

The Rangitoto Observer

Takapuna, Milford, Castor Bay, Forrest Hill and Sunnynook

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY Issue 119 - November 24, 2023 AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

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Battle lines drawn as coastal track meeting looms

Auckland councillors will face a roomful of frustrated locals next week, calling for guaranteed public access to the Takapuna-to-Milford coastal track.

Residents are looking for leadership from Auckland Council's planning, environment and parks committee next Thursday 30 November.

But council has indicated the issue remains "complicated".

The addition of Devonport Heritage to groups with speaking slots at the meeting may make any decision even more complex.

The group's submission will centre on the need to respect a heritage listing on the Firth

property, where the track has been blocked by a fence since late September. It will be represented by Trish Deans, a long-time heritage advocate and former Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member, who told the Observer she would bring fresh information about the

To page 2

Did someone say Raindeer?

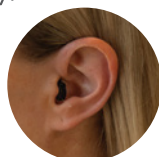


Spirits undampened... Carmel College's Christmas market day drew a healthy crowd despite wet weather last weekend. The Snelgar family (from left), Kathy, Cameron, Morgan and Darrell, were among those enjoying the stalls and festivities. More pictures, pages 12-13.

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Milford heroes back on water after rescuing fisher

Milford yachties who rescued an overturned kayaker last weekend will be back in the water this weekend competing in the Pied Pipers they had been training in when the incident unfolded off Castor Bay.

Milford Cruising Club Commodore Andrew Robertson said the three men, whose boats have berths at the marina, brought the hypothermic fisherman to shore early Saturday afternoon.

"We rallied a few people at the club to get

some warm blankets," he told the Observer.

Young staff at the ice-cream kiosk at the club alerted its chef who helped find the blankets to keep the man warm until an ambulance arrived to take him to North Shore Hospital for treatment.

Gavin Woodward on *Ratcatcher* and Brad Brown and Dillon Browne on *Minstrel* rescued the fisherman who had been in the water for some time and was tangled in gear. He was wearing a lifejacket, but was

unable to get back into his kayak. This was collected from the club later in the weekend.

Robertson said the yachties would be back at the club this weekend, when it hosted the Squadron Plumbing Pied Piper Intergalactics, a national event.

The rescuers and other helpers, most of them club members, would likely be recognised in the traditional way after racing.

"I'm sure there will be a bit of a celebratory drink," Robertson said.

Coastal track's future to be put to test with councillors

From page 1

listing's history and the wishes of the late Paul Firth and his sister Anne, who grew up at the property.

Paul Firth, who died in 2021, after his sister, allowed walkers to cross the land from when a council bridge over rocks washed out in 2011. Beneficiaries of the Firth estate want the property's 2013 heritage listing lifted by the council so they can sell the property unencumbered by the need to protect its dilapidated home, valued at just \$50,000, on what is a multimillion-dollar seafront section at Black Rock.

The Takapuna lawyer acting for them, Alex Witten-Hannah, says the fence can come down immediately and the beneficiaries will gift a strip of land for the track to be rebuilt if the listing goes.

But Deans said the council had to follow its own rules: "You can't just flip out things on the list... it's all got a heritage."

A plan change would be required to lift the heritage listing, she pointed out.

The planning committee chair and North Shore ward councillor, Richard Hills, said this would have to be considered by independent commissioners, not councillors. The Firth beneficiaries were asking for "things we cannot do", he said.

Hills has called for all options to be out-

lined to councillors. He is waiting to see staff recommendations ahead of the meeting, before deciding if, as chair, he puts forward last-minute resolutions of his own that might go against officer advice.

If these involve budgeting for the likes of a new bridge, any resolution would have to win the support of a majority of councillors and be factored into the council's long-term plan.

"I've asked for every possible option for how we give access to walkers," he said.

The Devonport-Takapuna Local Board, which last month urged officers to do more to resolve matters, will be represented at the meeting. Chair Toni van Tonder said it wanted to evaluate the updated report, which may have more information on various sticking points.

Views about the Firth building's heritage merits are divided, but most submitters are unimpressed that for years nothing has been arranged by council to safeguard the track, despite it saying in 2012 that the bridge would be rebuilt.

Council withdrew from a 2018 Heads of Agreement it struck with Paul Firth to buy the property at 50 per cent of market value. It is understood the withdrawal, in August 2022, was due to the cost of restoring the home and maintaining the property, which at one stage had been mooted as an arts or writers retreat, an idea that gained little traction.

Wary of setting precedents – given the track crosses a total of 72 private properties – and overturning heritage listings, along with likely difficulties in gaining consents for coastal structures, council officers have indicated any change of tack in handling the matter would need to be at councillor direction.

The Takapuna Residents Association, which presented a petition signed by 7500 people to council's governing body last month, has a speaking slot. Grey Power and the Te Araroa Trust, which oversees the national walkway the coastal track is part of, and private submitters also want to speak.

Witten-Hannah said he will attend to outline what he says is a history of council inaction, since the first discussions about the sale of the Firth property took place in 2010.

He said the council's failure to buy the property or lift the heritage listing should not become a burden to the around half a dozen Firth beneficiaries, some of whom live overseas, and now want it sold so they can get on with their lives. He reckons an estimated \$100,000 cost to initiate a plan change should be met by the council. "Council put the heritage listing on. Council can take it off."

It was a small amount to pay for "access for the people of Auckland in perpetuity", he said.

• The Observer will cover the committee meeting in its next issue.

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SIMON WATTS

MP for North Shore

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simonwattsmp

Authorised by Simon Watts,
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Briefs

Diary date with bells on

Sunnynook is getting in festive mood to encourage cycling, with a Christmas Family Bike Ride around Sunnynook Park on Sunday 10 December from 5pm to 8pm. Dress up and bring a bike helmet and a picnic. Pre-registration is required at the Sunnynook Community Centre.

Tokki lauded

Milford restaurant Tokki is one of just three on the North Shore included in the city's 50 best compiled by the *New Zealand Herald's* Viva section.

Helping hand

Donations of Christmas gifts and food for the Auckland City Mission are being accepted at Takapuna Library and Takapuna Pool and Leisure Centre until 6 December.

Mural painter's progress stymied by pile of dirt



Regan Hill-Male (pictured) has completed half of a colourful street mural in Sunnynook's Sycamore Dr, but progress on the remainder has been slowed by a large pile of dirt dumped on the verge by Vector.

Getting the pile moved is proving slow going, says frustrated Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member and Sunnynook local Mel Powell.

After several phone calls to Vector she was still to be told when the power-lines company would take away the dirt, which comes from work around a coned-off substation further up Sycamore Dr.

Artist Hill-Male told the Observer last week he had been able to work around the pile, but wanted to finish painting soon.

Powell organised the mural, on the street-facing wall of the Wool-

worths supermarket, as a community project to brighten up the area after devastating floods in January.

She secured a \$7500 grant from the Milestone Foundation to pay for materials and labour.

Vector told the Observer it had removed some of the soil that was obstructing Hill-Male's access. "Unfortunately... while their access was resolved, there were some soil marks left on the wall, which has also prevented the mural being completed," a spokesman said. Vector said it would return to clean up the marks and was sorry for the inconvenience. In the meantime, it seems the marks had been washed away by the rain.

• Artist explains idea behind mural, page 21.

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Convenience meets lifestyle at Omana North

Nestled in the heart of Milford, Omana North stands as a symbol of refined coastal living. This recently constructed luxury apartment building offers a limited number of two and three-bedroom residences, attracting those who appreciate Milford's laid-back village atmosphere.

Omana North's appeal lies in its thoughtful design and quality craftsmanship, catering to the preferences of downsizers and retirees who are looking for spacious, but low maintenance living in a safe community. The charm of Milford extends beyond the building itself, with local cafes like Dear Friends and Crop providing a friendly backdrop for residents. For those seeking a culinary delight, restaurants such as Musashi is just around the corner, while Pym's offers the perfect spot for a low-key wine with friends. However, with the spacious and elegant kitchens of Omana, the clever baker or culinary enthusiast will enjoy state of the art appliances and engineered stone benchtop.

The tranquil Milford Beach offers a peaceful escape for you to rest and retreat on one of the park benches, or a leisurely stroll as your morning exercise. For your sporting and recreation needs, there are a number of options, including the local Milford Tennis & Squash Club, Pupuke Golf Course and the Milford Bowling Club.

Convenience meets lifestyle at Omana



North, with Milford Mall conveniently situated next door. The basement car park connection ensures easy access to local supermarkets and retail options, simplifying residents' daily routines.

Yet, what truly sets Omana North apart is the captivating views of the water and Milford's surroundings. The architectural design emphasises bright and airy spaces, enhanced by floor-to-ceiling windows, creating a living environment that boasts of serenity and ultimately, scenic visions.

Residents also enjoy the community spirit at Omana North. It is not unheard of



for neighbours to organise frequent social events amongst themselves, making way for lasting friendships and there is a genuine sense of belonging for all walks of life. The onsite amenities, including a heated 16m pool, provide not just recreation but also a space for relaxation.

In essence, Omana North offers a blend of comfort and community but with a little taste of luxury. It's a place where residents can quietly enjoy the best Milford has to offer, appreciating the simple pleasures of life in a beautifully crafted and inviting space.

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Christmas festival among town centres' party plans

The festive season swings into action locally early next month, with the Takapuna Christmas Festival being held on Saturday 2 December.

Santa himself is one of the attractions at the daytime festival, which is one of three major events being funded by the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board.

Devonport's Friday After Five street party is returning on 1 December, while Milford is reserving a little je ne sais quoi until 11 March, when it intends staging its Viva La France day, which has proved popular for 10 years.

The three Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in the local-board area each received \$20,000 of board funding for an event in 2023-24.

The managers for each area outlined their intentions to the board last week, each promising fun-filled, family-friendly events.

Takapuna Beach Business Association (TBBA) boss Terence Harpur, who is also the board's deputy chair, emphasised he had taken no part in board discussions and decision-making over the funding.

The TBBA was criticised by board members at an earlier workshop for pitching for funds for multiple events, but subsequently withdrew these applications.

Harpur said the TBBA still planned other activities, through a mix of partnerships, including boutique Christmas markets on December 16 and 23, Summerdaze in January, Lunar New Year in February, a new Turkish-themed event and a Latin Fiesta.

The Christmas Festival, already signalled with decorations on Hurstmere Rd and Waiwharariki Anzac Square, was designed to lift spirits after another tough year, he said. "It's essentially there to make people happy."

Stalls, food trucks, a mini-train ride and entertainment would be on offer between 9am and 3pm, with Santa on hand from 10am to 2pm by the Christmas tree. Harpur expected around 5000 people to turn up.



Big bauble proves an eyecatcher

An eight-metre-tall, six-metre-wide Christmas decoration with 24,800 LED lights is attracting attention in Waiwharariki Anzac Square.

The bauble will be lit up between 8pm and 2am every night until Christmas.

Formerly used in Parnell, the bauble was

bought for around \$10,000 by the Takapuna Beach Business Association, which upgraded it with extra lights and changing patterns.

"Good decorations do not come cheap," said TBBA chief executive, Terence Harpur.

A CCTV camera has been installed to discourage any potential vandalism.

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Unhappy feet prompt Beach Series move to Milford



Ready, set, go... Jason Herriman calls junior racers into action

The popular Beach Series event relocated from Takapuna to Milford Beach due to contestants getting minor injuries at the previous location, according to the race director.

Jason Herriman told the Observer the reason the series moved from Takapuna to Milford Beach this month is "a safety one" as contestants were cutting their feet and stubbing their toes on the concrete ramp that leads to Takapuna Beach from Gould Reserve, near the boat club.

The Beach Series is a weekly all-ages run, swim and stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) event that has been running since 2004.

The first of the weekly Tuesday events at the new Milford location was held on 7 November.

At its peak the event was the biggest weekly fitness event in Auckland, attracting many hundreds of runners, swimmers and paddle boarders to Takapuna Beach each Tuesday evening. Herriman hopes it will return to pre-Covid numbers, with the trend upwards again.

After three weeks, registered participants had surpassed last year's total entrants, he said, with 252 people registered by the first race, and "maybe 100" more signing up on the day.

Takapuna Beach Business Association chief executive Terence Harpur said it was sad to see the event move from Takapuna. It would be welcome if it returned.

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Local library hours trimmed following funding cut

Takapuna Library hours are being cut by two and a half hours a week, as a cost-saving measure.

Devonport Library will also reduce its weekday closing times, by a total of two hours, with both cuts taking effect from the first Saturday of February. Both libraries will remain open seven days a week, but with earlier and varying closing times.

In Takapuna, Thursday late nights are being dropped, with the library to close at 5.30pm, rather than 7.30pm, in line with current other weekday services. Friday, however, will have a 5pm closing. Weekend hours remain from 9.30pm to 4.30pm.

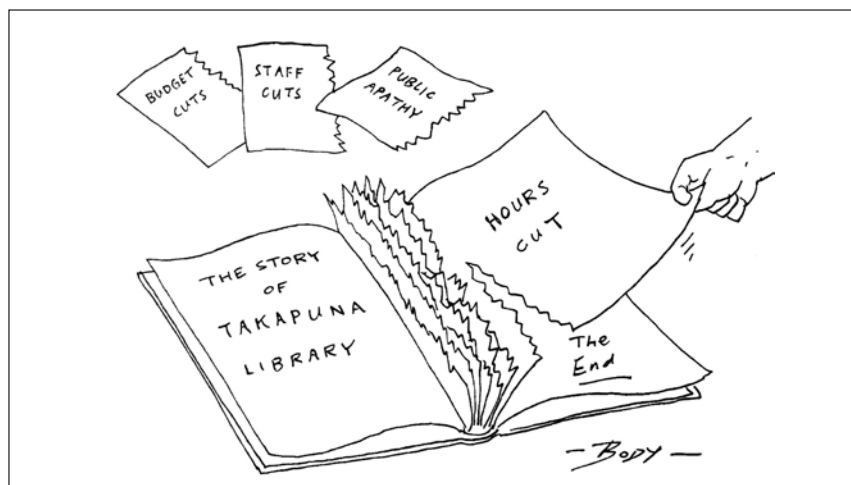
No jobs will be lost with the changes, due to some vacant positions having not been filled.

The cuts followed a review of the pattern of patronage, said Auckland Council connected communities leader Trina Schuster.

This was triggered by a decision of the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board to cease topping up council library funding. The board removed a \$50,800 provision from its local delivery initiatives (LDI) budget for the libraries, after its own funding to provide services was cut by council.

Since 2016/17, after previous cuts, the local board has provided LDI funding to maintain hours.

The current board decided in July it could no longer justify this spending. Chair Toni van Tonder said at a board workshop this



month that choosing what times to trim had been an operational decision by library staff.

Schuster told board members visitor numbers had been assessed over 12 months. The decision to close Takapuna earlier on Thursdays and Fridays would impact a total of 32 visits a week. Of these 17 visits were on the Thursday, but the late night was not as popular as it had once been.

Board members quizzed Schuster about why the hours were not more standardised. She said across the city, library hours varied slightly from what had been a standard of around 56 hours, down from 58.

Some libraries were open six days rather

than seven, to cater for differing local needs, with some centres, such as Devonport, busier than others at weekends, and thus open longer then, until 5pm.

Member Terence Harpur suggested all hours be made 9pm to 5pm, including at weekends, as this might be the only time some families could get to libraries.

Schuster said the pattern of use would be monitored, but time was needed to communicate changes to the public well in advance.

The changes would coincide with the start of a staff pay period and the start of the school year and avoid disrupting students studying for end of year exams.

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Milford mall sees positives in Warehouse departure

The Milford Centre is maintaining a positive outlook despite the impending departure of the Warehouse as anchor tenant, with new stores opening this month and plans to add more brands to the mix.

Centre owner, the New Zealand Retail Property Group (NZRPG), says it will use the space vacated by the Warehouse to expand its range of stores.

NZRPG general manager Campbell Barbour scotched local speculation that more apartments might be built in the place of the Warehouse, saying any longer-term development would be outside the current centre's footprint, on the property's car park near the corner of Milford and Ihumata Rds.

All bar around 10 of the 63 dwellings of the centre's recent Omana North high-rise development had now been sold, he said.

NZRPG was "pretty optimistic" about the centre and Milford generally, Barbour told the Observer. "It's performing exceptionally," he said.

Having the mix of a centre, supermarkets, and a good main-street offering, including hospitality, was a positive.

Barbour said with the Warehouse lease nearing an end "commercial conversations" around future rent and costs led it to decide to vacate from 1 April next year.

He appreciated there was some public unhappiness at its going after nearly three decades, but said: "You can't be all things to all people."

Milford had become a serious fashion-forward destination with strong brands. Adding to this from 24 November is the opening of Seed Heritage and Lorna Jane activewear, both leading Australian brands, following the recent addition of Seasalt Cornwall.

The centre had a unique mix on the North Shore, including independent local stores, such as Well Hung butchery.

Barbour said filling the large space the Warehouse left provided an opportunity to link the centre's side wings through to Whitcoulls, providing greater circulation. "And that would give us the ability to subdivide the space and get more range."

As a smaller centre, Milford's wasn't suitable for a super-tenant and didn't compete with 'mega' centres. The focus was on shopping experience.

Milford Business Association manager Murray Hill says Marketview sales data confirms the good performance of local retail.

In a business update to the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board last week, he said Milford was contributing strongly to the board area's retail ranking of fourth in Auckland. September sales in Milford were up nine per cent, while Newmarket was down five per cent, he said.

But Hill said the Warehouse itself had over time become noticeably less busy.

It remains a tenant at NZRPG's Westgate centre, but local shoppers will now have to go to Glenfield or Albany for their closest store. The Birkenhead outlet closed in 2020.

Hill said ready access to street parking was vital for Milford to continue to thrive. He warned the board to be wary of any plans by Auckland Transport to charge for parking.

The town centre had also benefited from business and community groups, notably Rotary, working together on its appearance.

Asked about an empty store at the centre car park's Kitchener Rd entrance, Hill said the vacating tenant had a long lease and the landlord was happy to keep it empty and get rent.

Board member Gavin Busch said Colliers commercial real-estate figures showed Milford had, as of mid-year, fewer retail vacancies than neighbouring Takapuna – at just six per cent, compared with Takapuna's 13 per cent.

Lakefront locals continue to voice cycleway fears

Lakeside Milford residents are still on Auckland Council's case over their concerns a cycleway may one day be pushed through on their boundaries.

David Schnauer, accompanied by around half a dozen neighbours, told the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board's community forum they wanted the board to say it was not keen on the idea, mooted by Auckland Council staff some years ago.

He proposed the board and residents should work more closely together to manage the lakefront in the area between Henderson and Sylvan parks.

"We could be working constructively with you to support public access around the lake on a walkway."

Instead, two different objectives remained on the books, causing angst – to promote better access and to create a cycleway in what was a "nursery for the lake".

Board members agreed to a tour with the residents, some of whom sold riparian rights to the North Shore City Council for a walkway.

"Who better to be the guardians of their beloved backyards?" said member Gavin Busch, when Schnauer floated the idea of forming an incorporated society to give the group some standing to co-manage the walkway better than he considered council was.

Chair Toni van Tonder said council's aspirational Greenways Plan did envisage more connections in the long-term, including for cycling, but there was no funding for this. "I don't think there's anything to worry about."

The plan was being refreshed this year and would in time be open for public feedback, she said.

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Dermatologist, Dr David Lim

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High schools name top academic performers



Rayen Lee
Rosmini College

Rosmini College has selected Rayen Lee as its 2023 Dux. Rayen achieved academic excellence certificates in five subjects and won the school's Digital Technology Trophy, Aldiss Classical Studies Prize, Jim Church Senior Physics Cup, Yunus Mohammed Cup (for effort and determination in maths), and the Donnelly Cup for Senior Economics, along with the Matthew Casey Cup for Dux.

In 2022 Rayen was a part of the team that won an innovation and engineering competition for building an artificial intelligence-controlled drone that recognises hand gestures, then delivers aid for emergency responders. Next year he will be studying engineering at the University of Auckland on a scholarship.



Chloe Procter
Carmel College

Carmel College has chosen Chloe Procter as its 2023 Dux.

Chloe achieved academic distinction in level-three mathematics with calculus, chemistry and biology.

She was the year 13 top scholar in level-three religious education and level-three classical studies, also winning the Science Cup and New Zealand Institute of Physics award.

Chloe earned a University of Auckland Top Achiever Scholarship, which she will use to study for a Bachelor of Science from next year. Chloe's academic success predated this year as she was a NCEA level two top scholar in 2022.



Ivy Doak
Westlake Girls High School

Ivy Doak has been awarded the Westlake Girl's 2023 Dux award. She was first in level-three French, economics and mathematics with statistics and won the Senior French Cup and the Excellence in Senior Statistics Trophy.

She achieved excellence for every assessment in 2023, participated in the University of Canterbury's women in engineering residential programme and won an aerospace challenge. Ivy's hands-on experience includes constructing a private aircraft and drones during Rosmini College's 'One Foot in the Clouds' project. Ivy has been awarded a scholarship to the University of Auckland, and a \$10,000 Rocket Lab scholarship. She will undertake a Bachelor of Engineering.



Andy Tao
Westlake Boys High School

Andy Tao won Westlake Boy's Don Johnston Trophy for being the top academic student in Year 13.

Andy (left) has achieved endorsement with excellence across all three levels of NCEA. He has amassed a total of 285 excellence credits, including gaining excellence in every assessment done this year.

Last year Andy was named a New Zealand Outstanding Scholar, placing him in the top 51 of secondary students nationwide, while he was still in Year 12. He

did so by gaining scholarships in calculus, chemistry, English, geography, physics, statistics and an outstanding scholarship in biology.

He also started a calculus club last year to improve other students' ability to gain scholarships and this year began a consulting service for younger students to talk to seniors about selection, goals and study.

Andy has accepted a top achiever scholarship to the University of Auckland next year, where he will study Biomed.

Lake House opens Friday youth hub

A new weekly youth hub has been launched at the Lake House Arts Centre with the goal of connecting local youth with the arts.

The hub, named Pier Place, will feature retro video and table and board games, arts and crafts, a space for reading and homework and time on devices and for snacking. It will run on Fridays from 3-6pm.

Lakehouse Arts venue and media coordinator Rathikka Slick said the goal of the hub was to give local youth a space to socialise

outside of school. "It's not a space where you come in and do nothing... It's about getting involved in creative projects."

The arts focus gave the centre a point of difference over other youth hubs like Shore Junction, which is also in Takapuna, she said. It is being funded by a grant from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage.

The hub is free to attend but interest must be registered for space reasons with Aidan Allen on aidanallen@lakehousearts.org.nz

Westlake Girls crews enjoy early Karapiro success

Westlake Girls High School rowing crews picked up one gold and seven other division-one medals last weekend in their first outing at a two-kilometre regatta this season.

Steph Severin and Phoebe Dobson won the under-18 coxless pair event on the second day of the Lake Karapiro Memorial Regatta in Waikato.

Another Westlake duo, Talia Chatfield and Maeve Lockett, finished behind them, completing the one-two for the school.

An intermediate coxed four, intermediate coxed eight and under-18 coxed four from the school all claimed second-place finishes on the second day. And an under-18 coxed four, open coxed eight and U18 coxless pair won medals on the first day.

The school's head rowing coach, Ian Bright, told the Observer he was "really happy" with all the crews' performances considering how much stress some students have been under with exams.

He said the main focus of the regatta had been to work on the crews' processes, plans and race strategies.

The rowers would now be settling back



On the lake... Westlake Girls' open coxed eight in action at Karapiro: (from left) Annabel Savage, Charlotte Mawston, Bella Davies, Payton Berry, Maeve Lockett, Talia Chatfield, Steph Severin, Phoebe Dobson and Tayla Coplestone (cox)

PHOTO: PICTURESHOW.CO.NZ

into a training routine in Auckland before heading back to Karapiro for the Christmas Regatta next month.

Bright said that regatta would be another chance to "see how we're tracking" before the season ramped up after Christmas.

Delayed start at camping ground sparks questions

Takapuna Beach Holiday Park improvements are lagging badly and occupancy arrangements should be reconsidered, says local resident Kay Miller.

She urged the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board at a recent community forum to step up its governance role and seek more answers from council property arm Eke Panuku, which manages the camping ground's lease, over changes to the site's masterplan.

This had more cabins and fewer campsites than a 2021 plan did, she said, along with an extra commercial building. "This is a matter of public interest," said Miller. "Let's hope it's not run like an Air BnB in Takapuna."

Board chair Toni van Tonder said the board

had questioned Eke Panuku and the leaseholder and was satisfied with the answers it received at a workshop in July.

This included an assurance that the site would operate as an affordable Kiwi-style camping site. Cabins would not be for permanent or long term use.

Due to the root system of a pōhutukawa just outside the park's boundary, a top corner of the park would be turned from a parking place into a grassed tenting area.

Van Tonder acknowledged work had gone more slowly than initially proposed.

It was a small site, with difficult terrain and stormwater improvements were needed before the operator could begin building.

Member George Wood said the work was a year behind schedule with nothing to show.

Resource consents were in the pipeline for preliminary site works, a council official said.

The board is waiting for environmental reports. As the land-holder, it has to sign off on variations to the existing approval.

The Rose Cottage has been cleared from the northern end of the site. Staff cabins and an old amenities block are also being removed.

John Mansfield, general manager of Top 10 Holiday Parks Group, which has the lease to develop the park, hoped to start new building work in April 2024. This is expected to last between nine to 12 months.



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Sunny mood prevails at school's big Christmas market

Rain couldn't dampen the seasonal spirit at Carmel College's Christmas Market by the Lake on Saturday, which attracted a crowd of more than 2000 to browse 65 stalls selling art, crafts, gifts and food. Live music, a raffle and a Christmas tree grotto all added to the festivities. Money raised at the event, first held last year, will help pay for furniture and landscaping for the school's new outdoor learning space.



Dodging the showers... Sarah Mayo and daughters Isobel (left) and Lucy Knowles



Family affair... (from left) dad Kevin, Carmel College Year 11 Sameera and mum Kmya D'Sa amid the market's hustle and bustle. Right: Elisabeth Ric Hansen (left) and Christine Hall behind daughters (left) Scarlet Ric Hansen and Evelyn Hall



On the hunt... Year eight Carmel students Amelia O'Grady (left) and Katie George with Katie's mum, Karen, had fun browsing the stalls



Christmas spirit... Janet Llewellyn (left) and Tanya Chang (right) flank Carmel College students Amelia Devlin, Kristen Subere, Emily Chong and Elyse Llewellyn



Snack time... (from left) recent Carmel leaver Ruby, year 12 student Bella and mum Sandra Wilson enjoyed the food on offer



Thumbs up... (from left) William Higgins, Shanie Faller and Marcus Christan welcomed a break in the weather

All smiles... Carmel year eights (from left) Charlotte Moore, Elise Taylor and Eve Barr didn't let the rain affect their mood



Board adopts plan for future of the shore



The environment and water quality in the Devonport-Takapuna area are two major focus points in the local board's plan for the next three years.

The 2023 Devonport-Takapuna Local board plan, now formally adopted by the board following public consultation in July, is the key document guiding the board's decision making for the next three years.

Key themes that came through in the consultation included a greater consideration of senior, youth and disabled populations, local food security, community safety, and increased support for arts, sports, and recreation.

While there were mixed feelings from submitters around the idea of a targeted rate to help fund a new library and community hub in Takapuna's Waiwharariki Anzac Square, the majority supported the plan's climate and environmental initiatives.

"We are told time and time again in every consultation that the environment and water quality are front of mind for all of you and we share this feeling," says local board chair Toni van Tonder.

Van Tonder explains that, as the board anticipates reduced budgets in future, they are focusing on how its money is spent to get the most benefit to the most people, whilst still reaching and engaging with a rapidly changing population.

"We will continue to apply a future-generations lens, focusing on making decisions that have long-term benefits for those who stand to inherit our place. We believe that by investing in the priorities

outlined in this plan we will be able to create a more resilient and sustainable community that can withstand future challenges whilst still working towards the vision we hold.

"Thank you to those who have contributed to this plan with your feedback through consultations, attending business meetings or simply taking the time to reach out to board members. We appreciate you sharing your knowledge and aspirations for the area to shape our plan so we can get the most out of the next three years."

All of Auckland's 21 local boards are legally required to produce a plan every three years, establishing a set of priorities.

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board priorities are:

- Our environment
- Our people
- Our community and facilities
- Our places and transport
- Our economy

To view the final version of the plan when it becomes available online, follow the local board's Facebook page at facebook.com/devonporttakapuna

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Royal unveiling... Diana, Princess of Wales, does the honours at the opening of the Pupuke Waterwise Centre in 1983, while Prince Charles (left) looks on

Waterwise group marks 40 years on Pupuke

Carmel College teacher Jenny Green has been helping organise water confidence classes for junior students for 28 years, making her ideally placed to co-ordinate a recent get-together to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Pupuke Waterwise.

It was held on the shore of Lake Pupuke at the Waterwise Centre behind Milford Primary School, where the first of the country's Waterwise groups was set up. These provide primary and intermediate school students an introduction to sailing and kayaking, along with water-safety skills.

On the centre's wall hangs a picture of the then Prince and Princess of Wales, Charles and Diana, who officially opened the centre in April 1983.

It was three years earlier that the idea arose at Milford Primary, leading to a determined group fundraising and labouring to build the facility.

Green understands 40 weeks of weekend working bees were held to build the centre. "It's a great facility," she says. Milford Primary's principal at the time, Lloyd Roundtree, had to gain Ministry of Education approval to have classes there in school time.

When Green first arrived at Carmel, she was asked to co-ordinate Waterwise for its Year 7 and 8 students, despite having no sailing background. "I had to learn the bow from the stern," she laughs. She soon saw the benefits of Waterwise for local children and is now on the Pupuke board.

Green's length of service to Waterwise and efforts to gather together some of the founding and early members, some well into their 80s, were also recognised at the anniversary celebrations in late October. Current Pupuke chair and Forrest Hill Primary School principal John Marwick presented her a bouquet. Carmel's students also helped with the event, as part of their school service programme.

Green said she loved seeing those who were still able to get along reunite. "They loved it," she says. Among those attending was John Algie, a former deputy principal at Takapuna Normal Intermediate School, who helped lay the two-level building's foundations.

Pupuke Waterwise's success soon encouraged other areas to set up similar groups, all reliant on volunteer help from parents and community members. A national society was later formed and its membership is still strongest from the North Shore, which has four Waterwise groups, training around 5000 students a year. The others are at Narrow Neck, for Devonport peninsula schools, Torbay and Murrays Bay.

Pupuke has five member schools in Milford, Forrest Hill, Campbells Bay, St Joseph's primaries and Carmel College. Other schools have previously been involved, but Green says capacity is limited, so if one drops out its place is quickly taken.

The biggest challenge is for schools to find enough support in



Sailing advocates... Jenny Green at lakeside and (below, from left) John Waters, Stuart Robinson and Gordon McLeay at the Pupuke Waterwise clubrooms readying masts for new Optimists



delivering the programme, with parent helpers often hard to come by.

Volunteer instructors John Waters, Stuart Robinson and Gordon McLeay, who were last week assembling masts for new Optimist sailing dinghies, said sponsorship was also vital and much appreciated. This often came from people with past or family connections to the local schools involved.

Takapuna-based business Oceanbridge Shipping freighted eight Optimists over from Australia recently to upgrade the fleet. Owner Bill Speedy also paid for two of the boats. Other sponsors were Smale Group, Superette and JP Crafts. The North Shore Boating Club donated three boats.

Only pink part of former library dates back to 1950s

Noting the headline on the 10 November Observer issue that the former library is for sale drew my interest. It was stated that, "...the two-storey 1950s building has a Heritage B listing..." Later there is mention of the "facade and staircase" being protected.

Well they may be, but the two-storey glass box of a building is not a 1950s construction.

The first part is still there enveloped in a corner of the glass box. The original is the portion of slightly pink stonework. This is the portion I used to visit when I joined the library, and in fact I never remember visiting after the glass box was built as I had moved away by then.

I find it hard to even think that a wrought-iron staircase case of the 1960s would be of heritage standard, whereas a better case would be put for the original little pink one.

All this information would have to be researched for such a Heritage Protection notice to be issued. Sadly, it seems the Observer has only been given some of the facts.

John Webster



Old and newer... The old Takapuna Library, built in two main stages in the 1950s and 1960s, is for sale. The pink stone original section was opened first, with the two-storey addition built later

Takapuna asset sales stupidly vandalise our inheritance

Not even the minute Blomfield Spa pocket park and haven of green and trees in Takapuna is worth saving, according to Eke Panuku. A local offered to buy it, maintain it and leave it as is, but Panuku wants the highest price possible.

Auckland Council and our local board have vandalised our inheritance. I am

ashamed of the Takapuna, and indeed Auckland, that future generations will inherit.

The Firth property debacle, selling off the Mary Thomas Centre and losing the old library's land is unbelievably stupid and short-sighted. It feels like all the things of inherent value are being sold off to balance the books, but will not reduce rates anyway.

The travesty of our square will be little more than a sunless prison exercise yard when the high rise is complete. We had a blank page – and the outcome is shameful. As is what is left of the beachfront park at the Strand. Please, everyone, oppose the desecration of open spaces and trees in our area.

Marion O'Kane

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A tale of two donations explains building's two-stage construction

The former library at 2 The Strand was, like the Auckland Harbour Bridge, built in two major stages, says an Auckland Council senior research librarian, Derek Whaley.

Asked by the Observer to shed a little more light into the history of the building, he said when the library opened on 13 March 1956, it was a very small, single-storey structure, built on gifted land and paid for by a donor. By 1963, it was given a two-storey extension, thanks to a separate bequest.

"The pink-stone structure is definitely the most important heritage part of the building," Whaley said.

He relayed information compiled for council's Walk Auckland app for the library stop on the Central Takapuna History Walk.

The land for the first purpose-built Takapuna library was donated by R & W Hellaby. It was built with funds provided by Catherine Trimble in honour of her sister, Fanny, as is commemorated on a plaque on the building exterior.

Another resident, Grace A. Abbott, left a large bequest to the Takapuna Borough Council, also to be used to help fund a library building. By the time the money was made

available to the council, the new library was already open, so the funds were put towards its substantial extension.

The two-storey Grace A. Abbott Bequest annex, designed by Sargent & Smith, opened to the public on 9 February 1963.

The library remained in continuous use until 1989, when it was replaced by the current library across the road.

In 2014, during a major renovation of the new library, the collection and staff moved back across the road, albeit only briefly.

Whaley said the building's distinctive pink stone was Putāruru ignimbrite. The steel stairs in its extension were protected due to their specific style and timbers.

Over the years, local-body representatives and community advocates have suggested the old library might make a good museum or art gallery for Takapuna.

It has been vacant since 2018, deemed an earthquake risk. Council property arm Eke Panuku put it on the market this month, as an unwanted council asset.

Due to its endowment status, returns will be spent locally.

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and supply chain constraints are among the factors creating heightened demand for this asset class.

"The benefits of unlisted commercial property funds can be numerous for those looking for a long-term investment and stable returns over time."

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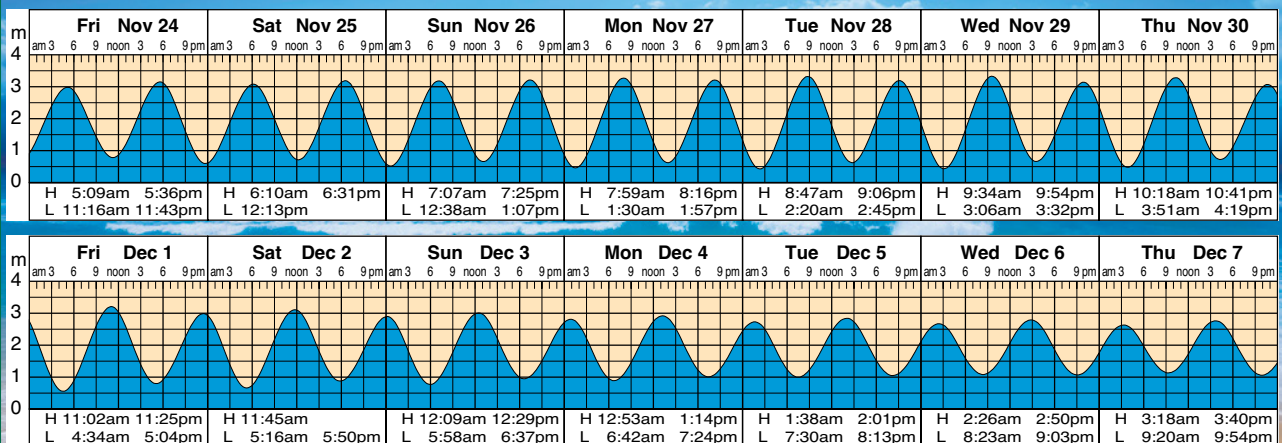
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Milford / Takapuna Tides





Korean heritage and symbolism colours vibrant artworks

When Ji Yeon Jeong came to New Zealand from Korea 15 years ago, she thought she would stay for a year on a business internship, but now she is settled on the North Shore where she is an enthusiastic promoter of cross-cultural conversations through art.

She teaches painting and has had four exhibitions this year, including around Matariki when she showed work in conjunction with Maori artists, including Lake House arts centre-based carver Natanahira Pona.

Now, at the Depot Artspace in Devonport, she is showcasing traditional Korean painting technique and colours. She hopes the works will appeal for their intricate brushwork, vibrant colours and deep symbolism, and as an insight into Korea's artistic heritage.

Jeong has combined this high artistry with folk painting, typically done by common people to depict everyday subjects.

"You can see the honest lives of people at that time, and see what they dream and wish for. These things are reflected in the lives of Koreans today," she says.

Beyond the simple artistic dimension, she believes paintings can help in cultural exchange and resonate with Koreans living here.

Jeong quickly became fascinated by Maori culture, prompted by visits to Auckland Museum.

She went on to complete a Fine Arts Masters degree at Elam art school at the University of Auckland, where she also became more interested in using elements of Korean art.

A few years later, Jeong did post-graduate studies at Wananga Aotearoa.

"I went to Wananga because I wanted to learn indigenous arts, but the course wasn't available at the Auckland campus." Instead, she took a course on bicultural professional supervision, which she says has helped a lot in her understanding of New Zealand society and collaborations.

"The uses of art and culture from each country are endless. In particular, New Zealand is a multicultural society based on dual cultures, so it is a suitable environment



Colours and culture... Ji Yeon Jeong with paintings from her latest exhibition, which is informed by traditional Korean artistic techniques, as used in this image of birds (right)



for various cultural events and cultural exchanges. Artistically, you can create a variety of hybrid artworks through the traditional arts of each country. In this way, another culture will be born."

Jeong believes the subtly changing culture of a country over time – past, present and future – informs appreciation of it. "To understand the present, you must understand the past," she says.

Her painting students are mostly Korean, but sometimes Kiwis apply. She finds older people become closer to their instincts and immigrants especially seem to get mental health benefits from the focus of painting.

The name of her exhibition is *Creating an Empty Space in Between*. She says this fuses both a scholastic approach, popular in the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897), through a painting genre known as Chackgeori, and a more imaginative folkloric style. It also references the way space provides scope.

"This exhibition expresses the ways in which, as immigrants, we can freely enjoy

all cultures in a multicultural society and live in harmony by creating our own space in an often confined environment," she says.

Regarding the colours in her work, Jeong explains that Oriental colour culture focuses on harmony with nature.

The five cardinal colours of white, black, red, blue and green are based on the concept of yin-yang and five elements and also represent her identity.

Colours also represent directions and seasons.

Blue represents east, white represents west, red represents south, black represents north, and yellow represents the centre.

"As a symbol of the seasons, blue symbolises spring, red symbolises summer, white symbolises autumn, and black symbolises winter."

It all adds up to multi-layered messaging on canvas.

• *Creating an Empty Space in Between* runs until 27 November at the Depot Artspace, Clarence St, Devonport.

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Level 1, Takapuna Library**

Until 12 January 2024, Open daily.

Aotearoa artist files hold rare and rich glimpses into our art history via exhibition catalogues and invitations, reviews, CVs and even small artworks such as the pieces we show by Christine Hellyar, Graham Fletcher and Makyla Curtis. Artist files are important for our sense of history, for research, and as inspiration for art-making. Please visit our exhibition, and while there you can also browse the 700 artist files we hold in the Angela Morton Room. Open daily.

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**Join us this summer for
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Our summer reading programme encourages children aged 5 – 12 to become independent, enthusiastic readers with a fun bingo board of reading challenges. There are badges and stickers to be earned, and great prizes up for grabs. Takapuna Library will be offering regular story time sessions three times a week throughout the holidays, as well as movies and lots of other activities. Come and visit us to grab one of our take-home kits from December 11th to get started!

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Winning sounds of the season

North Shore Brass and Westlake Girls High School's Cantare choir are combining to take their award-winning sounds to the city.

The Takapuna-based talents will resonate at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Parnell in a special Christmas concert. This will also feature bass trombonist Matt Donaldson, a Westlake Boy High School student, who at just 15 became the New Zealand Junior Champion of Champions, one of the youngest musicians to win the title at the New Zealand Brass Band nationals in July.

North Shore Brass was runner-up at the 2023 event and is the reigning Auckland band champion. It recently celebrated its 100th anniversary in concert at the Bruce Mason Centre. The 80-voice Cantare choir,



directed by Fiona Wilson, won several gold medals at the recent national secondary schools choir competition, the Big Sing Finale.

The concert at the cathedral will feature several Christmas favourites, including a solo from Donaldson in 'You're a Mean One, Mr Grinch'. The North Shore Brass Academy Band will play before the A-grade band in an event that also acts as a fundraiser for the organisation.

The concert is on Saturday 2 December, at 7.30pm, with tickets priced at \$15 for students,

\$30 for seniors and \$35 for adults, with family passes at \$80, available from eventfinda.co.nz or at the door.

For those not wishing to cross the bridge, the Academy Band will play at the Takapuna Christmas Festival on the same weekend.

Navy Band drops anchor at Bruce Mason

The Royal New Zealand Navy Band is the star turn in the final *Morning Melodies* of the year at the Bruce Mason Centre.

The Christmas-themed concert on Monday 4 December at 11am will be a sing-along session.

The country's only full-time military concert band includes top musicians capable of playing across a wide range of styles and events, from military commemorations

to lively performances. The band's busy schedule includes an annual appearance at *Morning Melodies*, a series now in its 22nd year.

The concerts have this year included singers and brass and jazz ensembles.

Ticketholders are welcome to arrive up to 30 minutes early for complimentary tea and biscuits before shows. Book at the theatre or at aucklandlive.co.nz.

Carols a hot ticket at the PumpHouse

Forty of 190 available tickets for a fun evening of carolling at the PumpHouse were snapped up on the first day of sales.

The annual Christmas Carols in the Amphitheatre, at which the venue's community choir leads the way, is on Sunday 17 December at 6pm.

Tickets are priced at \$8, \$10, \$15 and \$20 – thanks to a subsidy from the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board helping keep prices down. Those who book at the theatre online can choose which price they wish to pay. Songbooks are provided.

• Meanwhile, the recent PumpHouse picnic day (pictured) drew good crowds, in what was a reprise of a popular fundraiser from the 1980s. "It achieved the goal of getting the community down to the PumpHouse," said theatre business manager James Bell.

While the amount raised was yet to be fully tallied, he said the event attended by around 2500 people on Sunday 12 November, featuring theatre tours, food trucks and stalls, was likely to have covered costs.

He hoped increased awareness of the lake-side venue would encourage people to keep an eye out for its diverse range of shows.

Bell said the cost and regulations around



staging events had increased over the years, including having to pay for extra rubbish collections and the like, so for any repeats of picnic day, a different model of organisation might be considered.



Artwork in progress... Artist Regan Hill-Male at work on his Sunnynook mural

‘Dream wall’ provides perfect canvas for young artist

Flora and fauna scenes are bringing new life to a blank concrete wall in Sunnynook, thanks to a Forrest Hill artist's colourful vision.

Regan Hill-Male is completing a large-scale project that runs along the Sycamore Dr side of the Woolworths supermarket.

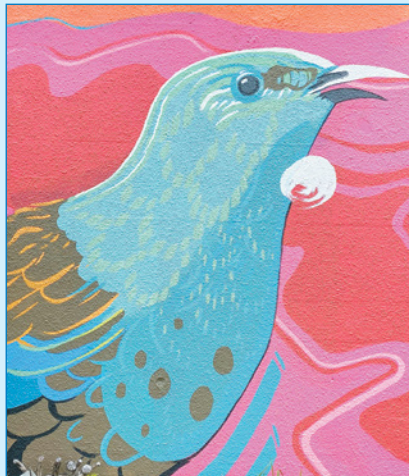
“This is almost a dream wall – there’s a massive amount of foot traffic and cars coming along,” he says.

Along with feature images of birds, frogs and flowers, swirling patterns work through the length of the design, visually tying together its changing colour panels and different wall surfaces. The swirls represent water, a nod to the history of the area as a flood plain.

Last summer's floods prompted the mural project, championed by Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member Mel Powell as a way to uplift the area. With consent from the supermarket, a busy but blank section of central Sunnynook is being transformed, with a light-coloured wall becoming a canvas to showcase nature's beauty.

“It’s a classic kind of native flora and fauna mural, but more fluoro,” says Hill-Male. “It’s my take, with the colour and swirls and shapes.”

He hopes the mural will prove uplifting to the many people who pass by, and says early reactions to the work in progress have been encouraging. People coming and going from the shopping centre, waiting at the bus stop, or crossing over to Sunnynook Park and



the community centre have been positive.

“I want to give something nice to the community after some people lost everything,” he says of the floods which caused significant damage in the area.

Powell first reached out to Hill-Male about six months ago, having seen a mural he painted on the fence at his home in Forrest Hill. She liked the idea of getting a local artist for the mural project she had in mind. Once funding was secured, the 27-year-old AUT arts graduate arranged time off from his four-day-a-week retail day job to paint the mural, excited at the scale of the project.

“I’m trying to find my way in the art world,” he says.

Murals are what he has decided to focus

on, having already completed several at schools, including at Wairau Intermediate, where he was once a pupil. “I want to do this full-time,” he says. “There should be more art work in urban spaces.”

Having been keen on art since he was at Sunnynook Primary and through his time at Westlake Boys High School, he is happy to be making his mark locally.

Hill-Male counts himself lucky not to have been affected by the Auckland Anniversary Weekend flood, but he saw the damage to the area he grew up in.

In his job at a lighting shop, he deals with electricians still working on insurance jobs on homes damaged in the floods and says the backlog of work is significant. “Your house is meant to be your space, safe from the elements – people feel violated.”

The mural should be completed by early December, taking around three weeks in total. It is all painted by hand, rather than with spray paint, which he says is slower but kinder to the environment. “I want to have a good positive impact on my community,” he says.

Hill-Male has also been inspiring younger artists, having given a talk at Wairau Intermediate about his work. He told them his passion lay in murals because they were something for all to see.

“Urban artwork is incredibly under-appreciated. It makes a community more satisfying to be in and can reflect significant cultural events,” he says.



Milford actor is Christmas show's man of many parts

The popular Tim Bray *Santa Claus Show* is returning to the PumpHouse Theatre this Christmas season, with a Milford actor playing multiple characters.

The show, opening next month, follows Kelly, a little girl with a tendency to bossiness who needs to learn the true spirit of Christmas as she journeys to the North Pole accompanied by an array of whimsical characters.

Many of those characters are played by Milford resident Awatea Timothy, who will take the stage as Kelly's dad, a jumping teddy, a yapping dog and is also the alternate for Santa.

The teddy bear is his favourite of the bunch. "He's quite goofy, the character, which is kind of me as a person anyway," Timothy says.

The actor says this year's production hits different story beats than last year's version of the show and has fresh faces in the cast.

The show has been a seasonal regular since 1991.

"It's been running for so long, so it's just amazing that Tim [Bray, director] keeps it fresh every year."

He describes the bright, energetic show as "super-fun".

"Prepare to be wowed and for the Christmas spirit to overwhelm you."

Timothy is joined in the cast by another Milford resident and Takapuna Normal Intermediate student, Jessie O'Hanlon, who says she is excited and nervous for her first performance in front of a paying audience.

Timothy, originally from Ashburton, moved to Auckland to study a Bachelor of Performing and Screen Arts at Unitec.

He decided to make the move to Milford to be closer to rehearsals for the show.

"I really wanted to do this show so it was going to be closer to the show and it's such



Close to home... Awatea Timothy (left) with *Santa Claus Show* castmate and fellow Milford resident Jessie O'Hanlon

a beautiful place as well."

He won't be here for much longer, however, as he's planning to move to Western Australia next year to work in the mines.

"It's just like to build money and then come back and see what the haps is, so at least I'm not struggling doing acting gigs where you have to take time off work for auditions and things."

When he returns to New Zealand Timothy hopes to do more acting work using te reo, similar to his role in the .co.nz production staged at the PumpHouse during Matariki.

Timothy has acted in both adult and children's theatre and said both have their positives, although the ruthless crowds for children's theatre is particularly enjoyable.

"On stage I think you get that instant gratification from the audience... with children's theatre, they're quite unforgiving. They'll tell you what they think, which is awesome for us as actors."

• *The Santa Claus Show '23*, at the PumpHouse Theatre from 4-22 December. See pumphouse.co.nz for tickets.



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Paws for effect...
Actor Awatea Timothy (above and opposite page) plays a dad, a yapping dog and is an alternate for the part of Santa himself, but says this "goofy" teddy bear is his favourite role in the Tim Bray show at the PumpHouse



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| Trolls Band Together (G) 91min | Previews 25&26 NOV |

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