle is truly magical to be a part of. Enjoy waiaha and haka at the summit while gazing at the night sky before descending back down to the village.

#### LIGHT THE NIGHT 6:30PM

For the first time ever on Victoria Rd, a breathtaking Puanga Matariki lighting display will appear out of the darkness.

Enjoy a walk down the street, seeing our heritage buildings as you've never seen them before. Come back for more! You can enjoy our Puanga Matariki lights every night until Sunday July 10th.



## Council lambasted over widespread tree losses

Living next to a large terrace-housing development on a clear-felled site in Milford, Steve Aschebrock said he was struck by "council hypocrisy" when reading a story in a recent Observer about its need to increase tree coverage.

The same issue (27 May) also reported that the Milford Villas development that his Gordon Ave home backs onto was under way.

Aschebrock knew this already – having seen large puriri, nikau and kowhai cut down on the site on back sections off East Coast Rd – but what vexed him was reading that council officers considered the development would have a less than minor impact on neighbours.

"What's the definition of less than minor and who determines that? And why aren't the neighbours contacted, and why is the council hiding behind non-notified consents?" he asks.

Adding to the keen gardener's frustration is Auckland Council's proposed targeted rate to mitigate climate change, including by tree planting, while it oversees developments that are removing trees.

"Why don't they just stop chopping down

trees?" Aschebrock said to the Observer.

"I would have thought mature natives would have been relocated if the council was serious about tree coverage. If biodiversity is also sought, well that was truly killed by this development – the local morepork is silent, the three frequenting keruru are no longer and the tui are very quiet."

Watching scores of heavy trucks travel local roads to strip topsoil and then bring in aggregate was appalling, he said. "I would have thought under carbon reduction that we would have seen a part of the site left for topsoil that would have been spread back later."

Suburbs were being badly impacted already and he did not consider moves to allow further housing intensification in them would provide good liveable solutions.

The Auckland Unitary Plan had a focus on intensification around town centres, but as he had found, this had spread out. Apartments near transport made sense, he said, but suburban shoe-boxes did not.

Aschebrock said when he learned about the two-storey 32-dwelling development this

year he spoke with council staff but was told he could not submit. The Milford Residents Association separately raised concerns about the "very cramped" nature of the site plan, suggesting six dwellings be removed for more open space and better parking and rubbish collection areas. Planners required one dwelling to be removed for some minor reconfiguration.

A shared rubbish storage area and limited parking concern Aschebrock.

Traffic will get busier around Stanley Ave, he predicts. Having lived in his home with his wife and now adult son for 18 years he loves the area and is happy to share it with newcomers – in moderation.

He thinks the council should stick up more for its ratepayers, who chose the suburbs partly for their leafy charms.

With a neighbour having died recently, he would not be surprised to see another nearby property sold and cleared for development – and of its trees.

The cumulative effect on the suburbs should be of concern to Aucklanders who valued the tree canopy, he said.

## Community garden may have home

A temporary garden and community space could be set to move in next to Takapuna's Toka Puia car park, says community development agency Eke Panuku, which owns the land.

Earlier this year, a community garden was set up in a vacant lot on Anzac Ave, next to the Sargeson Apartments. Local resident Andrew McKenzie, who had also worked on the Forrest Hill Community Garden which officially launched last month, said he had tried to get official approval to use the Anzac St site, but no mechanism was in place to allow for it.

The group was now working with Eke Panuku on another site. "I think with all the apartments going in and the loss of backyards and people to have that option, there's huge demand for that now. Within two weeks of doing things [at Anzac Ave] we had 30 people interested in being part of it."

He did not want to confirm the location of the temporary site on their radar, prior to its confirmation, but said the group was also continuing to search for a permanent site.

A spokeswoman for Eke Panuku told the Observer, however, that the site at 14 Huron St was being considered for various community activities. It is tagged for future development. Panuku said a group of locals had expressed interest in its potential use, with one other idea being photography exhibitions.

The site is not due to go to the market this year as the company is currently finalising its development strategy.

"We are very supportive of community-led placemaking initiatives and would be happy to support some temporary planter boxes where edible plants can be grown as part of a wider range of activations on this site," the spokesperson said.

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# Westlake runners make their mark at nationals



**Rewarding slog... Alfie Steedman (right) shows the way for Westlake Boys at the secondary schools cross-country nationals in Nelson last weekend, coming home with an individual gold medal and two team ones**

The high school's strong running programme is reaping rich rewards with a large contingent of boys competing successfully

Westlake Boys' runners Alfie Steedman and Cameron Maunder claimed gold and bronze individual medals at the national crosscountry champs in Nelson last weekend.

And the school placed first or second in all of the boys' teams events: Year 9, junior and senior.

Steedman, aged 15, won an individual gold and was also part of the winning junior three-person and six-person teams. His individual race time was 12:28 over 4000m – 10 seconds ahead of the next competitor. Max Tuttle and Jamie Maunder came fifth and ninth, respectively, in a field of more than 100 runners.

Senior Cameron Maunder – named in the New Zealand Secondary Schools Athletics Association team to travel to Australia in late August – picked up an individual bronze. Nick Davies, Etienne Calonne, Jett Curteis, Roman Matson and Harrison Loretz joined him on combined scores to take the senior team gold medal, with the school runner-up in the three-person team event.

Coach Theuns Strydom said the seniors were a "very, very young" group, with only two Year 13s. Westlake had dominated the senior competition for the past six years, and this was set to continue.

Westlake runners also made up the North



**Team leader... Coach Theuns Strydom (left), seen being interviewed, won an award for his dedication to distance running**

Harbour relay side which won the senior regional title.

The school took a 42-strong squad south – the largest contingent from around the country – underlining the depth of its year-round running programme which involves up to 130 boys. Seventeen of the 50-odd students in the competitive side of the programme who qualified to get to nationals were from Year 9. Their six-person team won gold and the three-person team was runner-up. Individually, Leo Wright was ninth, with

several other young Westlake boys just outside the top 10.

Strydom was surprised to be presented with a Caltex NZ Good Sorts Award at the event – for his dedication to distance running. He has built up the Westlake programme since 2005 and runs the school's learning support centre.

"For me it's about the boys, I get emotional about them getting the success."

Winning was also a motivation to get them out of bed for training in the mornings, he said.



**On the charge... Rangitoto lock Tristyn Cook leads from the front as Westlake 1st XV captain**

## Season shaping up nicely, after top-of-table win

Westlake's 1st XV cemented its position at the top of the Harbour Rugby schools table after knocking over Manurewa, the only other previously unbeaten team, 39-0 last weekend.

This year, the 1st XV competition includes one full round and one split round of five games before the playoffs. Westlake tops the table after its dominant win at home took it to seven wins from seven matches.

"What we looked to do was set-piece domination in terms of our scrums and line-outs," said the team's forwards coach Rob Mildenhall. "We looked to play territory, because they are a massive team, so stopping big bodies close to your line is very, very difficult. The boys executed very well."

"Our team may be smaller, but they're fit, they're strong, and we look to move teams around the park."

Mildenhall said Westlake had a young team this year, and players were learning a lot. "On Saturday they played their best game of the season."

But Covid-19 and illness still presented a challenge, he said. "We've really had to dig deep in terms of our depth. You often rock up to training and all of a sudden we've got another two or three boys out for the weekend, and we've just got to be able to adjust to that."



**Two-on-one... Flanker Jay Dunne tries to step Manurewa's defenders**

Mildenhall said there were a number of players to watch this season, including captain and lock Tristyn Cook, who was a rare talent. Lock Jack Lee, halfback Taiga Kato and first five-eighth Blake Lidgard were also standouts.

Harbour Rugby has already selected a provisional representative group of about 60 athletes for its under-18 emerging players development camp, with 20-odd of those

being Westlake boys. The group will be narrowed down as the end of the season gets closer.

Westlake was to play Rangitoto College away this Friday 24 June, followed by Rosmini College at home on Saturday 2 July. Although the team is in a good position, Mildenhall expected the boys to continue to learn and to be able to execute their skills under pressure.



## Shore schools shine at Big Sing

**Choralation, the combined Westlake schools choir (above), was named as giving the best recital by a mixed-voice choir at the Big Sing gala concert at Auckland Town Hall last week. Westlake Boys' Voicemale choir won best male recital and Westlake Girls' Canatare the best recital among female secondary choirs from the region.**

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## Brass bands lay on showcase

Music fans are in for a treat when North Shore Brass stages a community concert in Takapuna next month, in preparation for the national brass band championships in which its bands have a strong track record.

The Concert Prelude programme on Sunday 10 July will feature four brass bands tuning up to compete in Wellington the following week.

Audience members will get a taste of their repertoire in a wide-ranging programme, including some fun elements.

The afternoon culminates under the baton of Harmen Vanhoorne, conducting the premier North Shore Brass band – Auckland champions. It will compete at nationals in the A-grade section.

Other bands include a youth-section entry, which combines North Shore and city players, under the banner of Auckland Brass Bandits. Josh Rogan, sub-principal trumpet with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, has been training them for several months.

The up-and-coming North Shore Brass Academy Band, under Andrew Leech, will perform ahead of its second outing at nationals, in the D-grade.

And local teacher Mark Close will lead Auckland City Brass, which is competing in the B-grade.

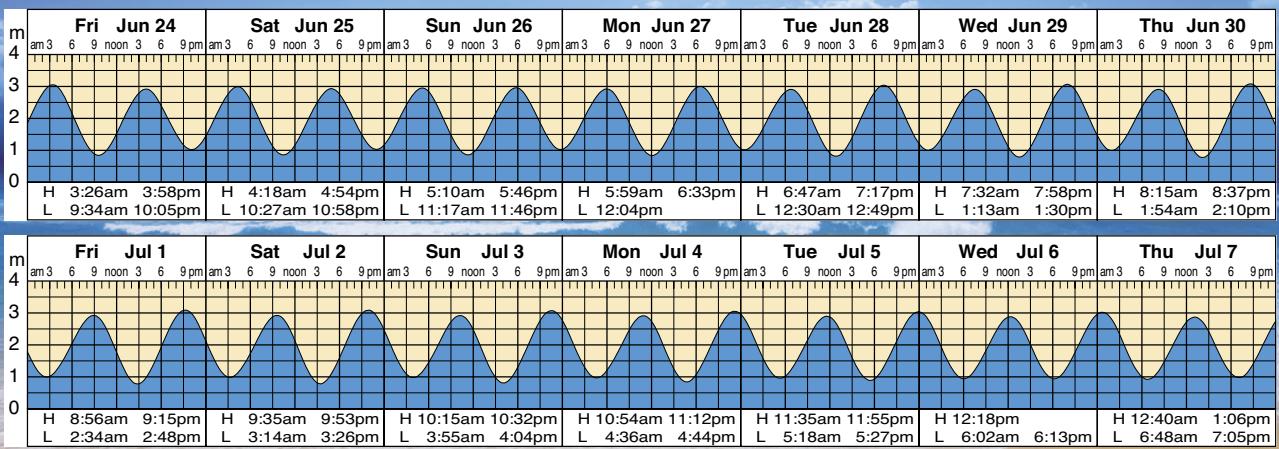
• North Shore Brass at Westlake Girls High School's event centre, 2pm-5pm, on 10 July. Door sales only, tickets \$20, with students free.



**Competition-ready... Conductor  
Harmen Vanhoorne and (below)  
the North Shore Brass Academy  
Band**



## Milford / Takapuna Tides





## Artist's WoW entry staying secret until big reveal

Takapuna artist Oliver Cain is keeping his latest innovative project – an entry in the World of Wearable Art awards show – firmly under wraps.

He is counting down to its unveiling at the big stage spectacular in Wellington in September.

Just getting his “dress” to the internationally recognised event will be a mission, requiring a 2m wooden crate for safe transportation.

No fabric is involved in the entry, he says, which instead draws on his skills in ceramics. But just how is yet to be revealed.

“The idea is the dress will look like it’s made from ceramics, but it’s not actually ceramic,” he teases.

The 2022 event will feature the work of 100 designers from 20 countries. Cain’s entry was selected for the WoW awards show last year, but Covid forced its postponement.

“It was my first time entering and first time I’ll be going to WoW,” Cain, aged 26, explains.

The crowd-pulling show is staged over three weeks and has a prize pool of \$185,000.

The multi-talented visual arts graduate of Unitec and 2021 AIMES award recipient says entering competitions and awards is part of raising his profile and trying new things.

And any money he wins comes in handy. As a developing artist, he supplements his income by doing shifts at a Takapuna barber shop.

“Most of the money I make goes into a big pot for art to keep everything going.”

As part of his art practice he has a cheeky sculptured line of ceramic gnomes and strategically positioned bananas. Describing his work as having a “queer aesthetic”, he also fashions ceramic eggplants – the emoji of the fruit having become a sexual symbol online.

This year, he turned his hand to painting a fibreglass whale tail for the Whale Tail Trail across Auckland. His work, sited at Westhaven, was purchased at the fundraising auction for WWF and has been moved to Raglan by the



**Crate expectations... Oliver Cain, pictured in his home studio, will send his WoW entry to Wellington in a wooden box.**

couple who bought it. His sister, Esther, also came up with a whale tail which was on show in Devonport earlier this year.

The siblings were born in England but immigrated with their parents to New Zealand. Oliver finished high school at Takapuna Grammar School, where he says he “did all the arts classes I could”. He spent a few years in England before returning to Auckland for tertiary study.

Cain shares space in the home garage turned studio and kiln with his father’s projects. This is where he worked on the WoW entry for several months, wondering if it was feasible.

“I had a bit of time for it with Covid,” he says.

Fashioning it stretched his abilities. “Dad is very engineering minded and he was able to help me. It was a cool to have this journey going on in the background.”

Cain estimates he spent more than \$2000 on the entry. He would love to recoup costs by gaining an award in the several categories he will be judged in. These include the monotone category, but he also qualifies for consideration as a first-time entrant and a student.

“The family is all super-excited and have booked tickets. We are all going down.” Cain looks forward to attending special designer days and meeting other entrants during a planned week-long stay in Wellington.

Transport costs to get the giant box containing his outfit safely south are luckily being met by show sponsor Mainfreight.

“It’s the most expensive dress I own – the only one,” he laughs.

He won’t be trying it on though, saying it only suits being modelled on a runway. “I’m quite excited to see it.”

## Soprano wins local aria prize

A North Shore arts institution celebrated its 20th anniversary this month by naming a new winner of the Becroft Aria.

After competition at the PumpHouse, Dunedin soprano Olivia Pike received her \$3000 prize from local arts philanthropist Genevieve Becroft.

The competition, organised by the North Shore Performing Arts Society, dates back to 1954, with the Becroft family sponsorship starting in 2002, adding to its status as a prize for up-and-coming singers.

Although the New Zealand Aria competition is undoubtedly the country’s most prized, the Becroft Aria draws strong contenders, says its convenor Bruce Farrell, who also chairs the society. “It’s one of the most lucrative competitions in the country, barring the New Zealand Aria,” he says.

Second and third placegetters also win cash prizes in the contest, which local volunteers help stage.

Society’s vice-president Alan Reekie has been involved for 35 to 40 years, with his efforts in championing the arts winning him a QSO honour last year.

Eighteen hopefuls contested the prize this year, with the field narrowed to eight who had to sing two pieces each before the judge, Kristin Darragh, a mezzo soprano who teaches at the University of Waikato and was herself a previous finalist. Winner Pike’s repertoire included a Puccini aria.

London-based opera singer Jonathan Lemalu was once a finalist in the contest and opera great Kiri Te Kanawa was pipped at the post in her developing years by another standout future Dame, Malvina Major.



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