

The Rangitoto Observer

Takapuna, Milford, Castor Bay, Forrest Hill and Sunnynook

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**Pupuke Golf Club snares
national awards... p3**

**Locals give up fight against
Amaia upsizing... p8**

**Top school sports stars
revealed... p 10-11**

Former library for sale after three-year delay

The former Takapuna library building at 2 The Strand is finally on the market, three years after a divisive Devonport-Takapuna Local Board decision to sell it.

Occupying a prime 486sqm freehold site, the two-storey 1950s building has a Heritage B listing, meaning elements of it will need to

be retained in any future development.

It has stood vacant since 2018, having been deemed an earthquake risk.

Money from its sale will be returned for local use in the former Takapuna Borough Council area, council property arm Eke Pānuku has confirmed.

“We’re staring down the barrel of needing to recycle assets,” local-board chair Toni van Tonder told the Observer. “The fact this has taken so long shows we’ve got a journey on our hands.”

The run down Mary Thomas Centre on
To page 2

Blood brothers cut a dash

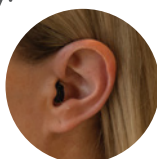


Frightful... The Jefferson brothers, Spencer (6) and Harvey (4), from Milford, relish playing bloody ninjas at the popular Bayswater Halloween Trail. Pictures, page 12-13.

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Briefs

Garden gone

A temporary community garden set up on a vacant council site on Huron St, next to the Toka Puia carpark, is moving on. The site was provided by Auckland Council property arm Eke Panuku to community members led by Andrew McKenzie who hope in time to gain a lease on a permanent site. Ideas for this include Auburn Reserve or at Anzac St, where a guerrilla garden was set up on a vacant section several years ago. The parties agreed it was time to wind up the trial garden, as the shaded site did not attract much wider interest. Planter boxes have been removed, as have art works from a pop-up exhibition. Containers used for storage will remain in the short-term.

Bridge blocks boats

The pedestrian bridge across Wairau Estuary from Milford Reserve to Inga Rd was stuck in the down position for two days last week, forcing the Milford Boating Club to warn members that taking masted craft out to sea was not possible. The bridge is usually upright, allowing vessels to come and go from the marina, except when pedestrians activate a button to lower it. Auckland Council told the Observer it was notified on Wednesday that the bridge was out of action. The cause was a broken variable speed drive, with the part replaced and the bridge working again on Friday 3 November.

Tree limb felled railing

Railing at the entrance to the Patuone Walkway from Auburn Reserve was damaged when a large branch fell onto it, but the walkway remains open and safe to use. Auckland Council is assessing the cost and time frame for a repair.

Library building a 'unique blank canvas'

From page 1

Gibbons Rd will also be put on the market in due course, likely as a site for apartment development.

Community group tenants have been moved into nearby offices in the Community Services Building next to Takapuna Library, with the exception of North Shore Budget Service which remains downstairs and is looking for a new home.

Auckland Council budget pressures which have cut local board funds have prompted the local board to look at further asset sales. But it was told recently by Eke Panuku that the processes required between a decision to sell and any returns being available could take two to four years.

Of four other properties approved for sale along with the former library under the council's Covid Emergency Budget triggered in 2020, only one sale has been completed.

This was the former Devonport Borough Council building, which fetched \$2 million which went into general council coffers.

A strip of land behind Lake Rd shops on Blomfield Spa, Takapuna, has just gone on the open market having first been offered to mana whenua. A section set aside for roading at 2 Forrest Hill Rd but not needed is now being prepared for sale after public consultation.

Eke Panuku told the Observer another surplus corridor of land at 24R Linwood Ave, leading between homes to Linwood Reserve, Forrest Hill, was going through a reserve revocation process, with no set timeline.

The proceeds from these remaining sales would be returned to the council, not tagged for local use, unlike the old library which was an endowment for the area.

The library property is being marketed by Bayleys which says the building of about 583sqm, with a roof deck, is a "unique blank canvas" with an excellent frontage. Its zoning allows a range of retail, hospitality, office

and accommodation uses. Bayleys described the building as a sought-after refurbishment opportunity and said demand was high in a transforming Takapuna for A-grade commercial tenancies, with several recently completed local developments having been let at record rental rates.

Van Tonder said trying to come up with solutions to deal with funding shortfalls was challenging, and these would worsen with a looming council move to equity funding, which would reduce allocations to asset-rich areas such as the North Shore.

The board needed to ensure it had the money to maintain well-used assets, which was why it was reviewing its asset portfolio to get a better overall picture of the more than 100 leases it held.

The facade and staircase of 2 The Strand are believed to be heritage elements that will have to be protected in any development.

An Eke Panuku spokesperson said a 2010 conservation plan prepared for North Shore City Council outlined special features in the building. "It mentions the stairwell inside and the facade." However, the plan was not a regulatory document, said the spokesperson, so the purchaser would need to work with council's regulatory team to determine what could be done with the building.

The next big decision the local board must make is on the future of the current library. It hopes to hear back from Eke Panuku before Christmas with an initial opinion on the feasibility of adding another level to the building to group all community facilities on one site.

Building a combined library and community hub on Waiwharariki Anzac Square is another option, but money for this from the council seems unlikely. But proceeds from the sale of the Mary Thomas Centre could be deployed for this, or another local project.

The idea of a targeted rate to help the board fund a hub was not favoured by residents asked as part of Local Board Plan feedback.

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Go-ahead Pupuke Golf Club wins top national awards

A local golf club has been recognised for its ability to engage with the golfing and wider community with two accolades at the National Golf Awards.

Pupuke Golf Club was presented with the Club of the Year and Event of the Year awards at a ceremony last month.

General manager Matt Owen told the Observer that after a tough year of rain it felt "very satisfying" for the club to be recognised for its achievements.

Club of the year is given to the club that shows an outstanding record of achievement encompassing membership, customer service, marketing, and community relevance.

Among other initiatives, the club partnered with the Centennial Park Bush Society to identify parts of the course which could be utilised in more environmentally friendly ways.

More than 5000 native plants and trees have been planted across the course, with the aim of not only improving the aesthetics of the course but to encourage more native birds to visit, Owen said.

The club has also attracted new players to the sport, especially women, with its 'chip and sip nights' which aim to make learning the sport enjoyable. Over an eight-week programme, beginners can learn the basics and enjoy a drink afterwards.

Golf operations and marketing manager Daniele Lowe said 220 women regularly attend the evenings.

Part of the club's long-term membership plan is attracting younger members and it's made an effort to do so by partnering with eight local schools to offer free lessons.

The initiative has been very successful, with the club's junior membership growing from 50 two and a half years ago to 115 today, Lowe said.

The club has also engaged more with its Asian membership by introducing a role on its board for a person from the Asian



Winning combination... (from left) Pupuke Golf Club head professional Andy Ivermee, general manager Matthew Owen and head of golf operations and marketing Daniele Lowe

community, to communicate happenings with members of Asian descent – who make up more than a third of the club's total membership.

This has allowed the members to be more engaged with what's happening at the club and make suggestions about what it can do to make them feel better represented.

The club now has more Korean food options on the clubhouse menu and has started a 'Kowi' (Korean Kiwi) social tournament.

The club's 'Flat Day Out' won the event of the year, which is presented to a

club which delivers a memorable event or activity.

Pupuke's Flat Day Out brings together golfers and non-golfers of all skill levels for a social game with a live DJ, food truck and groups playing music out of their own portable speakers.

Lowe said the event is targeted at the 19-32-year-old demographic to show the fun, social elements of the club.

"We want to show off our social side. You don't have to play golf to be a member here."

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Drainage upgrade coming for problem intersection

The flood-prone main intersection at Castor Bay is in for some attention from Watercare, with pipe upgrades now on its works schedule.

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board chair Toni van Tonder gave the news to the Castor Bay Ratepayers and Residents Association (Cabrra) annual meeting last week, saying she had just heard that stormwater-network improvements had been given the go-ahead.

Watercare planned to appoint a design consultant within the next few months and target construction for early 2025, though it might be able to move this forward.

Planned work will not solve all the area's issues – underlined last summer when the intersection of Beach Rd, The Esplanade and Castor Bay Rd was impassable – but it will reduce the frequency of road and property flooding.

Van Tonder said Watercare had told her that upgrades to critical infrastructure in poor condition would give protection up to about one-in-five-year rainfall events.

“Due to the very flat grades from there to the sea there is little opportunity to completely remove flooding through infrastructure provision,” a memo from Watercare said.

A single box culvert of 2000x1500mm would replace a twin-pipe configuration.

Watercare said the project would min-

imise health and safety risks by reducing road ponding and flooding.

It would also support growth in the area of about two hectares near the proposed pipe upgrades, where intensification is occurring.

Van Tonder was unable to give definite answers on other local infrastructure issues raised at the meeting at Kennedy Park's Observation Post, which was attended by around 40 people.

Auckland Council staff were still undecided on the rebuild of steps from Kennedy Park down to the sea, she said.

A geotechnical assessment was awaited, after the lower part of the stairs were washed away this year.

Because this had happened before, replacement could not be guaranteed.

New stairs at Snells Beach had just recently been destroyed in a storm, she said, which illustrated the difficulties council was facing with coastal assets, severe weather events and climate change.

Requests were made from the floor for handrails at the stairs at the northern end of Castor Bay and another disabled car park by the beach, along with a reminder about the narrowness and steepness of existing steps.

Cabrra's re-elected chair, Hamish Anderson, said: “Improved beach access is really important. It's one the association has been pushing.”

New stairs were also wanted near the shower above the beach.

Van Tonder indicated that handrails could be looked at for existing steps as an interim measure.

Other priorities for Anderson are Cabrra's campaign for the World War II military installations at Kennedy Park to be maintained, after many years of neglect, and for fewer black flags to be raised about beach water quality due to stormwater issues.

He was heartened some progress had been made with board support on Kennedy Park, but decisions were yet to be come.

Van Tonder said quotes for restoring the barracks house at 139 Beach Rd looked likely to come in lower than initially expected.

Despite tight budgets, she said the local board's role was “like influencers” to advocate with council.

This term's board had more members from the north of its area, including Mel Powell, who was at the meeting, and George Wood, who had long kept a close eye on local matters.

“They get the area,” she said.

North Shore ward Auckland Councillor Chris Darby also attended and with van Tonder was quizzed about Mayor Wayne Brown's local board amalgamation plans. Both said the benefits of change needed to be established.

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Hopes of track deal dwindle as meeting looms

Chances of a deal being struck over access to the Takapuna to Milford coastal track look slim ahead of an Auckland Council committee meeting on the issue at the end of the month.

Alex Witten-Hannah, lawyer for beneficiaries of the Firth estate – who want a heritage listing on a dilapidated cottage on valuable land lifted so it can be sold – says no one from council has approached him to talk terms. This was despite Mayor Wayne Brown instructing CEO Phil Wilson to deal with the matter after council received a petition from the Takapuna Residents Association signed by 7500 people calling for track access to be guaranteed.

“He said ‘fix it’, but it’s not fixed.”

Witten-Hannah is adamant the heritage listing needs to go, which he says would clear the way to settling rates arrears on the property, which the public has crossed since a council-built bridge washed out in 2011.

He has this month written to the mayor saying if the heritage listing is lifted beneficiaries are willing to gift up to a two-metre-wide path through the property to guarantee track access.

The offer improves on an earlier offer of 1.5m, which council staff reported was less than the minimum 1.8m required for a track. They maintain the proposed easement was



No talks... Lawyer Alex Witten-Hannah says the council hasn't been in touch to discuss terms for a potential deal

across rocks at the coastal edge of the property, not where the existing track traverses the land higher up.

Council officials say it is for councillors to decide whether to negotiate, but Devonport-Takapuna Local Board members have told staff they want more effort made to resolve the situation which has seen access to the track blocked by a fence at the Firth property since 29 September.

They say the board has been left out of

the loop and wants more clarity about the dispute when the matter comes before council's planning committee on 30 November.

Witten-Hannah said he was happy to discuss with council where a gifted path might go. “It could be on the existing track.”

If a deal was done, the fence could be removed in 24 hours.

He has been told by council that its heritage team estimates a cost of around \$40,000 for the council to lift the heritage order, but that a heritage expert would have to determine that the rationale for it no longer applies. Initiating a private plan change would cost upwards of \$60,000.

North Shore ward councillor Richard Hills, who chairs the planning committee, said access issues were complex and dated back many years. Precedents and climate change needed to be considered for an informal track that crosses 71 other private properties.

The local board resolved last month to tell the committee of its strong desire to see public track access maintained and to request it to investigate options for formalising access across its Takapuna-to-Milford length.

The board also asked staff to explore with Te Araroa Trust and the Outdoor Access Commission what support they might be able to provide to the track, which is part of the national Te Araroa Trail.

Letters to the Editor

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Email to
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Letter

Firth property could offer even more

Those who've walked the coastal track know it highlights a natural experience which is unique to Auckland.

The land in dispute might attract millions from a rich-lister, but would add much more to our city if developed by the council in keeping with the rest of the track.

How about more seating in volcanic stone

– like the giant's chair, but with room for groups – to provide a special resting point along this unique trail?

I'm reminded of Cornwall's famous Minack amphitheatre, built by hand but now showcasing performances-by-the-sea to over 200,000 visitors a year.

Greg Waite

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It was our great pleasure to announce the winners of our recent People's Choice Awards, where members of the community were given the opportunity to cast their votes for their favourite places to eat and drink in Takapuna. We had a record number of votes this year, with almost every hospitality business being voted for.

Thank you to all of those in the community that took the time to vote! We can't wait to bring it back next October and do it all again.



BEST CAFÉ:

- Runner Up (3) – Takapuna Beach Café
- Runner Up (2) – JAM Café

WINNER: HONEY CAFÉ



BEST RESTAURANT:

- Runner Up (3) – Nanam
- Runner Up (2) – Tokyo Bay

WINNER: TOK TOK



BEST TAKEAWAY:

- Runner Up (3) – Burger Fuel
- Runner Up (2) – DoDo Sushi

WINNER: FLYING HORSE TAKEAWAY



BEST DRINKS:

- Runner Up (3) – Taylors on Hurstmere
- Runner Up (2) – Gong Cha

WINNER: REGATTA BAR & EATERY



BEST SWEET TREAT:

- Runner Up (3) – Glory Patisserie
- Runner Up (2) – Domo Bakery

WINNER: DUCK ISLAND



BEST COFFEE:

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- Runner Up (2) – Takapuna Beach Cafe

WINNER: JAM CAFÉ



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Beloved Lake Rd takeaway flies off with another prize

The Flying Horse takeaway has become the first hospitality venue to claim a three-peat in the annual Taste of Takapuna People's Choice Awards.

The family-run Chinese eatery on Lake Rd was a popular winner of the best takeaway category in the awards, announced last week, which are organised by the Takapuna Beach Business Association (TBBA).

Delighted Joanna Seto – who began helping her parents in the kitchen as a child more than 20 years ago – puts the Flying Horse's success down to “just being community based and listening to customers”.

It won the same award in 2021 and 2022.

Seto took over the day-to-day running of the business from her proud parents, Joyce and Joe. “I’ve been cooking for 40 years,” Joe told the Observer. The Setos bought the business nearly two decades ago, from friends who founded it in 1977.

Regulars who love their old favourites are a big part of its success, says Joanna, but she has been quietly updating the operation, adding a delivery service and enhanced use of technology.

An electronic self-ordering screen fazes some customers, but the over-the-counter service will continue, she says. “The biggest thing will be to not change the essence of Flying Horse, just improve the customer experience,” she says.

Two other businesses clocked up consecutive wins in the awards, which were presented at a well-attended function in the Elephant Wrestler bar. Honey was named best cafe, and Regatta Bar and Eatery recognised for having best drinks, following the same success in 2022.

More than 1100 people voted in the awards, with 132 different hospitality businesses in Takapuna gaining support.

TBBA chief executive Terence Harpur says: “It’s great recognition for the fantastic food and drinks the businesses offer and the



Family affair... Joanna Seto (centre) with parents Joyce and Joe who built the Flying Horse into a winning institution. Below: Duck Island manager Kyla Diamante celebrates with a “fairy bread” cone.

range of hospitality options in Takapuna.”

Harpur says voting was up on last year and it was great to see the public support for their favourites across six categories.

The tightest competition was for best coffee, Harpur says, with 35 cafes and restaurants gaining votes and margins between top placegetters very close.

Another notable category was for best sweet treat, with the top three place-getters all newcomers to Takapuna.

The winner, Duck Island, opened its ice-cream parlour a year ago. It beat a patisserie and a bakery, both of which have only been open for a few months.

Duck Island manager Nick Gallagher spoke for many when he told the Observer a good summer would be a further boost for business.





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Residents give up battle against Amaia expansion

The final hurdle has been cleared for a plan change that will see the Amaia development on Esmonde Rd upsize to 16 storeys.

No appeals have been lodged against a hearing panel's decision to allow a massive upscaling of the development on the old Harbourside Church site.

Residents remained unhappy with the expanded plans but had little hope that the decision could be overturned.

The Takapuna Residents Association (TRA) is among 58 original submitters against the plans who have opted not to take the case further. Citing the time and resources required for an ongoing challenge, chair Steven Salt expressed disappointment that the objections it raised to the expansion hadn't been given more consideration.

These included concerns about the height and imposition on the skyline. Traffic impacts on Esmonde Rd also remained a concern, he said.

But after considering an appeal and the need to call in experts, the TRA committee decided it should focus on town-centre issues and threats to the Takapuna-Milford coastal track.

Bridget Thrussell, who lives in Spencer Tee, just across an inlet from the development site, said she felt the odds were stacked against individuals up against expert witnesses called by developers in planning hearings.

Having previously given evidence to the Independent Hearings Panel which went on

to approve developer KBS Capital's plans, she decided against paying \$600 to lodge an appeal to the Environment Court.

Thrussell told the Observer that expert witnesses took a narrow focus, but the overall impact on the community was being overlooked.

A family down the road from her, with a daughter bedridden from long Covid, was moving out soon. "She was finding the noise disturbing."

Other neighbours were unhappy, fearing as she did that their properties would be shaded in the evenings. Others were concerned about Amaia residents parking on streets off Esmonde Rd.

The hearings panel found in a decision issued two months ago that these impacts would be within acceptable parameters.

Another Hauraki resident, Steven Arthur, said awareness of the upsizing was limited, which in turn had limited opposition to it.

The traffic impacts on commuters would be felt across the wider Devonport peninsula and Takapuna areas, yet council had ensured notification of the project was limited to nearby residents, he said.

Taller buildings were appropriate in the town centre, but not at the Amaia location.

"This complex will be a landmark for all the wrong reasons."

Salt noted that even a council planner had submitted to the panel that the development should be capped at 12 storeys, which is up

from the seven storeys originally consented. New blocks added to the original plan will see more construction peaking at the centre of the site.

"There was a lot of sliding back on some of the positive community things that would come out of it, with walkways," said Salt.

Developers are still advertising the site with images of its original plans, featuring smaller buildings, a boardwalk around the base of the site and a connecting Esmonde Rd to Francis St pathway.

The boardwalk will now run around the top of the site, the developers have agreed. This reduces some environmental impacts expressed earlier by the likes of Forest and Bird which is also not further objecting.

Lack of council funds has ended any early hopes of the connecting pathway being built, to join up with the Devonport peninsula green way.

Thrussell said prospective Amaia residents were now facing a much more cramped and less permeable site.

With public funds not available to build the Francis St-Esmonde Rd connection, they would be cut off from the wider Hauraki community and easy pedestrian access to its primary school.

Since a large slip at the rear of the site after last summer's adverse weather and the development's upsizing being approved, Thrussell said she was more worried about sedimentation and stormwater issues.

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Wartime evacuation inspires novel

A local bookstore owner and author's first historical novel, 12 years in the making, uses a semi-fictional narrative to put a spotlight on a little-known episode during World War II.

Set in 1940, Olivia Spooner's *The Girl from London* follows Ruth, a young school teacher who volunteers as an escort helping to evacuate children from war-torn England to Australia and New Zealand.

On a perilous voyage, Ruth forms close bonds with Fergus, one of the children she's escorting, and Bobby, a fellow volunteer.

Chaos continues on their return voyage, when their ship is attacked and sunk by German raiders, with the surviving passengers being taken as prisoners of war.

The story is told in two timelines, one in 1940 and one in contemporary times, following Fergus's granddaughter, Hazel, going on her OE with a book from her grandfather that will reveal Ruth's story.

"The idea in my mind is that as she's crossing one way, Ruth the character in the historical story is crossing this way, so they're crossing paths and Hazel is learning about Ruth's journey as she heads to England," Spooner said.

The inspiration for the novel first came to her over a decade ago when she was browsing the shelves at Devonport Library and read of the MS Rangitane, the ship that carries the characters in her book on their ill-fated return voyage.

Reading about the history of the passenger liner and its role bringing children from the UK led to more research about those who escorted the children.

Spooner, who owns The Booklover bookstore in Milford, said she felt their stories needed to be shared.

"I just thought that's a remarkable story that I don't know many New Zealanders know."

Spooner didn't feel comfortable about her ability to do the story justice at the time, but



Slice of history... Olivia Spooner's new novel shines a light on the evacuation of children from the UK during World War II

after attaining a Masters in Creative Writing at Auckland University of Technology, and thoroughly researching the topic she began writing the novel three years ago.

Her protagonist, Ruth, is based on a combination of different escorts Spooner researched, but many real historical figures are sprinkled throughout the story as characters.

Writing has been a lifelong interest for Spooner, but one that took a back seat during her 15 years working as a pharmacist.

On deciding it was time to pursue her passions, she bought The Booklover four and a half years ago.

"I stopped working as a pharmacist, was a full-time mum for a few years and once my youngest was in primary school I had a chance to pursue a new career."

• *The Girl from London* officially launches on 14 November at The Booklover and on 15 November at Devonport Library.

Final result cuts MP's vote share but widens majority

MP Simon Watts' share of the North Shore electorate vote fell slightly, from 61.9 to 60.6 per cent, after the counting of special votes.

But his margin over the second-placed candidate, Labour's George Hampton, rose by 3230 to 16,330, well in excess of his 3734 majority over Labour's Romy Udanga in 2020 and his predecessor Maggie Barry's margin of 12,716 in 2017.

Watts received 24,892 votes and Hampton 8562 votes.

In the North Shore party vote, both National and Labour's share fell slightly from election night on 14 October, to 50.79 and 17.65 per cent respectively.

The ranking of candidates in the seat was unchanged in the final count.

Pat Baskett for the Greens was third, with 3663 votes, despite not seeming to campaign locally, coming in ahead of Act's Anna Yallop on 2061 and Top's Abe Gray with 1229.

In the party vote, the Green Party was third with 4851 votes, nudging ahead of Act (4540), which was third on election night.

NZ First (1604) and Top (1055) were the next highest vote-getters in the seat, with New Zealand Loyal (209), Te Pāti Māori (207), NewZeal (133) and Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party (111) also winning support in three figures.

In Te Tai Tokerau, the Māori seat covering North Shore, sitting Labour MP and deputy party leader Kelvin Davis had his election-night majority of 487 flipped by Te Pāti Māori's Mariameno Kapa-Kingi, who took the seat by 517 votes.

Davis, who had held the seat since 2014, will stay in Parliament as a list MP.



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Shore schools honour top student athletes



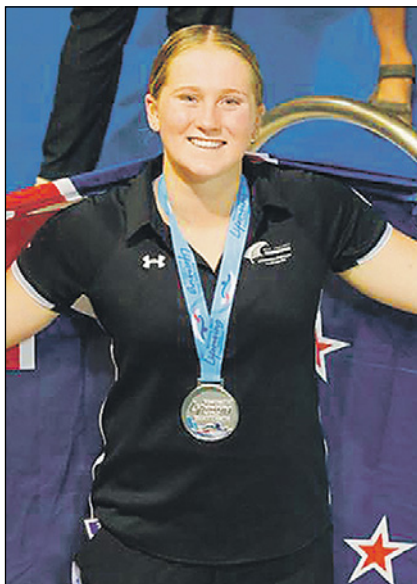
**James Cameron –
Westlake Boys High School**

James Cameron has been selected as Westlake Boys sportsman of the year.

The Year 13 student captained the school's first XV to its most successful year in history.

The side won the Blues area title, got to the final of the national final four competition and claimed the Moascar Cup in the process.

James, who plays at centre, performed excellently in all of Westlake's big matches throughout the season and as a result was selected as vice-captain of the New Zealand Secondary Schools team that toured Australia a month ago, winning both fixtures. He was this year invited to be part of a Junior Crusaders training camp. He is also a part of Westlake's touch rugby team which won the Auckland title in term one and will go on to compete at nationals in Rotorua in December. Next year he will go to the Crusaders Academy.



**Zoe Crawford –
Westlake Girls High School**

For the second year in a row Zoe Crawford is Westlake Girls High School senior sports-person of the year. Zoe has been selected for the New Zealand Surf Life Saving Black Fins team, which will to compete later this month at the German Cup, an international pool-rescue event in Germany.

At this year's Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, she won five gold medals and seven silver medals, while also setting a new junior record in the 100m mannikin tow. She broke four New Zealand under-19 records and two Australian records at the same event.

Year-13 Zoe won two silver and two bronze medals at the New Zealand Secondary Schools Swimming Champs, and also co-captained the school's premier hockey team, which won the Auckland champs for the first time since 2015 and came third at nationals.



**Mateo Roa –
Rosmini College**

Rosmini College has selected Mateo Roa as its senior sportsperson of the year. He has excelled in both beach and indoor volleyball, being selected for the national under-19 indoor team, and under-19 and under-21 teams for beach volleyball.

Mateo and his doubles partner Liam Campbell-Mauafu finished second at the Secondary School Beach Volleyball Nationals.

He later captained the school's premier indoor team to third place at the Auckland champs and the school's best-ever result of 11th at the national championships.

Mateo has also played a key role in the school's first XI football team.

Next year, he is moving to the Gold Coast where he will study at Griffith University, and looking to continue his beach volleyball career.

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**Lani Rawle –
Carmel College**

Carmel's senior sportswoman of the year is Lani Rawle, due to her achievements in sports including netball, touch, and volleyball.

She captains the school's Senior 1 netball, touch and volleyball teams.

At North Harbour representative level, she played in teams placed fourth in the under-18 Girls Touch Nationals tournament, first in the mixed grade at Touch Nationals and first at the under-18 Volleyball Nationals.

Individually, Lani was named in the Auckland Volleyball Championships team of the tournament and the New Zealand junior women's volleyball squad.

Outside of her playing commitments, Lani is currently co-coaching the Carmel Junior B volleyball team and year seven and eight touch team.

Parliament to look at boat-club law

Legislation to clear the way for commercial use of the heritage Bayswater Boating Club building will go before Parliament this year.

North Shore MP Simon Watts has secured first slot on the first Members' Day to be held when Parliament begins its term under the new government.

"It will be the first piece of legislation to be read," he told the Observer.

Members' Days are when bills sponsored by MPs come before the House. Though the date for the first under the new government is yet to be set, Watts said it would be pre-Christmas.

The aim of a change to legislation from the 1920s is to give the building's owner, the Takapuna Boating Club, the right to lease parts for other than boating purposes. It is keen to generate income to maintain the building, by adding new tenants.

Watts agreed to take up the club's case soon after first winning election to Parliament in 2020.

After Devonport-Takapuna Local Board backing, support was finally secured this year from Auckland Council also, paving the way for Watts to push the matter on at Parliament.

AT go slow on updating speed sign

A 50km/h speed sign on the corner of Hurstmere Rd and Anzac St is baffling locals, sitting as it does in the middle of Auckland Transport's 30km/h Takapuna town-centre safe-speeds zone.

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member George Wood (pictured below) has asked

AT why it is there, but is yet to receive an answer. The zone, set up in March, stretches north up Hurstmere Rd, beyond Killarney St.

Wood has previously expressed safety concerns about the town centre stretch of Hurstmere Rd, where a cycle lane goes against one-way traffic.



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Halloween events inspire creative costumes



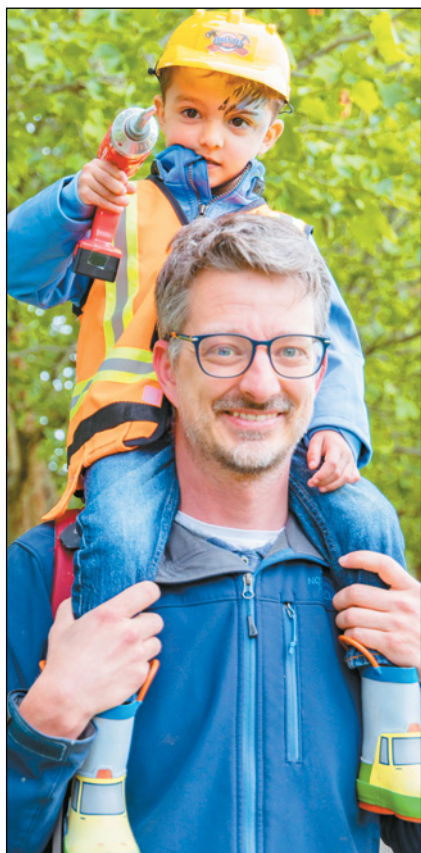
Costumed canines... Jo Counsell at the Takapuna Methodist Church on Lake Rd with local collie dogs that have an annual Halloween date as crowd-pleasers at the corner site

More than 3000 North Shore fun seekers descended on Bayswater for the annual Halloween Trail.

The Lake House Arts Centre in Takapuna also put on a spooky weekend community event attended by around 500 people in the lead-up to Halloween.

On the showery evening of 31 October itself, many local neighbourhoods were taken over by cleverly costumed trick and treaters, including some on four legs.

In their quest for sugary bounty, youngsters sought out the growing number of houses decorated to be ghoulish-friendly.



Knows the drill... 'Bob the builder' aka Evan Wichmann (3) and dad Daniel came from Takapuna



Nice'n'Nasty... Hauraki residents (standing, from left) Henry Ryder, Keanu Anesi, Kash Baskerville and Thomas Allen and (front) Makaia Anesi, channelling comic-book and movie character Harley Quinn

and horrible hordes of creepy characters



Devilish fun... Devonport-Takapuna Local Board chair Toni van Tonder (right, in white) emerged from a Halloween Eve dunking to encourage Devonport Car Company owner Lewis Rowe to go through the same ordeal at the Boo at the Beach event held at Narrow Neck. Organiser Anni Dowden-Jones (left) urged him on. Public donations for going through with the dare were collected for Kai 4 Communities



Wiggling out... Hauraki's Marek Harranek (5) tries a plate-spinning game



Mummy's the word... (from left) Bruno Stevens, his costumed brother Oliver and mother Beata Stevens, from Takapuna



Health warning... (from left) Giselle MacCulloch, Mikayla Burvill-Brown and Xavier Wakelin with their project about the harms of vaping

Under investigation: Intermediate students dig deep

Year eight students at Takapuna Normal Intermediate School recently concluded a deep dive into research topics of their choosing, many of them opting to explore pressing issues faced by their own generation.

Their eight-week investigations, the final task of the school's International Baccalaureate (IB) primary years programme (PYP), culminated in an exhibition day at which they presented their findings.

PYP coordinator Courtney Dixon said the projects encouraged the students to apply their learning in a real-life context which helped broaden the ways they took in and processed information. It also helped with collaboration as they are not put in groups with their friends but with other students with the same interests.

Kaveesh Saluja, Joy Cheng and Aron Chong have all experienced racism directed towards them personally, which inspired the group to investigate the issue. They researched why people can be racist, what different types of racism look like and how it's changed but not gone away over time.

Giselle MacCulloch, Mikayla Burvill-Brown and Xavier Wakelin said their worries about their generation getting addicted to vaping led them to choose that as their topic.

Xavier told the Observer they wanted to raise awareness about the mental and physical health impacts of vaping.

Mikayla said she was surprised to find out that the flavours, colours and blinking lights of the devices also play into the addictiveness, not just the nicotine.

Takapuna Normal Intermediate has been an official PYP IB school since 2013.



Personal knowledge... (from left) Kaveesh Saluja, Joy Cheng and Aron Chong researched racism, which all have experienced



Consumer culture... (from left) Anne Nagafuchi, Rebecca Xie and Hunter Lock with their presentation on over consumption

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Takapuna FC youth side does well

Takapuna Football Club's under-19 side made club history at the national youth championships in Napier, making the top eight of the second division for the first time.

The side got off to a tough start at the tournament over Labour Weekend, losing

to Nelson Suburbs 3-1 but bounced back to beat Otumoetai 3-2. They then got past Taradale 2-0, Whanganui 1-0 and Manurewa 1-0 to progress to the knockout rounds.

In the quarter finals they took on local rivals North Shore United, going down 1-0.



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Takapuna quick smashes Shore in season opener

Takapuna Cricket Club's premier side has had a cracking start to the season, blitzing North Shore, with strike bowler Ross ter Braak setting what is believed to be a club record.

Ter Braak took 8/17 in the first innings of the Hedley Howarth Trophy two-day match and 12 wickets in the game.

Coach Neil Fletcher said that an eight-wicket bag had been achieved before, but he couldn't recall one with only 17 runs conceded.

Ter Braak, who has played premier club cricket for around seven seasons since leaving Westlake Boys High School, has given a major boost to the Takapuna line up this season, after only playing a couple of games last season, when he was contracted to the Auckland Aces.

The left-arm quick bowler was not contracted for 2023-2024 "and we hope to see much more of him this season, unless he is called up for Auckland again," Fletcher said.

Takapuna declared after scoring 293 for nine wickets. North Shore scored 145 and 65, giving Takapuna the outright win and second place on the points table.

"It's a great start to the season... we haven't started that well in recent years, so it's great to get some momentum," Fletcher said.

Takapuna has also been bolstered by the return of veteran Greg Johnson, who is



opening the batting. Johnson was a prominent premier player a decade ago and has made a comeback in the hope of making the New Zealand over-40s side, which will compete in a World Cup in South Africa in March 2024. "He's fit and seeing the ball pretty well," Fletcher said.

Michael Sclanders, who is captain of the two-day side this season, is another player to watch.

• Takapuna's second match of the season, playing away against Parnell, began last Saturday, with Parnell scoring a formidable 340 runs. The match resumes tomorrow, 11 November.

In top form... left-armed Ross ter Braak in action for Takapuna against North Shore

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PICTURE: CONRAD BLIND

Shore thing... Westlake Boys High School students turned out in North Shore Rowing Club colours at two big regattas on Lake Pupuke

Golden glow to Pupuke paddling

Crews from Westlake Boys and Girls High Schools started their season with a statement, winning 15 division, one rowing titles between them, at big regattas held on Lake Pupuke last weekend.

Racing in the Bennett Shield Regatta took place on Saturday, with the Eric Verdonk Memorial Regatta the next day. Because the events were club regattas the students raced in North Shore Rowing Club's colours, the club both schools are joined to.

The boys won six gold medals on day one, shining in racing in the eights, with success in the under-15, U16, U17, U18 and men's novice coxed races, and also winning the U18 coxed quad sculls. The next day, wins came in the U17 double sculls, U17 coxed

quad sculls and U17 coxless pair oars.

Westlake girls crews won the U17 and U18 coxed four titles, along with the U18 coxed eight race at the Bennett regatta. Then the U17 coxed quad sculls and the U17 and U18 coxless pair oars at the Verdonk regatta.

Westlake Boys rowing coach Jo Shotter said it was a "quite good" way to focus into more races ahead. Chief among these was the Christmas Regatta at Lake Karapiro, which drew top Australasian schools.

"That's where we send out our best crews," said Shotter.

Both Westlakes also won division two races, with the boys claiming three golds and the girls two. Silver and bronze medals secured in both divisions added to the tally.



Transport junction... Rival factions meet on common ground in this photograph taken at Belmont in 1927, showing (left) one of the Devonport Ferry Company's cars approaching up Lake Rd from Victoria Rd and meeting the opposition buses (right and far right) of Mr. A. H. Smith and the Takapuna Tramways and Ferry Company coming out of King Edward Ave (renamed Bayswater Ave in 1997). Tramlines in the foreground of the road show the other means of transport then leading north to Takapuna.

When trams served Takapuna – and split opinion

Heritage librarian Derek R. Whaley backgrounds a slice of local history

Thursday, 22 December, 1910, was a monumental day in the history of Takapuna. The long-awaited tramway from Bayswater to Takapuna opened to the public, heralding an era of growth and prosperity for the area around Lake Pupuke.

Within a year, the integrated tramway and ferry system was already a great success.

Henry Hopper Adams, shareholder in the company and Waitemata County Councillor, had felt that it was best for the county to own the transportation system.

After two polls came out in favour of purchase, the county council requested permission from the government to take over the system. Unfortunately, the government ruled that a county could not operate its own ferry service.

Residents took the matter into their own hands when, on 1 July 1913, they established the Borough of Takapuna. Curiously, Ewen Alison, owner of the rival Devonport Steam Ferry Company, was elected mayor, thereby shelving any plans for the borough to buy the tramway system.

But in July 1914, William Blomfield, tram-

way director and shareholder, became mayor.

The council soon approached the Takapuna Tramways & Ferry Company's board of directors and expressed a desire to buy the system. They offered reasonable terms with Blomfield playing both sides in negotiations.

The company was no longer interested. They had finally paid off their debts and saw endless profit on the horizon. Why sell out at the peak of their success?

Almost the same week that the company rejected the borough's offer, New Zealand entered the Great War. The economy shifted to a war footing and ambitious plans were set aside. Meanwhile, Paul Hansen, guiding light of the tramway, was arrested as a resident alien and interred until 1919.

Blomfield was unfazed. In 1916, 1917, 1919, and 1920, he tried and failed to arrange a borough purchase of the system.

However, the network's failings angered the public and led to a drop in property values. As a result, in 1919, the Takapuna Ratepayers' and Residents' Association formed to protest the tramway's monopoly on borough transportation. The organisation

forced Blomfield out of office in 1921.

For the following two years, public transportation in Takapuna languished. A half-hearted attempt in 1923 for the borough to buy the system went nowhere. Finally, in February 1926, the borough council made one last attempt to buy the aging system.

The rise of motor bus services, the increased use of private automobiles, and the failure to electrify the tramway all contributed to a public battle over whether the tramway should be bought by the council.

The matter was to go to a vote but instead went to the courts. The company's debt holders finally gave up and sold everything to the Devonport Steam Ferry Company. The last trams ran on 26 April 1927. The next day, the electorate voted overwhelmingly in favour of the anti-tram party.

• Check out the exhibition *The Tramway that Made Takapuna* on Level 2 of the Central City Library, and join Derek R. Whaley in the Whare Wānanga on Wednesday 15 November at noon as he discusses the complicated history behind construction of this historic transportation system.

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Councillors pledge to push light rail to Shore option

Light rail to the Shore will be one of the key items on the agenda when Auckland Council meets with the new government when it is formed.

"The time of election rhetoric is now over," said Chris Darby, Auckland Councillor for the North Shore.

"I expect the new government will not want to throw out the enormous value of IP developed in support of light rail," he says.

The new Minister of Transport will receive a briefing as an incoming minister that will cover both the Waitematā Harbour Connections and Auckland Light Rail programmes.

Darby and fellow North Shore councillor Richard Hills have for many years focused on promoting rapid transit (rail or light rail) "against a background where the uninformed assumption was that a road crossing was the only crossing", Darby said. "Our secondary focus was to then have Takapuna and the city centre connected by that rapid-transit solution and to resolve the final missing links, walking and biking across the harbour."

The preferred option released early this year had light rail floating to the top as the rapid-transit solution for the Shore, something 75 per cent of respondents to the public-feedback process considered 'most important'.

"The outstanding question to be addressed in the [indicative business case], to be completed in early 2024, is the priority and timing



of each mode and route definition, Darby said. "Light rail to the Shore does not sit in isolation though," he said.

It forms part of a three-pronged light rail network (City-centre to Mangere, City-centre to North West and City-centre to the Shore) that further integrates with heavy rail, rapid bus, ferries and the wider bus network.

With the incoming government signalling the demise of City-centre to Mangere light rail, they are inadvertently pulling the plug on light rail to the Shore.

"All three routes are inextricably linked."

Darby said that if a new minister allowed the business case to be completed, "I don't doubt that it will show rapid transit light rail as the priority mode for delivery.

"We know the runaway success of the

Northern Busway faces insurmountable capacity issues in the early 2030s.

"We cannot sit on our hands for too much longer. The busway is doing the heavy lifting when it comes to moving people to jobs, education, friends and places to visit, and light rail needs to complement it by the early to mid-30s. "I personally would like to see the Akoranga – Takapuna – Smales Farm – Glenfield – North Harbour – Albany route investigated.

"When it comes to an additional harbour crossing where driving is to the fore, let's keep in mind there is no additional local road capacity at Onewa Rd, Esmonde Rd, Akoranga Dr, Northcote Rd, Tristram Ave or Constellation Dr."

All these motorway feeder arterials are at capacity and cannot be widened further, Darby said

"Neither can the motorway go through Smiths Bush, just south of Northcote Rd. I'm hopeful these considerable constraints, and the need to reduce emissions, will be flushed out in the [business case] and we fix our eyes on a solution that recognises how to get around town in a climate-change world.

"I've been riding the additional harbour crossing work for more than 17 years, joined by Richard in 2016.

"It certainly feels like a through-the-ages journey, but hey the City Rail Link was first conceived in 1924."

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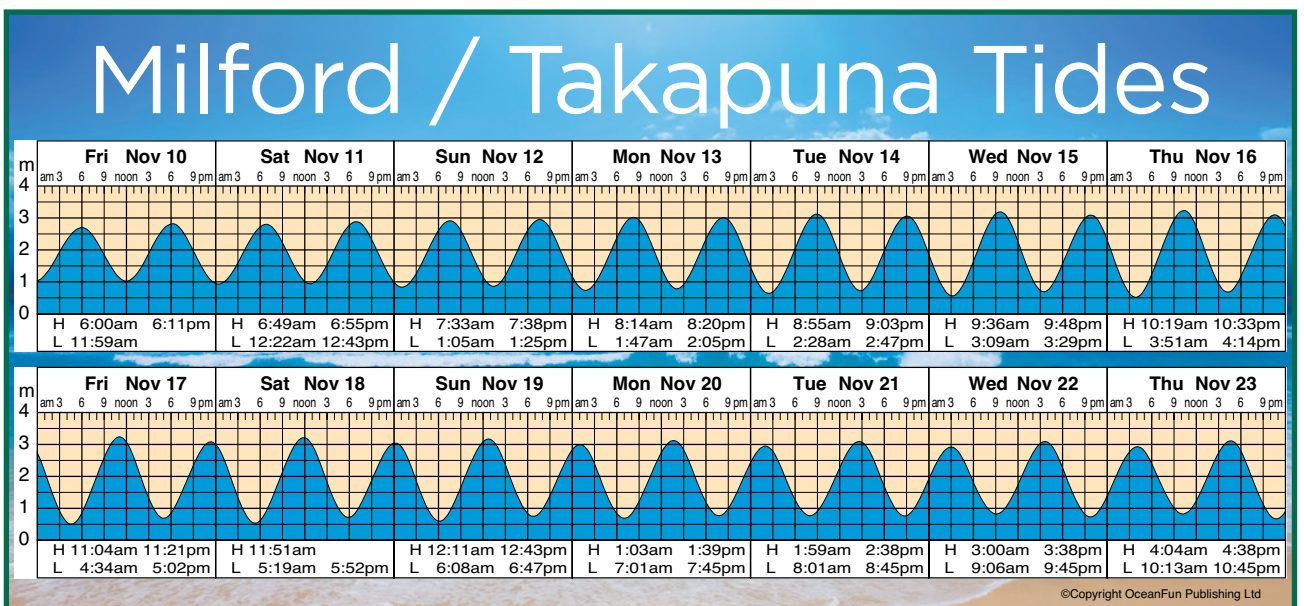
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Mums saddle up to launch new Sunnynook bike group



Three local mothers are behind a new Bike Sunnynook group which had its first event in Sunnynook Park last month, timed to coincide with 'Biketober'.

Volunteers Soriya Em, Rebecca Sinclair and Serenade Pugh are now looking to organise more events after an encouraging start, with more than 40 people of all ages attending, riding bikes ranging from tiny trikes to mountain and road bikes.

The aim is to promote Sunnynook as a 'Bike Burb', as part of a network of community-led groups with a vision of their neighbourhood as a bike-friendly place.

Em said people had welcomed the idea of using the park for more bike events. Family-friendly bike events had previously been held for Halloween and Christmas, but were put on hold due to Covid.

To kickstart the return of activities for all ages, bike decoration was encouraged and games were set up, Em said.

"As organisers, we had games and activities planned, however the children and parents were enthusiastic about self-organising."

Impromptu races were contested, obstacles navigated and balancing challenges tackled.

Bike Kaipātiki brought along its bike maintenance trailer to provide health checks for bikes, pump tyres and even remove trainer wheels for newly confident little ones, eager to graduate to two wheels.

Em said it was great to see people enjoying the opportunity to be active and interact.

"Older children extended help to younger ones, riding alongside each other around the park. A specific example was an older intermediate-age boy teaching a primary-school boy to ride without trainer wheels."

Bike Auckland lent support too, with its community activation manager, Teva Chonon, welcoming the event for highlighting the inclusivity and eco-friendly appeal of biking.

Bike Sunnynook has set up accounts on social-media sites and welcomes more volunteers and ideas for future events.

Wheely good fun... the local mothers behind a Sunnynook cycling initiative (in yellow T-shirts, from left), Soriya Em, Rebecca Sinclair and Serenade Pugh, joined some VIP visitors for a photo



Ready to roll... A repairs expert checks out a young rider's machine



Community power... Some of the attendees and organisers at the event in Sunnynook Park



Blast from the past: PumpHouse brings back the picnic

The PumpHouse in Takapuna is nodding to its past as inspiration for a fun fundraising afternoon to be held this Sunday, 12 November.

The PumpHouse Picnic gives people a chance to explore the theatre by Lake Pupuke or just relax lakeside and enjoy the food trucks and stalls. Entertainers will perform periodically inside the theatre.

The event, running from 2pm to 7pm, reprises picnics of the past. "It was one of the early things they did to fund the renovation of the PumpHouse into a theatre from a derelict building," said its manager James Bell.

Community campaigns starting in the 1970s secured the building's future. The picnics were held by the PumpHouse trust until the early 1990s. In those days, access to the car park was blocked off and a fee charged for those attending, but Bell said this was no longer permitted, so money would be raised from charging the food trucks and stallholders a fee for setting up.

"You can come along and spend no money at all and have a poke around the theatre," Bell said.

Performers include a K-Pop group, improv acts and musicians. There would also be a chance to see backstage, try on costumes and check out the lighting desk.

He expected about 10 food trucks and 30 stalls would be set up near the theatre. Items on sale would range from crafts to sweets. The chance to buy unique creations might



Picnics past... These photos from the 1980s show the popularity of PumpHouse events of the time

appeal to those looking for gifts. A raffle with donated prizes, including a night's accommodation in Takapuna, a meal out, and a show at the PumpHouse, would be another drawcard.

Koha towards the theatre would be welcome, Bell said, with collectors on site to take any donations. The need to fundraise was becoming more pressing for arts groups, with council contributions reducing, he said. Reviving the PumpHouse picnic was a nice way to do this that offered an easy outing for locals to appreciate the facility.




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Forrest Hill couple ready to revive Takapuna cinema

Takapuna's picture theatre is set to reopen next week, with new owners Shaun and Helen Hayward having overcome a series of challenges for its relaunch as Takapuna Beachside Cinemas.

The Forrest Hill couple bought the then Monterey Cinema in December 2022. But an electrical fire caused damage to the site on New Year's Eve. After repairs in January, they reopened just before Auckland Anniversary weekend, when the building was badly flooded upstairs and down.

Months of renovation followed, including to the counter area upstairs. Sound equipment needed replacing and the place has been repainted, ready to reopen on Thursday 16 November.

Hayward said the couple bought the cinema because it was "supposed to be fun". Despite the turbulent start they are still looking forward to what's to come.

"There's a silver lining in every cloud."

He told the Observer clubs and members of the public could hire the theatres for fundraising events, functions, birthday parties and special-interest screenings.

The independent cinema would source films from a range of distributors, he said.



Homegrown star returns with Irish songbird

International singer Will Martin is returning to his old stamping ground at the PumpHouse, bringing another star turn in established Irish artist Chloë Agnew on her first New Zealand tour.

Devonport-raised Martin appeared in his first post-school production at the Takapuna theatre, in the lead role of North Shore Music Theatre's production of Andrew Lloyd Webber musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. "I thought it would be really appropriate to come full circle, almost 20 years later," he told the Observer.

Martin and Agnew's *It's About Time* concert is the continuation of a collaboration that began at the Basel Military Tattoo in Switzerland in 2015. Although they did not realise they would be performing together initially, they hit it off. "We were instant BFFs," Martin says.

They have since performed together a number of times, mixing solos and duets.

"I don't want to give too much away, but there'll definitely be some Irish ballads from Chloë, some musical theatre from me and our first performance on New Zealand soil of our epic 'Power of Love' (Celine Dion) duet."

Martin attributes the start of his love of performing to his time at Takapuna Grammar School, where he studied music, was in the choir and appeared in musicals, including the *Pajama Game*, and as the Pirate King in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance*.

"It was these initial spots on stage that got me really caught up in the performing arts."

Since then he has forged a successful classic-crossover career. His debut album went to No. 1 in the UK, making him the youngest man to top the classical charts.

Martin regularly returns to his home country to perform, but this is his first time back since the Covid pandemic.

Previously, he appeared in *Les Misérables* at the Civic Theatre and also performed his arrangement of Requiem for a Soldier (the theme of Steven Spielberg's *Band of Brothers*) at an Anzac Day service at the Auckland War Memorial Museum attended by Prince William.

Dublin-born Agnew also got into music early, and was an original member of all-female Celtic ensemble Celtic Woman, featuring on 14 of the group's albums.

She recently took part in a 20th anniversary reunion.

Martin says her voice, like his, lends itself to a range of musical styles.

"Her voice is both exquisite, and versatile ... and she's great fun to perform and tour with ... 'a great craic', as she would say."

Martin also intends showing Agnew some local sights, including dropping down to Devonport for his favourite New Zealand chocolates. Trips to Waiheke and Matakana may also be fitted into the schedule.

• *It's About Time* featuring Will Martin and Chloë Agnew, the PumpHouse, 26 November, 2.30 and 6.30. Tickets from pumphouse.co.nz.



Instant friends... Will Martin and Chloë Agnew hit it off when they first performed together at the Basel Military Tattoo in Switzerland in 2015

VICTORIA THEATRE DEVONPORT



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Bad Behaviour (M) 107min	NEW
Loop Track (R16) 96min	NEW
Stop Making Sense (1988)	
Re-release (G) 89min	NEW
The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes (M) 157min	Preview 15 NOV

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The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes (M) 157min	16 NOV
Saltburn (R16) 132min	16 NOV
Napoleon (TBA) 158min	23 NOV
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