

# The Rangitoto Observer

Takapuna, Milford, Castor Bay, Forrest Hill and Sunnynook

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY Issue 133 - July 19, 2024 AN INDEPENDENT VOICE



**Clubmates backing Takapuna Olympians... p3**

**Local police diverted to fight CBD crime... p5**

**Former pro joins cast for Christie mystery... p14-15**

## Enter the Dragon: Asian theme on way for reserve

Asian-inspired concepts will be used in the design of a new destination playground at Knightsbridge Reserve, Forrest Hill.

Possibly part-funded by selling smaller Selwyn Reserve nearby or delaying car-park resurfacing at Fort Takapuna, the playground would be a first of its kind in the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board area.

While seeking to appeal to all comers,

the proposed design would recognise strong Asian population numbers on the Shore, particularly in the north of the local-board area.

The theme would be reflected in a dragon's-trail layout and a colourful garden, with seasonal planting rather than natives, a sheltered pergola-type structure and a shade tree and seating. Open space for exercises such as tai chi would be included and zones

for badminton and table tennis are on the drawing board.

Two concept designs were presented to the local board at a workshop this month, along with price estimates including drainage improvements that ranged from \$273,500 to \$321,000.

Auckland Council community facilities  
To page 4

## Taking flight in Forrest Hill



Lift-off... Twelve-year-old North Shore rider Cruz Fernandez gets some air on the Forrest Hill dirt-jump bike track, newly upgraded by volunteers. Story, page 5.



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## Track prospects looking bleak

Dwindling hopes of restoring public access to the Takapuna-to-Milford coastal track appear to rest on finding a buyer for the Firth property who will be prepared to formally challenge its heritage listing.

After an eight-week tender period a buyer for the property – where a fence has severed the track since late last year – has yet to be found.

“The reality is it could likely go to a private owner seeking the privacy of no walkway,” said the agent marketing the property, Andrew Dorreen, of Precision Real Estate.

The owners had hoped a sale allowing reopening would result from the tender process, but now all options would be considered.

Dorreen said one generous potential buyer had expressed interest in gifting the property to council. “Unfortunately, in approaching

council, this process was not collaborated on or made simple or straightforward at this stage.”

Others among more than half a dozen interested buyers had wanted to donate a strip of land to the walkway or rebuild a coastal bridge in exchange for the listing being removed.

Milford Residents Association co-chair Debbie Dunsford said Auckland Council standing behind its heritage listing, yet not being willing to buy the Firth property or pay to look after it, was “disgraceful”. In her view the listing was not merited. “It needs someone to challenge that listing – it would crumble.”

Dorreen said the process would be challenging, but it remained open for a new owner to explore the possibility of a plan change.

## Winter festival back for all to enjoy

Takapuna Winter Lights returns to brighten up the town centre next week, from 25 to 28 July, with a new tour added to the festival programme so people with disabilities can more easily take in the displays.

The family-friendly lighting spectacular is in its fourth year, and its host, the Takapuna Beach Business Association (TBBA), is buoyed by last year’s festival having just been named as a finalist in the New Zealand Event Awards.

TBBA chief executive Terence Harpur said: “We are thrilled the team’s hard work has been recognised nationally, and for the enormous amount of joy the event brings to so many in the community. “We are super-excited for this year’s event too.”

For the first time, the festival will feature a special Shine tour, an initiative between TBBA and Yes Disability and Phab, two North Shore-based champions for people with disabilities or learning differences.

“Public events like this can be quite

stressful and at times inaccessible for the people we support,” said Yes chief executive Sonia Thursby and the activities and events co-ordinator at Phab, Lexi Longman. “To have this initiative designed specifically for our community is amazing.”

Depending on the weather, the Shine tour will take place on Friday 26 July and Saturday 27 July Friday from 4pm, before the festival lights go on for the public from 5pm-10pm. Booking inquiries invited by email in advance to [events@phab.org.nz](mailto:events@phab.org.nz)

Light installations, performances and music all feature at the festival.

A Takapuna Grammar School stage will each evening showcase three student musicians.

Winter Lights 2004 has had a bumpy ride, with reduced Auckland Council events funding raising questions about whether it would go ahead, but support from sponsors and the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board ensured its survival.

# HON SIMON WATTS

MP for North Shore

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Three stars... Polevaulters Eliza McCartney (left) and Imogen Ayris and shotputter Jacko Gill (above, with Takapuna Athletics Club schoolgirl shotputters Sina-Maria Su'a and Kate Hallie) will compete in Paris

## Club gets in the Games spirit as leading lights compete

Takapuna Athletics Club members are recording encouragement videos for the club's three local Olympians and have plans for pre-dawn viewing of Games competition from Paris.

New Zealand team polevaulters Eliza McCartney and Imogen Ayris and shotputter Jacko Gill all joined the club as youngsters and are popular role models at its Onewa Domain headquarters.

The trio, who attended Takapuna Grammar School (TGS), are now in Europe for the countdown to the Olympics, which begin next Friday 26 July.

Club president Dan Brady said winter training squads were getting together to record messages which he would forward.

Between stints competing overseas, Gill trains at the club regularly, encouraging up-and-coming shot putters, who also benefit from the tutelage of his father, Walter Gill. The vaulters use the facilities at the Millennium in Mairangi Bay, which was

why McCartney switched clubs for a time, but last year she returned to Takapuna and joined with Ayris, who regularly helps at club nights, to launch a programme to provide gear for young athletes.

Brady expects a good turnout of club members and their families at 5am on Sunday 4 August to watch Gill compete live. "We will crank up the barbecue."

With the pole-vaulting heats and finals falling even earlier on weekday mornings, it had been decided to focus on that one "Olympics at Onewa" gathering.

The club will also cheer on its rising 800m runner James Ford in late August, after confirmation of his selection for the World Athletics Under-20 championships in Peru.

From this summer season, Brady said Takapuna will for the first-time add pole-vaulting to its activities, with a coach already lined up to help introduce this.

"It would be stupid not to have it, with Imogen and Eliza based here."

The cost of sourcing gear from the United States is expected to be around \$30,000, and funding will need to be arranged, but Brady said old high-jump matting could be deployed initially.

Once the summer athletics season starts, Brady hopes to get all three of the Olympians to visit together for a club night.

Along with the Takapuna Athletics trio, the North Shore is home to a host of other Games competitors, including some with strong medal prospects.

Some are imports to the area, drawn to good training facilities, such as Bay of Plenty raised canoeist Lisa Carrington, who has a home in Forrest Hill and trains at Lake Pupuke.

Others went through local schools, including McCartney's partner, kite-foiler Lukas Walton-Keim, who went to TGS.

The two Westlake high schools boast an impressive eight Games competitors.

• Roll of honour, page 9.



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## Briefs

**North Shore Brass shines**

North Shore Brass came third in the top grade of the national championships which finished in Auckland last weekend. Its youth band was also third in its grade and the Academy band fourth in C grade, underlining the promise of North Shore's younger musicians. A number of members collected individual instrument playing awards. (Details next issue.)

**Charity singalong**

The North Shore Male Choir is holding a concert of popular songs at St George's Presbyterian Church in Takapuna to fundraise for Harbour Hospice. The annual event on Saturday 3 August at 4.30pm will have a singalong format. Tickets are \$35 for adults (concessions available) and can be booked on the hospice website.

**Tap provided**

The shower below the playground on Takapuna Beach Reserve has had a lower tap added. This was requested late last year by the Takapuna Beach Business Association after public surprise it was not included with the new shower. Beach users also pointed out that water from the shower was draining down towards the concrete standing area for the barbecue. A new drain has since been installed in a bid to prevent this.

**Liquor report awaited**

The alcohol licensing inspector is still working on a report on Milford Motel's application to be classed as a tavern. The Observer was told on 17 June the inspector would complete their report within the next "week or two". The report will be sent to the District Licensing Committee who will schedule a public hearing.

**Money set aside for Fort Takapuna car park could fund playground**

From page 1

and parks staff acknowledged a budget shortfall of \$61,000 for the more expensive option and of \$13,500 for option two in what they said was a scheduled \$260,000 renewal of an existing playground in "poor condition". They wanted a steer from the board on next steps.

Northern area manager Sarah Jones said the design ideas for the playground on Knightsbridge Dr were informed by community consultation late last year.

Those consulted included Forrest Hill Primary School and the North Shore Chinese Community Trust. Thirty people responded to council's Have Your Say process online. Feedback showed a desire for a picnic area and green space, along with balance and climbing gear. There was interest in holding cultural events in a public setting and seeing Chinese-style structures incorporated.

A feature will be the dragon, depicted in a series of snaking play elements, from a head of wooden stilts to an earth-mound slide for a tail.

Board members agreed the opportunity to create something special was worth working on further, even if the cost meant losing something else. Chair Toni van Tonder said: "I'd rather supercharge a single location than do lots of fiddly little things."

Gavin Busch suggested if the board sold Selwyn Reserve – identified earlier in an asset review as having little use – proceeds could go towards the playground. "Selwyn is just a section that council has picked up at the end of a driveway," he said, while Knightsbridge Reserve could become "a statement piece for the middle of the Shore".

Jones said she would speak to council property arm Eke Panuku about Selwyn Reserve, but a quicker way to pay for the

project would be to transfer \$125,000 set aside towards car-park work at Fort Takapuna in Narrow Neck. That sum was insufficient to do the car park in any case, she said.

Members liked the idea of diverting the car-park funds. Van Tonder said there was an opportunity to create something with inter-generational appeal for the growing population in Forrest Hill. "Selwyn Reserve, I've got my eye on for Francis St -Esmonde Rd," she said, referring to board hopes of building a pedestrian and cycle link in Hauraki.

Members favoured expanding the playground size, rather than the cheaper option which would drop some elements popular with the Asian community such as a badminton area. "It was the No 1 popular sport for Asian groups," staff said.

A court could also double for pickle ball, but might be done more cheaply by installing matting rather than a concrete court.

Member George Wood: "If we're going to do it, let's do it properly."

Member Mel Powell said an upgrade would "draw more people into an awesome park". She suggested seeking community support in helping with the garden and engaging with the Dragon Trust and Milestone Trust, which supported Asian groups, to see if they might be interested in helping fund aspects of the playground.

Jones said she had found such groups generally did not contribute to council projects.

She said she would return to the board in a few months with a plan that would allow the work to be done in stages. This would take in the cost of a suggested drinking fountain and a power point for performances. Some existing play equipment, such as swings, may be able to be reused to offset costs, she said.

The board will then decide on the final scope of the project. Construction could start as soon as next year.



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# Local police diverted to combat crime in CBD

A senior constable who works with North Shore schools is among police officers who have been seconded from their usual roles to staff a 'safer streets' operation in the crime-hit Auckland CBD.

Waitematā District staff in investigation-support and family-harm roles have also been assigned to the central-city initiative.

In an email obtained by the Flagstaff, School Community Officer Murray Fenton advised schools including Campbells Bay, Forrest Hill, Milford and Takapuna primary schools, Takapuna Normal Intermediate School, and Rosmini and Carmel Colleges that he and several colleagues had been put on the safer-streets team.

"As a result of this Safer Streets initiative, it is with regret that I have to inform you that I will be unavailable for the next six months," he said. "I apologise for any commitments

that I have made with you. This directive was given to me at short notice by my supervisor."

The secondments were due to a lack of staff to launch the initiative.

"This was not something that I volunteered for and I can assure you that it is not something I am looking forward to as it will cause massive disruption and turmoil to myself and my family."

Schools later received an email from the relieving Waitematā East area commander, Michael Rickards, assuring them police had "a robust plan" to mitigate Fenton's removal from his role.

Operation Safer Streets – "an intensive deployment operation to target anti-social behaviour and crime in the CBD" – was announced last month by Police Commissioner Andrew Coster, who said it would continue until a new Community Beat Team was

fully established, staffed with extra officers confirmed in this year's Budget.

Fenton told schools it was hoped that in six months sufficient new recruits would have graduated to replace those officers seconded to the Auckland initiative.

"Our district has had to take staff away from some critical areas of policing such as investigation-support units, community policing, family harm and MPES (Maori, Pacific and Ethnic Services) groups," he said.

He had been told his colleagues would "try to get through everything while I am away".

One of the main areas schools might need assistance with was road-patrol training.

Responding to Observer questions about Fenton's secondment, Rosmini headmaster Nixon Cooper said: "We have valued Murray's advice from time to time and the impact of his secondment is mildly concerning."

# Volunteer duo ramps up quality of Forrest Hill bike track

From page 1

Forrest Hill's dirt-jump bike track in Greville Reserve is being upgraded by volunteers.

Dan Leo and Warren Gill have been working on the track behind the skatepark on Forrest Hill Rd for the past few weeks, adding more dirt where required and installing drainage and new take-off ramps.

The old planks on the take-offs had rotted and become a safety hazard, Leo said. "It was falling to pieces."

The 24-year-old Englishman has been travelling around New Zealand in his van, upgrading tracks in various locations and posting clips of the projects online.

He and Gill, who co-owns a concreting company, have also worked together on the pump track in Woodall Park, Devonport.

The pair have self-funded the Greville Reserve project, with Leo working during the week and Gill coming in on the weekends.

Leo said he hopes to finish off the work within a fortnight as he's heading to Northland to work on another project.

The North Shore's first Auckland Transport (AT) bike hub will be sited east of the football pitch at the corner of East Coast Rd and Forrest Hill Rd, after Watercare rejected an initial plan to have it on top of the concrete reservoir, south of the pitch.



Jump start... Volunteers Dan Leo (left) and Warren Gill

The new site will require a resource consent, which AT believes will be granted in the next month, allowing the hub to open by the end of September. The hub will sell refurbished bikes and offer free repairs and services.

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# Volunteers clear estuary debris, but more left to do

Volunteer groups rallied this month for what was billed as a final post-flood clean-up of the Wairau Creek estuary.

But the extent of rubbish found embedded deep in the mangroves means further community work will be needed.

The Milford Mariners group brought in a barge on the high tide on Sunday 7 July to access tricky-to-reach areas.

Around seven tonnes of timber and other debris that washed down the creek during the extreme weather events of early 2023 was collected, then unloaded at the Inga Rd boat ramp for disposal by council-arranged trucks.

Around 25 further volunteers pitched in, carrying rubbish out by hand and cutting up timber for disposal.

“We had an excellent morning,” said Milford Residents Association (MRA) co-chair Debbie Dunsford.

Helpers came from the MRA and Pupuke Birdsong Project, which jointly organised a series of earlier clean-ups, Milford Cruising Club and students from Westlake Boys High School.

The students, from the school’s Enviro and Interact groups, gave their time during their holidays, following earlier work on the estuary during term time.

Mariner’s scientific consultant Daven Illenberger said it would be safer to extract the remaining timber by barge than for volunteers to wade out and then have to carry it out 200m or so.

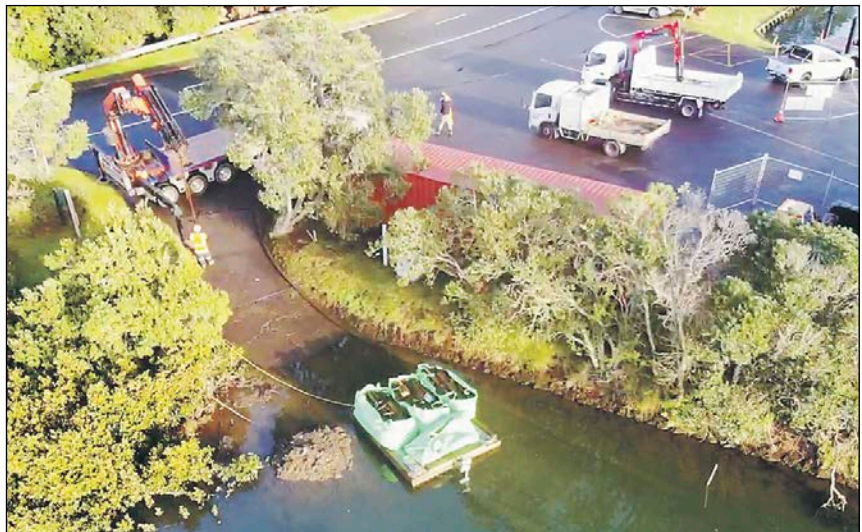
He estimated a full-day’s work remained and a time would be scheduled with Pupuke Birdsong volunteers, probably in September.

Dunsford said the MRA was interested to hear more from Auckland Council on how it intended to improve Wairau catchment resilience to future flooding.

To support flood-hit residents, it last Monday hosted a further session for community members to connect with council flood ‘navigators’ who can offer advice on the ongoing property buyout process.



Holiday helpers... Lending a hand at the Wairau estuary clean-up during the school break were Westlake Boys High School students (from left): Hooman Ghavidel, Terrence Venezuela, Xavier Chang, and Jimmy Lyons and Adrian Li. Below: Milford Mariners barge rubbish into the Inga Rd boat ramp.



# Science teacher recognised for creek collaboration research

A Westlake Girls High School science teacher has won a top research prize for her work looking at how girls-school students can benefit from collaboration.

Alex van der Loos (pictured), teacher in charge of year 13 chemistry, has worked carried out her research with a year-10 science class doing environmental studies of the Wairau Creek.

Van der Loos was among the last intake of around 30 International Coalition of Girls Schools (ICGS) fellows, who took on projects on the topic of how to improve girls’ collaboration skills.

Her work won the top prize of researcher of the year at the ICGS conference in Baltimore last month.

Van der Loos said putting the students into groups based on previous friendships and how they would work together, encouraging them to collaborate and work across groups towards a common objective, helped them become more confident in their abilities.

She had community experts on the creek speak to the class, in-



cluding Auckland Council representatives and Pupuke Birdsong environmental coordinator Tabitha Becroft, which helped students build their own identities as “scientists and experts in their own right”.

Van der Loos interviewed the students throughout the 18-month project, and collected other quantitative data, to see how they were engaging with it.

The results showed students were encouraged to collaborate more and were more confident to do so, said van der Loos.

“They also became more understanding of how collaboration works and why it’s so effective.”

The science department is working on implementing van der Loos’ findings into the classroom, with a full 10-week unit on community-project collaboration planned to form part of the curriculum for junior students.

Westlake’s involvement in ICGS will continue this year, through with the school’s head of visual arts, Elyse Heslop.

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# Westlake basketballers take bronze in world tournament

Westlake Girls High School's national-title-winning basketball side have made an impact on the world stage, claiming third place at the ISF World Schools Championships.

In the best performance by any New Zealand side – boys or girls – at the global event, the side took bronze by defeating a Hong Kong China side 64-35 in their final match, having lost a semi-final to the French team, 40-64.

Due to a last-minute schedule change, Westlake had to find their feet fast at the start of the tournament last month.

They arrived in Macau just a day before their first game, but still easily dispatched a school from Chile 100-26.

Westlake won the rest of their group games, with their toughest test coming in a first encounter with the Hong Kong China team. After falling behind at stages, they prevailed 60-49.

They won their first knockout game 82-33 against a team from Bulgaria, before falling to the French entry.

With the added carrot of becoming New Zealand's highest-ever finishers, they duly saw off the Hong Kong China side for a second time.

Westlake director of sport April Ieremia, who led the trip, said the side impressed with their usual fast-paced brand of basketball. "The girls deserved everything they got."

She said the team played as a cohesive unit, with coach Bronwen Davidson instilling confidence in the players.

The side was without a couple of big stars, as Zenthia Stowers was away playing for the New Zealand under-18 team at the Asia Cup and Katie Moors was out with a back injury.

But the rest of the team stepped up, with Kodee Williams-Sefo being a constant threat and younger players rising to the occasion.

As well as Williams-Sefo, the team comprised: Charlotte Mawston, Mia John, Imani



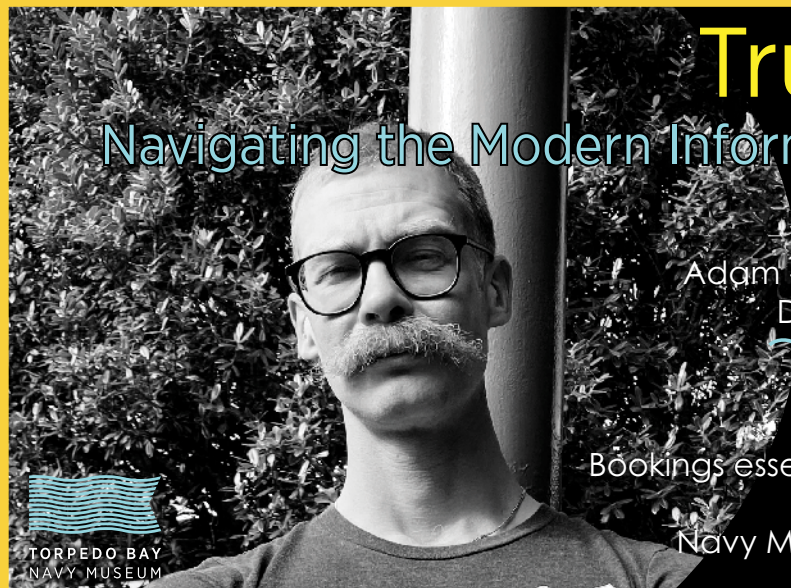
On the ball... Westlake's Kodee Williams-Sefo dribbles up-court in Westlake's world-schools quarter-final against a team from Bulgaria

Rasmussen, Elin Vincent, Brydie McMillan, Lily Fotu, Emma Schroeder, Lucy Dawson, Isabella' Chiffon Gasu.

The team also got to enjoy cosmopolitan Macau in their downtime, including visiting temples, dining, and seeing panda bears, Ieremia said.

The side's next challenge is the College Sport Auckland Championships in August, followed by the Northern regional champs, and the secondary school nationals, being held in Palmerston North in October.

Westlake will be aiming to win their third national title in a row.



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# Last-gasp win books another final against old foe

Takapuna Rugby Club premiers came out on top of a tense North Harbour championship semi-final against Northcote, with a last-minute try and sideline conversion winning them a spot in this Saturday's final.

Coach Nick Elrick said the pressure of the occasion got to the team early at Northcote, with the home side scoring two quick tries to take a 14-0 lead into half-time.

Takapuna started better in the second half, reducing the deficit with a try by captain Marty Brink.

With 20 minutes to go, they still trailed 19-24, but brought "some impact" off the bench to change the game, Elrick said.

From a scrum inside their own 22, they launched an attack finished in the corner by left winger Tika Lelenga.

Young first five Jackson Rainsford had all the pressure on his shoulders taking the sideline conversion in front of the booing Northcote grandstand, but slotted his kick to win the game 26-24 and send Takapuna to the final.

The tension ahead of the kick was followed by an "awesome" outpouring of emotions after it sailed over, Elrick said.

Meeting North Shore in the final at Devonport was an exciting prospect, he said.

The last three finals have been fought between the two clubs, with Shore winning in 2021, Takapuna in 2022 and Shore again last season.

"Hopefully that pattern can continue," Elrick said. "Everybody's keen to go one more and get a bit of revenge."

• North Harbour Championship Final, Takapuna v North Shore, Vauxhall Rd sports fields, Saturday 20 July, 2.45pm.



Onwards and upwards... Takapuna winger Tika Lelenga celebrates after scoring the match-winner on Saturday

## Westlakes produced eight members of NZ Olympic team

Eight former Westlake boys and girls high school students and one from Carmel College are representing New Zealand at the Paris Olympics which begin next week. They are:

- Three-time Olympian, former female world sailor of the year and former world champion Jo Aleh will this year be competing in the 49er class rather than the 470. The gold and silver medal winner returns to the Games after last competing in Rio in 2016.
- Connor Bell, a discus thrower, will be making his Olympic debut. A New Zealand record holder, the 20-year-old won gold at the 2018 Youth Olympics.
- Swimmer Cameron Gray is competing in the 100m freestyle. At 20 years old, he boasts an impressive resume, having

won bronze medal in the 50m butterfly at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and represented New Zealand at the World Aquatics Championships in the same year.

- Former Westlake rugby guns Moses Leo and Brady Rush are part of the sevens team heading to Paris. Leo is a North Harbour provincial player who made his national debut in Singapore two years ago, while Rush, a winger for Northland, was a key player in the 2023 side which won the world series.
- Rico Bearman, a 20-year-old professional BMX rider, was a late selection to New Zealand's Olympic team. He has an under-23 World Series championship under his belt and a sixth place finish at his first Elite World Championship this year.

- Justina Kitchen (along with Bayswater resident and Takapuna Grammar old boy Lukas Walton-Keim) will be New Zealand's first ever kite-foiling representative. Kitchen has won three national titles and placed highly at world events.
- Twenty-year-old Tara Vaughan will be attending her first Games after she and her national teammates Dame Lisa Carrington, Alicia Hoskin and Olivia Brett, won the Canoe Sprint World Championships K4 500m last year.
- Former Carmel College Student Nina Brown, aged, 21, and her swimming partner, Eva Morris, will be the first artistic swimming duo to represent New Zealand at the Olympics, since the Beijing Games in 2008.

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## WHAT'S ON @ Takapuna Library



The school holidays have flown by, with many fun, crafty Matariki-themed events for the whānau.

Our regular children's activities resume from 22 July with Wriggle & Rhyme (for up to 18 months old) on Mondays and Rhymetime (from 18 months old to 4 years) on Tuesdays.

Looking ahead to August we have Book Chat which occurs the second Wednesday of each month at 10 am, with the next session on 14 August. Come along and chat about your latest read with likeminded bibliophiles.

Annual event Poetry Day Prelude: Shore Words is geared for Tuesday 15 August, from 6 pm. This year join Poetry Society winner and editor Stu Bagby along with Bryan Walpert, an Ockham Book Award fiction finalist and author of nine books of poetry, fiction, and criticism; writer, independent art curator and publisher, Bronwyn Lloyd, and Siobhan Harvey, poetry award winner whose work appears in Best New Zealand Poems and author of eight books.

Our Friends of Takapuna Library affectionately know as 'The Friends' are a marvellous group of passionate library-lovers who promote the library and provide the most delicious finger foods for our after-hours events. If you are interested in joining or would like some more information, send through an email to: [TakapunaEvents@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:TakapunaEvents@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

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## Boardwalk was popular with disabled

Sandra Allen's comment ("Disabled forgotten in walkway decision", 5 July Observer) is correct.

There was no mention at the last Devonport-Takapuna Local Board meeting of our disabled community during the discussion about the future of the boardwalk under the protected pōhutukawa trees on Takapuna Beach.

When first built in the early 1990s, the boardwalk was very popular – especially with the disabled.

My elderly friend loved my driving her to Takapuna from her Westmere Rest Home. A former swimmer and long-time environmentalist, she enjoyed her wheelchair ride

under the pōhutukawa and watching the sea at high tide.

If still alive she would be appalled to learn that not only is the boardwalk being destroyed but on the advice of council arborists the trees, now a potential hazard to the public, will no longer be maintained.

Extensive pruning of notable trees on public land needs a notified consent and a hearing with independent commissioners.

Board members must acknowledge that 2500 people signed a petition to keep the boardwalk.

And they and the elderly and disabled are not invisible.

**Jan O'Connor**

## Road money could have helped buy house

What a pity the wasted \$2 million spent on consultancy fees to date to upgrade Lake Rd had not been reallocated by the Auckland Council to accept the very generous 2018 offer by the late Paul Firth to sell the prime waterfront property at Milford for \$3 million – half of its market value at the time.

In accordance with Paul and his sister Ann's wishes, this would have finally sorted out several outrageous debacles including :

1. Reopening one of Australasia's most popular public walkways between Milford

and Takapuna for use by the elderly, the disabled and families with prams and dogs.

2. The refurbishment of the historic Firth Cottage for public use as an artists/writers/marine/geological outdoor-education centre.

Now is the time for the beneficiaries of the Firth Estate, individuals, businesses, generous benefactors and the council to work together to urgently demand coordinated action to achieve this wonderful legacy for our grandchildren to enjoy, in perpetuity.

**Bruce Tubb**



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# 7 delicious lunch deals under \$20

Takapuna has some great options for lunch that won't break the bank.



Bian Sushi

## Bian Sushi – DIY sushi platter

Keep it straight with classic salmon and teriyaki chicken, or pick a couple of tasty oddballs like oyster or ginger carrot. Bian Sushi lets you build your own ideal sushi plate, piece by piece (we've budgeted \$18 for ten pieces). Bian Sushi can make all their classics with brown rice, if that's your preference. Stretch goals: Add a side of umami goodness with some miso (\$4).

**Where:** Shop 2, 33-45 Hurstmere Rd; [biansushi.co.nz](http://biansushi.co.nz)



Ajisen Ramen

## Ajisen Ramen – big ol' bowl of noodles

Something hot and filling is just the ticket on a cold day – and Ajisen Ramen's signature dish (\$19) is guaranteed to hit the spot. Thick and savoury broth, a good serve of noodles, chashu pork and an egg to boot. Stretch goals: A side of lightly salted edamame (\$6).

**Where:** 3/3 Northcroft St (under Sentinel); [ajisentakapuna.co.nz](http://ajisentakapuna.co.nz)



Box'd

## Box'd – delightful light meals

Check out Box'd for fresh, simple, beautifully presented Korean food. We're eyeing up the Jeyuk spicy BBQ pork mini box (\$17.90) or the Kimchi stew with pork (\$19.50). Stretch goals: Bump to a square box (\$25.00) and get two sides.

**Where:** 484 Lake Rd; [ordermeal.co.nz/boxd-takapuna/](http://ordermeal.co.nz/boxd-takapuna/)



No. 1 Pancake

## No. 1 Pancake – savoury delights

Looking for a light lunch that's a little different? Order up a beef cheese pancake at No. 1 Pancake, and chuck in a double cheese for good measure (\$18.80 total). These Korean-style hotteok pancakes are sumptuously savoury and surprisingly filling! Stretch goals: Mix it up with a Korean red bean pancake (\$6).

**Where:** 33-45 Hurstmere Rd; [no1pancake.co.nz](http://no1pancake.co.nz)



Takapuna Fish Shop

## Takapuna Fish Shop – classic Kiwi feed

Is it sunny? Make the most of the weather by ordering up a serve of snapper and chips (\$15.40) from Takapuna Fish Shop, lock in a bench at the reserve and soak up the sun. Pro tip – phone ahead and beat the queue. Stretch goals: At \$2.30, the classic pineapple fritter will round out your lunch.

**Where:** 444 Lake Rd; [takapunafishshop-online.co.nz](http://takapunafishshop-online.co.nz)



Eat Now

## Eat Now – just like being back in Hanoi

Everything at Eat Now is amazing. It's famous for its Hanoi-style Pho broth (\$15.90) Grab some summer rolls for \$4 and you're still coming in under \$20. Stretch goals: We recommend adding in a classic Vietnamese iced coffee for \$5.

**Where:** 8 Huron Street; [eatnow.nz](http://eatnow.nz)



Burger Burger

## Burger Burger – chicken burger comfort eating

A good burger is just irresistible. We recommend the chicken at Burger Burger. Juicy, zingy, and just the right amount of wild rocket – from the right angle it looks like a healthy lunch to us! Located in the fabulous Eat Street. Stretch goals: Curly fries with homemade aioli (\$11).

**Where:** 40 Hurstmere Rd; [burgerburger.co.nz](http://burgerburger.co.nz)

## Still hungry?

The good news is there's loads more wonderful lunchtime eateries in Takapuna. And just for you, we've put them all into a gigantic list at [ilovetakapuna.co.nz/directory/eat-and-drink](http://ilovetakapuna.co.nz/directory/eat-and-drink). Happy eating!



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# Where there's a wool: Knitters seek yarn donations

A Takapuna crafts group which makes items and clothing for charities is seeking wool and yarn donations to replenish its depleted supply.

The Busy Fingers club has been meeting at the St George's Presbyterian Church for the past 30 years, knitting, crocheting and sharing tea and biscuits.

Group leader Sonia Fenton said the club's members have most recently knitted booties and hats for the newborns at North Shore Hospital as well as items such as blankets and children's clothing for charities Barnardos and Presbyterian Support.

The group also knits items for Plunket and the Salvation Army.

Fenton said the club had been struggling to obtain yarn recently as donations it used to receive had dried up, so was charging a gold coin per session to fund the yarn it buys.

She said the club would take anything, from offcuts to full balls, as the knitters could make good use of it all, while stopping it from going to waste or sitting in someone's drawer.

Fenton said she specialised in making teddy bears but that anyone who comes can make whatever they want, as the charities find a use for everything.

"They're always grateful for anything," she said. "I used to say to them, 'Is there something in particular that you would like?', but they said 'whatever'."

Some of the knitters have made 'twiddlemuffs', tubes with sensory elements like zippers and balls attached, which help the dementia patients at North Shore Hospital stay stimulated.

The club also offers a great space for people to socialise, said Fenton.

"If you want to come and just sit and be social for a while, that's fine. We've got a few ladies that will teach people as well."

• If you want to join or donate yarn or wool, email [soniafenton49@gmail.com](mailto:soniafenton49@gmail.com)



Marilyn Squire (left) and Doreen Hall said they come to the club to enjoy their hobby and the companionship of the group. Below: Lynette Miller (left) and Beverley Lea with baby clothing they knitted at a previous session.



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# Man of Kent a natural for annual Agatha Christie

Art is imitating life in Forrest Hill actor Nic Scanlan-Dyas's return to the stage in Shoreside Theatre's annual Agatha Christie murder mystery.

"My character is an English 60-year-old, he tells the Observer. "It's my first piece back after 30 years and I get to play myself."

More surprising than his perfectly matched casting is the play's setting, in Maidstone, Kent, where Scanlan-Dyas grew up. The *Spider's Web* script even references places he remembers from his childhood.

The former professional actor plays amateur sleuth Sir Ronald Delahaye in the production, which opened at the PumpHouse in Takapuna this week. "It's really, really good fun," he says.

Scanlan-Dyas, who spent his 20s popping up on the British stage and screen, including on BBC TV series *The Bill*, has ventured far and wide in the decades since.

He retrained in computing and worked for a software company, then stepped across to banking in New York. Later, he spent 15 years in Japan, after his New Zealand-born partner secured a high-flying job there as a corporate finance lawyer.

He met Jackie, originally from Gisborne, in London. They married a few years ago at St Mark's in Remuera, with Scanlan-Dyas attracted by the church's traditional English style. The couple's daughters, aged 16 and 17, attend Kristin School.

The family had a harrowing time during the Covid quarantine in 2020, when the family tried to get into New Zealand to see Jackie's mother, who was seriously ill with cancer.



Well-suited... Nic Scanlan-Dyas at Shoreside Theatre's rehearsal room in Forrest Hill, preparing for his role in *Spider's Web*

She died when they were in MIQ. But with Jackie's father diagnosed with Alzheimer's, she and Nic were determined to establish a family home here and prepare for their daughters' further education.

Scanlan-Dyas keeps the Forrest Hill home fires burning, with his wife commuting from Tokyo, working two-and-a-half weeks

there at a time. The house-husband role is one he also fulfilled in Tokyo, doing the school run, organising moves and finding time to pen a few murder-mystery novels, form a band and record.

Last year, his curiosity was piqued when he saw Shoreside Theatre advertising its Agatha Christie season. When he saw a

## Milford / Takapuna Tides

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# murder mystery

post about auditions this year he decided to give it a go.

He says it is the first time in seven or eight years that he's had the time.

Another key reason: "My children have never seen me act."

Worried about remembering his lines, Scanlan-Dyas recorded the script and talked his part back while wearing headphones on daily dog walks across Pupuke Golf Course.

"People must wonder what I'm doing talking aloud."

He plays a suave military man in a play set in the mid-1950s, and has the job of outlining the action to the audience.

Scanlan-Dyas is impressed by the standard of community theatre here, and was surprised at the length of the 11-performance season, with a larger audience than he experienced doing shows at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

"Some of the people I've worked with on this are as good as the people I've worked with on professional shows."

Scanlan-Dyas attended East 15 Acting School in Essex, and went on to win plenty of parts, but there was no Hollywood moment.

"When you're working professionally, 90 per cent of what you're doing is auditioning," he says. Rejection goes with the territory and it begets humility in his reminiscences.

He recalls his agent geeing him up to audition for a television series of *Tarzan* by telling him he'd be perfect for the lead role, only to turn up to find a roomful of similarly tall, toned, long-haired hopefuls.

"I was tall, so I was always being a policeman," he laughs.

"By my 30th, I'd decided if it was going fine – wine and caviar – I'd keep going, but if it was baked beans I'd think again."

So he changed course, although he retains fond memories of his acting years and thinks he will do more community theatre here.

But he is slightly embarrassed that his wife has bought a stack of tickets for family and friends to attend and is planning a pre-performance drinks party that he won't be able to imbibe at. "I said, you've got to manage your expectations."

It will be hard to top the reception he and fellow cast of *Ladies Night* once got on a six-month UK tour. The play about a troupe of male strippers – written by New Zealanders Anthony McCarten and Stephen Sinclair – wound its way through big theatres to His Majesty's in Aberdeen.

He recalls the cast in velcro trousers running the gauntlet through an overly enthusiastic crowd. "By the time I got to the stage, I had practically nothing on."

It made for more better work stories than his business days.

"My wife always says she married a stripper," he says.

• Spider's Web is on until 4 August at the PumpHouse Theatre. Tickets at pumphouse.co.nz



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