

The Rangitoto Observer

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 127 - April 26 2024

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

**Magic club marks
wand-erful 50 years... p3**

**Garden group wins
Kumara Award... p5**

**Pupukemoana
photo spread... p8-9**

New \$425k Forrest Hill Rd crossing wins approval

A new crossing with signals will be built by Auckland Transport (AT) across Forrest Hill Rd, near the corner of Blakeborough Dr, at an estimated cost of around \$425,000.

It will replace two existing mid-road refuge islands, either side of bus stops.

AT says the islands "aren't ideal" because

reaching them from the footpath requires people to cross two lanes on a main road with a T2 lane.

The Devonport-Takapuna Local Board agreed at its April business meeting last week to use nearly half of its discretionary Local Board Transport Capital Fund on the work.

The crossing will be just south of where a pedestrian died at the Blakeborough Rd corner in 2018, after being hit by a vehicle.

Members George Wood and Mel Powell, who both live in the area, convinced their fellow board members to support a project

To page 2

Fantail flies high



Winning fare... Fantail & Turtle executive chef James Wheeler (left) and head chef Aniket Kotkar with two of the Smales Farm eatery's most popular dishes – pork ribs and prawn tacos – after it was named this month as the country's best gastropub. Story, page 2.



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Email news@rangitoto-observer.co.nz

Project should slow ‘rat-runners’

From page 1

option that included kerb ‘buildouts’ on the Blakeborough Dr corner to slow vehicles entering Forrest Hill Rd.

Blakeborough was a local rat-run route, they said. Member Peter Allen agreed, and said speed on the T2 lane was a problem.

AT said it can do the build-outs and upgrade standard footpaths at the corner as part of the project estimate, but cautioned costs would not be finalised until detailed designs were done. Construction would likely be a year or more away.

Board members have faced flak after AT last year built a series of costly raised crossings on East Coast Rd. These have been cited as an example of overkill, for which funding has recently been reduced.

Although board members have questioned the need to install “gold standard” crossings in some other areas,

Powell and Woods say the Forrest Hill Rd

project is justified, given how many school children, residents and commuters cross the road daily.

An extra-wide raised crossing at Narrow Neck Beach, estimated to cost \$345,000, has also won board approval. This will use up most of the rest of its three-yearly local-transport spend.

Members want a workshop held so they can have a say on where any remaining money is spent – probably favouring safety signage – rather than see it disappearing into AT’s city-wide coffers.

They have also asked AT to consult them regarding several other projects, including another raised crossing at the already signalled intersection of Forrest Hill Rd and Tristram Ave.

Due to problems with excessive numbers of road cones repeatedly and unexpectedly disrupting traffic, AT has also been asked to better inform the board about traffic-management plans coming up in its area.

HON SIMON WATTS
MP for North Shore
northshore@parliament.govt.nz
simonwattsmpp



National NZ
Authorised by Hon Simon Watts, Parliament Buildings, Wgtn.

Takapuna has nation’s top gastropub

Smales Farm bar and eatery Fantail & Turtle has been named New Zealand’s best gastropub.

Judges declared it the Supreme Champion of the Hospitality New Zealand competition at an awards ceremony at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron this month, having narrowed down the 50 venues chosen in a public vote to find seven regional winners.

Fantail & Turtle general manager James Wakefield credited executive chef James Wheeler and his staff for the success.

“A lot of those pub classics, Wheels and his team just elevate them as much as they can,” he said.

Wheeler said his menu takes standard pub grub and does it better, such as using

higher-quality cuts of meats and dry-ageing some of them.

The business has a focus on sustainability, buying whole fish and lamb, and using the entire animal, including the bones for stock.

It also started growing its own herbs on-site in 2022.

Wheeler said the most popular items on the menu were pork ribs, beef sliders, prawn tacos and jalapeño wontons, the latter making this year’s 100 Iconic Auckland Eats list.

Competition judge Connie Clarkson said the Fantail & Turtle menu was “confident, balanced and presents well, with a commitment to zero waste, provenance and sustainability”.



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Abracadabra! Club marks 50 years of magic



Hot stuff... (from left) Sebastian the ventriloquist's dummy, Shore City Magicians Club founding and life member Bruce Allan (aka Bj the clown) and club president Mark Robinson with an array of magic paraphernalia

The Shore City Magicians Club has pulled off the trick of lasting 50 years, an achievement club members attribute to its nurturing of young talent.

Founding and life member Bruce (Bj) Allan told the Observer the club was started in 1974 with the sole intention of teaching young people magic, as no others had that focus. It remains the club's key objective and is the main reason it has survived, he said. "If you don't put the trees back in the forest you don't have a forest."

The club has been based in the Takapuna Community Services building since it began, teaching 11-25-year-olds magic and 'allied

arts' such as balloon work and juggling.

Club president Mark Robinson, who joined the club as a boy in 1996, said it was a great organisation for anyone interested in magic, including people with disabilities or who don't fit in easily elsewhere.

The membership has included autistic and blind people. "They spend their life with people saying you can't do this, can't do that and then you come to magic club and you can do the impossible."

He said the club teaches not just magic but also values which can transfer into multiple aspects of life. "There's a lot more to magic than just the tricks – there's learning how to

speak in public and skills that can help these kids throughout life."

The club currently has 16 members, six being young learners, but had as many as 50 a decade ago, Robinson said.

Access to learning resources online has meant fewer young people are interested in joining a club, but it was the best way to learn. "Anyone can learn a magic trick but that doesn't mean you learn how to perform it or make that trick entertaining."

The club meets at the Takapuna Senior Citizens Hall on the first Wednesday of every month. Its annual show is at the Rose Centre in Belmont in June.

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Briefs

Big block awaits bids

A block of nearly a hectare overlooking Takapuna Beach remains on the market, with expressions of interest closing on 2 May. The 9482 sqm site, which stretches from Hurstmere Rd down to restaurants Tokyo Bay, Regatta and Francs near The Strand, has been marketed by Bayleys. Agent Stuart Bode said the property was going through a marketing campaign and as of last Friday had not "sold prior".

'Bring back bobbies'

A call for more regular police patrols in central Takapuna has been made by former Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member Jan O'Connor to the current board. Sparked by the stabbings at the Westfield mall at Bondi Junction, Sydney, this month, she urged it to advocate for more police presence locally to deter attacks and crime generally. Her in-person submission was received.

Northcroft St works

Upgrades are scheduled to start on Northcroft St, Takapuna, on 29 April, says council arm Eke Panuku. The work, scaled back from an unpopular trial two years ago, should take two months.

Timetable tweaked

Auckland Transport admits it changed the 814 bus schedule by five minutes without notice. The aim was to allow more transfer time to the Devonport ferry, but some users say it has impacted their bus connections at the Takapuna end.

Apartments spokesman

A story in the last Observer quoted a spokesperson for apartment residents about lack of action on Sacred Grove. The wrong last name was used. It should have read Allan Morris (not Lewis).

Shore food banks and others join forces to tackle rising need

A new food network has been set up to deal with growing 'food insecurity' problems across the North Shore.

The North Shore Food Insecurity Network is a collection of food banks, community gardens, churches, community centres, the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and budgeting services dedicated to helping people become less reliant on food donations.

The manager of the Takapuna North Community Trust, Natasha Geo, who is also facilitator of the food network, told the Observer that often groups working on similar issues weren't even aware of each other's existence.

Collaborating could mean for instance that food banks would become more aware and connected to other services like local community gardens or budgeting services, so they could refer regular food-parcel recipients who might be supported in another way.

Geo said that the food banks in the network have told her demand for parcels has increased across the North Shore, with rises in the cost of living.

People were unable to afford basic food items and were returning for parcels more frequently.

"There are groups of people attending who would not have accessed food banks previously," she said.

Even families with two earners were finding they could not afford a basic basket of food.

The network will be "solution-focused", meeting once every two months to discuss what they can do to help people access the food they need, with donations a last resort.

"We're trying to attack the problem by having the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff but also building a fence at the top of the cliff so people don't have to rely on food banks in the first place."

Local groups including Grow Forrest Hill community garden, the Sunnynook Community Centre, Takapuna Methodist Church, North Shore Budgeting Service, the Takapuna CAB and the Good Works Trust are involved already, with talks involving further groups, including on the Devonport peninsula.

Geo said the work was doubly important now because food banks were having to manage their stock and could not help everyone who came to them.

"That's why referrers like the Citizens Advice Bureau or community centres [and] victim support are really important, because they can kind of vet the people who are requesting (support from food banks)."

Many food banks keep their details hidden to avoid being overwhelmed or taken advantage of, so the network will allow them to contact each other to learn where extra pressures are or what consistent challenges they all have, to gain a better understanding of the problems.

Woolworths New Zealand has given the network over \$25,000 to help with its operations, which Geo will distribute.

She is currently talking to the organisations to find the best way for them to access the money.

A future goal of the network is to build a shared database, with each food bank recording the same information about its users so they can see trends in demand, Geo said.



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Garden group snares award, founder spreads the word

Phoebe Atkinson points to a crop of kumara soon to be harvested at Forrest Hill’s community garden on Seine Reserve. Its near-readiness times nicely with the trust she co-founded having this month won a Kumara Award. The award, from the Placemaking Aotearoa organisation, recognises not so much the crop as the community growth Grow Forrest Hill has promoted.

The synergy of growing produce along with neighbourhood connections is what first drew Atkinson, husband Dave and a small group of supporters to seek Devonport-Takapuna Local Board backing to transform a portion of the reserve.

“We still don’t know who nominated us for the award,” she says. The finalists were assessed by judges after community nominations.

Grow Forrest Hill won the Caring For the Land, Caring For the People category of the awards

In the two years since the trust gained approval, it has established garden beds, built sheds and a glasshouse and installed a pizza oven that has been cranked up for community dinners. The core group of volunteers has swelled to around 50 people, with 15 to 20 of them arriving most Sunday afternoons for working bees. Atkinson says most weeks a newcomer or two will turn up. Some come along to learn new skills, others also for companionship, with a wide range of ages and ethnicities involved.

Atkinson’s role is growing too. With more helpers at the garden she has widened her attentions to become something of a food-security champion, delivering on a \$20,000 programme funded by the local board. She has set up a map of community gardens and ‘pataka kai’ food cupboards for donated supplies. The Grow Forrest Hill model is being looked at in other areas. Atkinson is sharing expertise with the Sunnynook Community Centre and those keen to establish a sustainable garden in Takapuna. A workshop was held for Kainga Ora at its Bardia St housing development in Belmont, where a pataka kai for residents has been set up. She has also held talks with the Ngataranga Organic Garden in Devonport, which may be open to sharing some of its space with the wider community.

Atkinson has lived over the road from Seine Reserve since 2012. She has studied horticulture and town planning, and been a high-school chaplain and a teacher. “The skills from all those roles are at play here,” she says. Seeking grants and sponsors is part of what she does. “Your passion carries you and then you get the activation.”


Current activities at the garden include planting brassicas and more salad greens. Last year the small kumara patch yielded 14kg of the vegetable – she hopes for more this season.

• Find out more at growcollective.co.nz

Building community... The synergy of growing produce along with connections motivated Phoebe Atkinson and others to create Grow Forrest Hill


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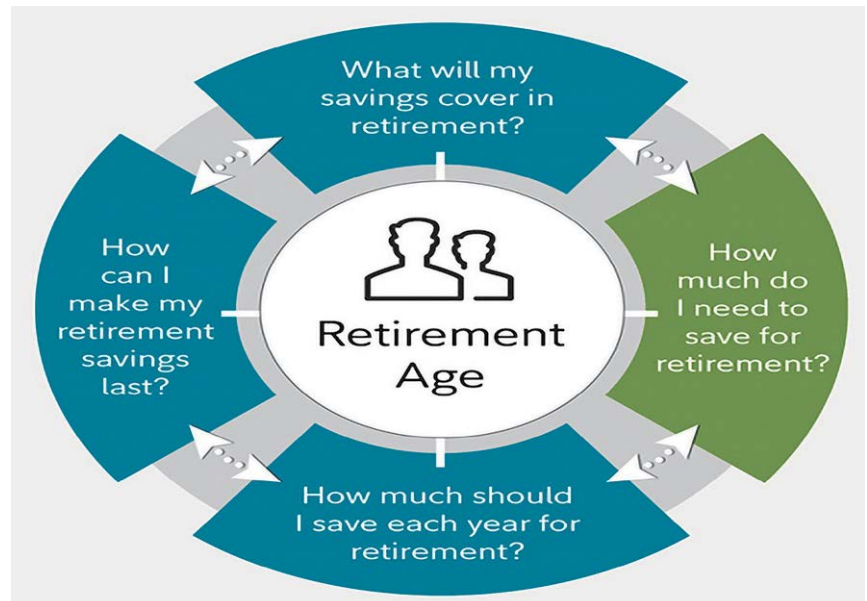
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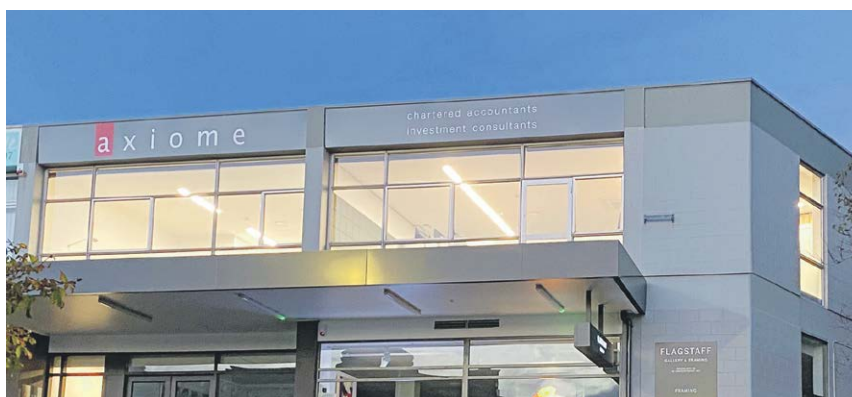
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Local Filipino community keen to offer taste of home

Forrest Hill resident Jade Munoz, who is organising a Filipino Festival in Takapuna next weekend, has a personal motivation for wanting to share her culture.

She wants her daughter, who attends Takapuna Normal Intermediate School, and children like her to grow up knowing their heritage. “I want them to know how special it is.”

But Munoz is also excited for other locals to learn more about the Philippines during a day of food and cultural entertainment at Waiwharariki Anzac Square.

Choosing Takapuna as the location is deliberate. Most of the 70,000 Filipinos in New Zealand live in Auckland, with a large number of those on the North Shore, many working in health care.

Munoz – a brand and marketing specialist for Air New Zealand who has a background of working on big events in the Philippines – has also noticed previous Turkish and Latin festivals have done well in the area, attracting both expat communities and other visitors.

Businessmen Chris Delrosario and Eric Ordonez, who share premises in Takapuna, are also hoping the festival will be a way to introduce more people to what they offer.

Engineer Delrosario set up an ice-cream shop, Gian’s Sorbetes, six months ago on the promenade behind the ASB off Hurstmere Rd. The idea came after his wife experimented with making avocado ice-cream at home. The couple soon bought an ice-cream machine, and began selling it to family and friends, expanding flavours to include Filipino favourites, several of which have won national awards.

Gian is their son’s name and Sorbetes the term Filipinos use for ice cream, which is typically sold from street carts in the Philippines.

Delrosario, who has lived in New Zealand for 20 years, says Filipino ice cream tends to be firm, and while it is usually dairy-based, some of his varieties are vegan.



Cool treat... Chris Delrosario of Gian’s in Takapuna with an ube ice-cream. Right: Filipino Festival organiser and Forrest Hill local Jade Munoz.

He hopes Kiwis will become less hesitant to try flavours such as ube (purple yam), tofu vanilla with brown sugar and tapioca pearls and tart citrus, alongside his more familiar mango, coconut and strawberry cheesecake flavours.

“We’ve got bold flavours – black sesame, a very Asian thing.”

Having started the ice-cream venture in his garage in West Auckland shortly before Covid struck, it faced tough times during lockdowns.

“We were thinking of stopping the business,” Delrosario says.

Instead, they picked up some retail outlets and boxed on, their persistence paying off when they landed a gold medal at the last New Zealand Ice Cream Awards for a fusion flavour of tangy calamansi fruit melded with manuka honey. More success came at the Artisanal Food Awards.

Filipino food is gaining wider recognition, with restaurants such as Nanam on Hurstmere

Rd leading the way in New Zealand. The popular Hapunam food truck will be at the festival, alongside other stalls reflecting the regional variety of a country spread across 700 islands.

Munoz says meats such as grilled chicken and skewered pork are specialties, alongside braises and baked goods that pick up on the country’s Spanish colonial influences.

Having organised recent Filipino events at Western Springs and in West Auckland, Munoz says she is eager for North Shore people to learn about what she describes as “a very caring culture”. Attendees will have the chance to see traditional dancers performed through the day and maybe even join in with a bamboo stick dance.

Munoz says: “For me this is really taking the Filipino culture mainstream in a very popular place and I hope lots of people, not just Filipinos, will come along.”

• Takapuna Filipino Festival, Waiwharariki Anzac Square, 11am to 4pm, Saturday 4 May.



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Second Pupukemoana proves popular

The second annual Discover Pupukemoana event drew more than 500 people to learn more about Lake Pupuke this month.

Many took the chance to kayak on the lake or use the gear provided to go snorkelling.

Others stayed ashore, enjoying workshops and stalls and the tranquil surrounds.

Tabitha Becroft, the environmental coordinator for event organisers Pupuke Birdsong Project, said even though the weather on 14 April was more unpredictable than for the inaugural event last year, it stayed fine enough for everyone to have a good time.

The snorkelling tours and a weaving workshop, at which people made harakeke fish, proved the most popular activities, she said.

Bilingual workshops on pests and plants were held in English and Chinese.

Held in Killarney Park, the event was hosted to raise awareness of the importance of Lake Pupuke to the local ecosystem.



What a view... Ankit Marothiya (left) and Deepika Khadolia came from home in central Auckland to discover more about Lake Pupuke



Oarsome experience... Eric Webster helped attendees launch into kayaking on the lake



Team effort... Organisers and helpers, including (from left) Pupuke Birdsong Project environmental coordinator Tabitha Becroft, chair Rachael Pates, volunteer David Morrison, Takapuna North Community Trust staff Maisie Ramsay and Georgia Pringle, and trust manager Natasha Geo, with part-time staffer Ben Zhang (rear), who took a bilingual session on pests and plants, and Asian community liaison and events coordinator Grace Samuelson



Dads and daughters... Brian Wolfman (above) and five-year-old twin daughters Aria and Lexie arrived from Milford by bike, while David Anderson (top right) brought his two girls, Iris, aged 7 (left) and Stella, 8, from Devonport



Taking the plunge... A group of snorkellers is kitted out and given a briefing before exploring the depths



Key info... Healthy Waters biosecurity team members Belinda Studholme (above, left) and Madison Jones, offered advice. Right: Jeff Zhao brought 18-month-old daughter Chloe along from home in Hillcrest for the day



Winter Lights denied local-board grants funding

The underfunded Takapuna Winter Lights Festival has been denied a grant from the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board after two board members swayed the vote by saying it would be “poor governance” to give it any money.

Chair Toni van Tonder, who had spoken earlier of her wish to support the festival which has been hosted for four years by the Takapuna Beach Business Association (TBBA), used her casting vote at a meeting last week against giving a maximum grant of \$8000 to Golden QT Events, the company of organiser Daniel Green.

The crowd-pulling event has lost \$40,000 in funding from cash-strapped council pro-

motional arm Tatakai Auckland Unlimited, but hopes to gain sufficient support from elsewhere to continue. The TBBA will make a decision on this next month.

Members Gavin Busch and George Wood argued strongly at the April board meeting that the application was inadequate. Grants staff had also flagged the money was sought for event management and producer costs. Grants criteria required money to be spent on delivering events, not on salaries.

Members Mel Powell and Peter Allen supported giving the grant if that point could be resolved. Deputy chair Terrence Harpur, who is also TBBA chief executive, sat aside for the debate.

Van Tonder expressed disappointment the application was not up to scratch. She then put up a recommendation that staff provide advice if there were other avenues by which the board might support the event. This was passed, with Busch and Wood voting against.

Allen withdrew from discussion and the vote on a community event run by his company, Seven Events. The board voted to grant it \$4000 of \$8000 requested towards the costs of bringing back Christmas at the Lake in Milford.

Seven Events’ initial application was also criticised as lacking detail by Wood and Busch, who voted against. The grant will go towards staging, lighting and sound costs.

Amaia keen to make start on coastal path

Plans to build a publicly accessible path around the Amaia apartments site at 48 Esmonde Rd are advancing.

The developer, KBS Capital, has to build the route around the top of its coastal site, as a condition of a planning consent. An esplanade reserve on the site’s perimeter will be vested in council as part of the deal. After five years, the path will become a council asset to maintain.

The developer was keen to get on with the pathway work, Auckland Council staff told the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board in an update this month.

Board members wanted the plans to be overlaid with conceptual designs for a boardwalk from Francis St, Hauraki, to Esmonde Rd. The building of a boardwalk has long been a board goal, but is unfunded. It would extend the Devonport peninsula ‘Greenway’ cycleway and pedestrian route north.

Connectivity was a key part of the sales pitch for Amaia, which was controversially allowed to upscale from the three blocks of apartments and a hotel under construction to a much larger and higher complex to come.

Objections on scale, transport and environmental grounds were rejected by planning commissioners last year, allowing for 13 more buildings rising from four to 16 storeys high.

Board chair Toni van Tonder said for the Francis-Esmonde link to be fully realised, Amaia’s path should align with it better, maximising potential connections at the south-eastern corner of the site. Officials will feed this back to KBS Capital, which estimates the path cost at around \$590,000, plus nearly \$60,000 for landscaping.

Member Gavin Busch said he expected there would plenty of interest from locals in visiting the site for the likes of New Year’s Eve. “It’s a fantastic view, a lovely spot to look back towards the city and the harbour bridge and lights.” He hoped provision would be made for this with lighting and a larger viewing point at the rear of the site.

Members asked about path widths, materials, accessibility, and future liability for any failings or slips. “We don’t want to inherit it in five years and suddenly find in year six that we need to rebuild it,” said van Tonder.

Council parks senior planner Louise Thom-

as said while the board would cover “hard asset” maintenance, including seating, dealing with vegetation would come out of council funds. Seating designs had been changed to “off-the shelf” models to allow for easier replacement. Maintenance costs were estimated to be around \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year.

Busch said the ongoing costs needed watching, potentially including weed and pest control. He noted the board had asked in a submission to an earlier Amaia consent that open space not be vested in the council.

Member George Wood asked how far back the pathway was from the cliff top.

Geo-technical reports had been done, said Thomas. Another parks planner, Cas Hannik, said the path was to be set back from a coastal erosion hazard line. It would mostly be two metres wide and a mix of concrete and wooden boardwalk sections.

Staff said the board would soon get the finalised path proposal. Board deputy chair Terrence Harpur asked them to explore with developers if they might contribute to a future link. Van Tonder was keen for them to come along and explain how “the visions overlap”.



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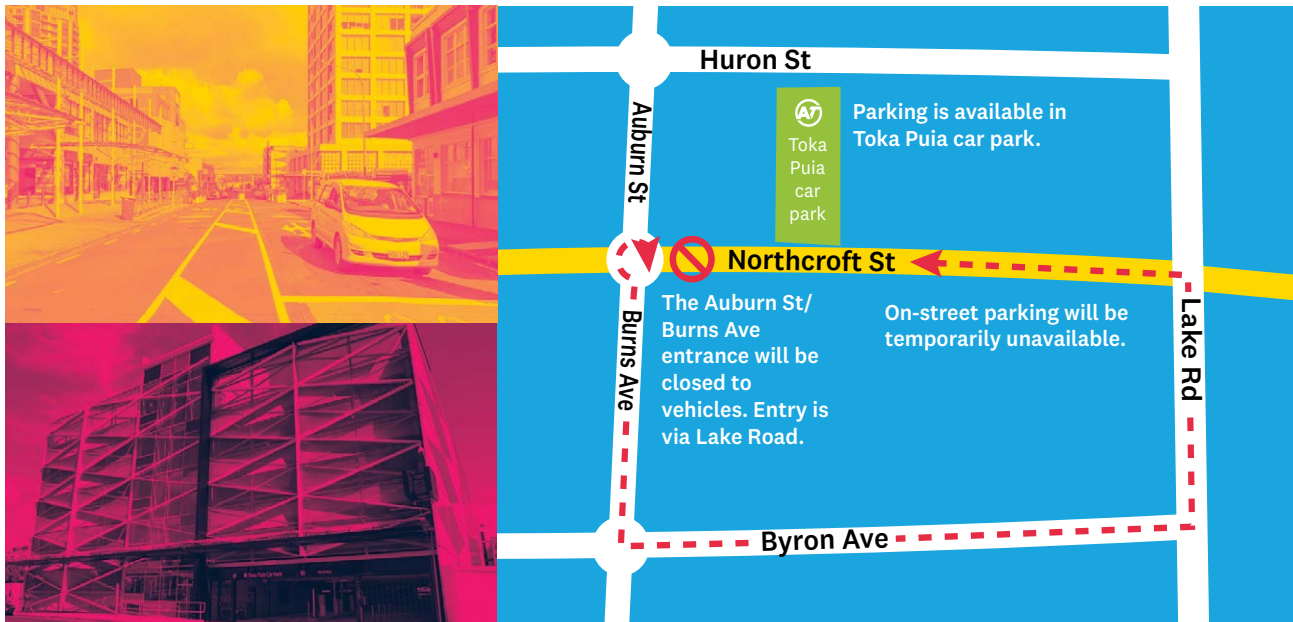
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The map above shows how to access Northcroft Street during the construction period.

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Rising rugby duo unlock spots in national under-20s

Takapuna's Tristyn Cook has made the New Zealand under-20 rugby side alongside his great mate and fellow Blues U20 lock Cam Christie.

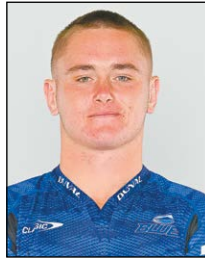
The middle rowers have been friends for around seven years, having played against each other at schoolboy level and together in age-group rep teams for North Harbour and the Blues. Cook went to Westlake Boys High School, while Christie was at Orewa College.

"Its much easier knowing you are going into matches when you have a chemistry with someone," Cook said.

The pair were even set to play senior club rugby together this year for Takapuna, but Christie finally opted to play for North Shore. "[Cam] had registered for Takapuna but at the last minute he changed his mind and signed for our arch-rivals for some reason.

"I despise him for that," Cook laughed.

The Blues came fourth in the national super rugby under-20s competition, but Christie and Cook's locking prowess was recognised



Tristyn Cook (left) and Cam Christie

by both making the New Zealand side.

Cook knew members of teams who finished down the ladder would struggle to make the under-20 side.

"I was stoked to get in," he said, even though it will mean his appearances for Takapuna premiers will be limited in 2024.

"I'm pretty gutted knowing that, but I've got a whole lifetime to play for Takapuna whereas making the New Zealand under-20 side is a one-off opportunity."

"The Takapuna coaches are right behind me."

Cook has had a stellar rugby career already with Westlake, and making the New Zealand Secondary Schools side in 2022. Like many young players, he hopes to eventually play Super Rugby.

"I want to make sure my body is ready... I need to put on a bit of weight and fill out," he said. "Mass needs to meet mass."

Cook is 110kg but estimates his peak playing weight will be around 118kg. Any heavier and he will start to lose speed around the field.

Last week he was in Wellington at a camp with the national under-20 side which culminated with a game against the Hurricanes development side.

Tomorrow, the side flies to the Sunshine Coast for matches against Argentina, South Africa and Australia.

It later heads to the World Rugby U20 Championship being held in South Africa in late June and July.

Letter

Council is cutting off Te Araroa

Good coverage on the Sacred Grove issue in your last edition (12 April).

One factor that the council doesn't seem to heed is that by blocking off the boardwalk, it is cutting off Te Araroa Trail.

During the recent very high king tides, no one could walk along the beach in front of the grove for several hours each day, so the trail was inaccessible during those times.

It is time that the council takes heed of public opinion and opens up the boardwalk for the pleasure and convenience of thousands.

Roger Hall



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Father-and-daughter award winners part of Westlakes'

Around 130 Westlake high school students are involved in their schools' combined annual dramatic productions, an updated Gershwin musical, *Crazy for You*, and action-packed drama *The Three Musketeers*.

One hundred Westlake Boys and Westlake Girls students who make up the casts of the shows, which begin their runs next week, have rehearsed through the school holidays. Nearly 30 more and several former students comprise the orchestra.

Among those involved are father and daughter Nick and Katie Brown, who were each recognised for their parts in putting on the musical *Into the Woods* last year, which was named the overall Outstanding Production at the 2023 Auckland Live Showdown Awards for secondary schools.

Nick, Westlake Boys High School's head of drama, won the Best Director Award, while Katie, who played the witch in the show, was named Best Leading Actor in a Musical. In all, the Westlake schools picked up seven awards at the Showdown ceremony last October.

The Browns have teamed up again in *Crazy for You*, which for multi-talented Year 13 student Katie will be her last big school production. She takes the lead role of Polly Baker. "It's a really lovely thing to share with your child," says Nick.

The 18-year-old said when she was younger she did not like acting in front of her father or asking for advice on auditions. "I wanted to be independent."

But having proved herself in a host of school and community theatre productions, she now enjoys conversations about their



Family affair... Nick Brown (left) is directing and his daughter Katie starring in *Crazy for You*, one of two upcoming combined Westlake productions

shared creative passions, which her mother, a dancer, also joins in on.

"I respect Katie as a performer," says Nick. "We listen to each other."

Katie hopes to successfully audition for a place at a theatre school in England, where Nick is from. It's a route her father followed, gaining a degree in directing, working in the West End and, now with a PhD, focusing on teaching. Directing and developing talent, he sees as his real vocation. "It's like painting pictures and they talk back to you."

He has been at Westlake Boys High School for 10 years, and enjoys the collaboration between the two schools.

Although many in the community see Westlake Boys as an academic and sporting school, he says it has real strength in the performing arts.

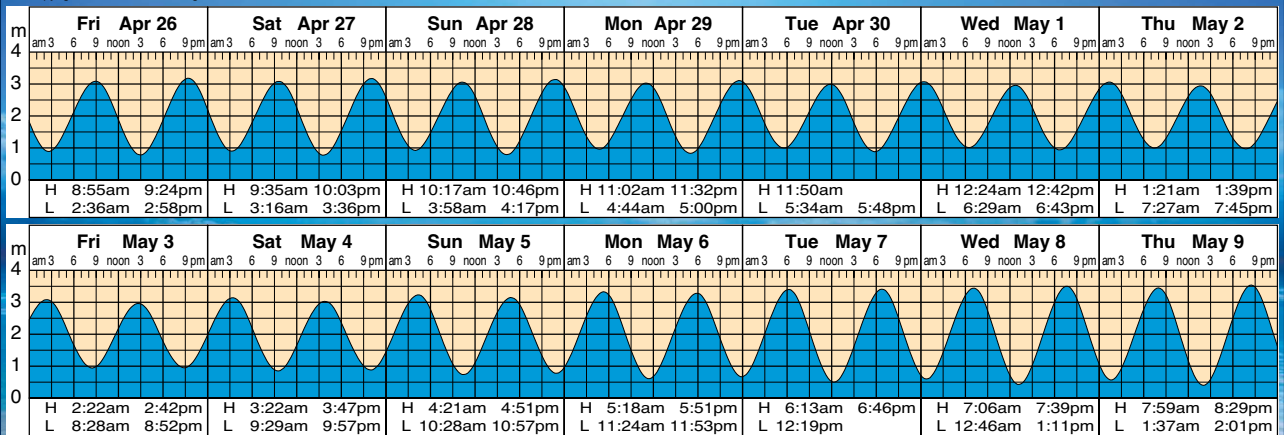
Westlake Girls High School boasts its own strong Shakespearean and choral traditions. The schools have a mixed choir, Choralation, which Katie sings in.

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theatre showcase

excited about participating in the performing arts, cast members performed excerpts at Milford and Sunnynook primary schools and Wairau and Takapuna Normal intermediates last term. Sword-fighting scenes from *The Three Musketeers* were popular.

“For us it now feels like we’re really adaptable to different audiences,” Katie says.

In *Crazy for You*, singers will tackle renditions of showtime classics such as “I’ve Got Rhythm” and “They Can’t Take That Away from Me”.

The show, a hit on Broadway in the early 1990s, is largely based on the 1930 Gershwin musical *Girl Crazy*.

“The music is just outstandingly good,” says Nick.

Essentially a romantic comedy, in which Katie plays opposite Arnav Pillai as Bobby, the show has plenty of “schtick”. Katie draws on skills from taking dance, drama and music classes at school, attending top dance studio, Neverlands, in Albany, and taking voice lessons with an NZ Opera tutor.

Like a trooper, she says if her very competitive UK auditions don’t come off this year, she will treat it as a rehearsal and apply again next year for what she hopes will provide a pathway to a professional career.

Nick is also directing *The Three Musketeers*, based on the Alexandre Dumas novel.

The venue for both shows is the Westlake Boys auditorium, allowing for an arena-style presentation. *Crazy for You* is first up on Tuesday 30 April, with *Musketeers* opening on Wednesday 1 May. The shows alternate until Saturday 11 May. Tickets are available from iticket.co.nz

PumpHouse offers workshops

The PumpHouse Theatre is holding a series of workshops for people wanting to learn more about “behind the scenes” aspects of putting on productions.

Run by experienced theatre people, the workshops are considered ideal for those new to community theatre or wanting to extend their skills. They are delivered with support from Creative New Zealand’s Creative Communities Scheme.

Among those offering their expertise is long-time professional stage manager Teresa Sokolich, with an introductory workshop on 18 May, and a master class later in the year.

PumpHouse box-office and marketing coordinator Meg Andrews will host an evening session on show promotion on Tuesday 7 May. On the evening of Thursday 9 May, Rob Holland, an engineer with years of involvement in community theatre, will run a health and safety course.

For more information or to book, visit pumphouse.co.nz/backstage.



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