

The Rangitoto Observer

DELIVERED FORTNIGHTLY

Issue 1 – 15 March 2019

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE

**New Takapuna-Milford paper
hits the streets... p2**

**'Sacred' pohutukawa trees
turn into a menace... p4**

**Fears locals short-changed
by new town square... p7**

Preserving coastal track no walk in the park

The future of a hugely popular coastal track between Takapuna and Milford is set to be secured as Auckland Council negotiates with a property owner over purchasing his historic bach.

People have been walking through Paul Firth's garden since 2011, when a wooden bridge was washed away in a storm.

At that time, the council found it had never been an official bridge and rebuilding would

require a coastal consent, which required approval from all affected landowners.

Firth, now 74, withheld his consent because

To page 3

Oarsome costumes make waves at Beach Series finale



In the pink... Jason Herriman was among entrants who got into the spirit of a retro-themed final night of the Beach Series summer races at Takapuna Beach last Tuesday. More pictures p8-10



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The Rangitoto
Observer

INAUGURAL ISSUE



from the Award-winning Team
at the Devonport Flagstaff

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NEXT ISSUE: March 29
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Community newspaper launches



Good to grow... Devonport Flagstaff editor Rob Drent (left) and business partner Peter Wilson celebrating Drent's naming as Community Journalist of the Year at the 2018 Voyager Media Awards

The *Rangitoto Observer* – a sister publication to the *Devonport Flagstaff* – launches with this edition.

The community newspaper will cover news and events from Milford and Takapuna, through to Castor Bay and Sunnynook.

"There is clearly an appetite for local news, especially with declining community coverage in other media," managing editor Rob Drent says.

The strength of the *Flagstaff*, which is

delivered to 9500 homes from Devonport to Takapuna, with an extra 1500 copies distributed to businesses and on stands, shows there's still an appetite for print, he says.

The *Rangitoto Observer* will have a circulation of 10,000. The combined circulation of both papers will be close to 22,000 – with an estimated 70,000 readers.

Launched 25 years ago, the *Flagstaff* is well established and financially healthy.

Drent says he and business partner Peter Wilson were looking at how to grow the business, and after some informal surveying of clients, the new paper emerged strongly as the best option.

"There's a clear desire for a local paper to serve local communities. And from the advertisers' perspective, the increased reach of both papers offers them a great opportunity to connect with potential customers."

The *Rangitoto Observer* is the same size and paper stock as the *Flagstaff*, but with different stories for a different readership.

"The Milford-Takapuna area is changing markedly, and essentially a new community is emerging with the number of apartments being built – so it is an exciting time news-wise," Drent says.

"We've also been lucky enough to recruit experienced journalist Jodi Yeats – a former *North Shore Times* editor – as part of the expansion."

If you would like to pitch an idea for a story or tell us about an event, email news@rangitoto-observer.co.nz.

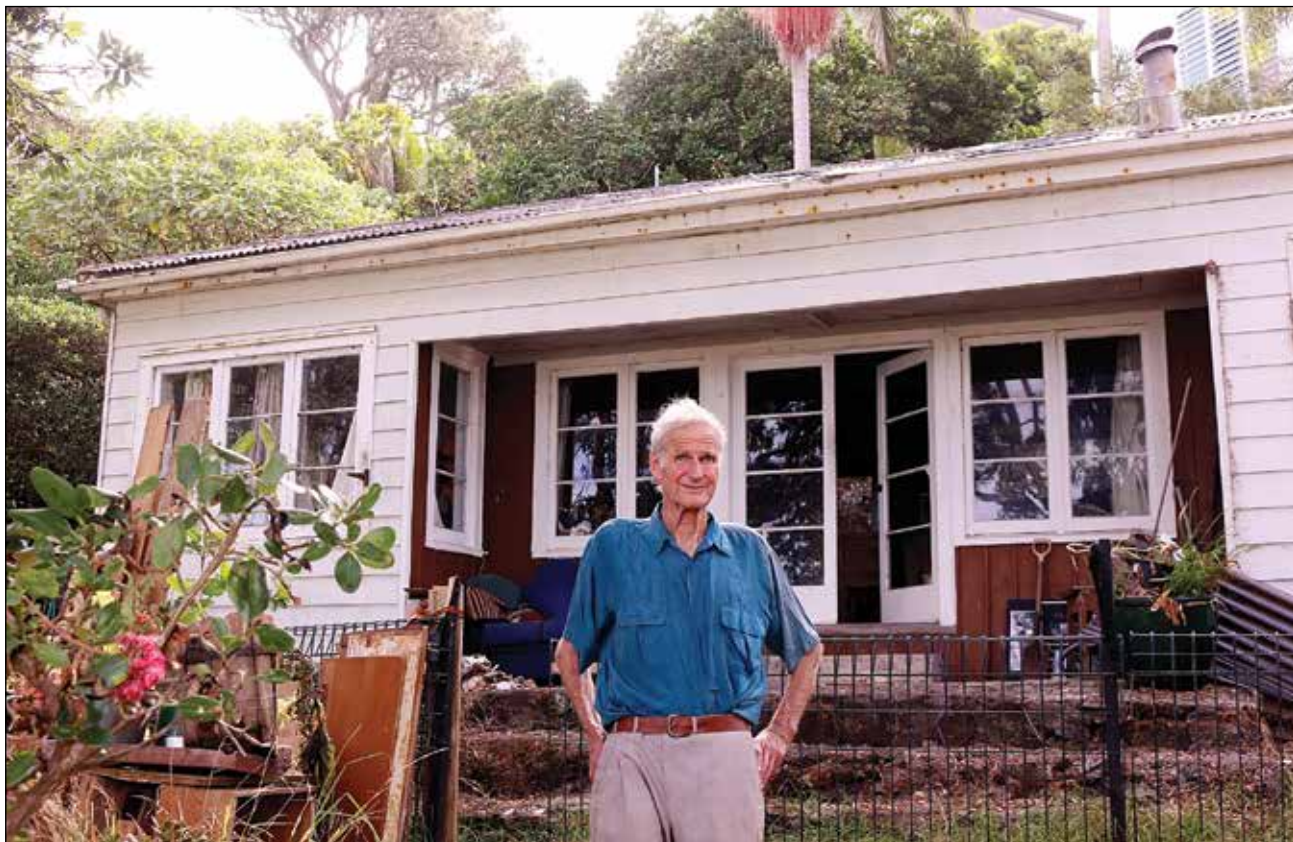
The *Rangitoto Observer* team will be based in an office at level 1, 6-8 Milford Rd.

If you would like to enquire about advertising, email sales@rangitoto-observer.co.nz.

Express your views on community issues by writing a letter to the editor and sending it to news@rangitoto-observer.co.nz. Please include your name and suburb. Letters may be edited for length.

In brief

- Barry's Point Reserve has been selected as a potential site for a dog park. A Devonport-Takapuna Local Board workshop will be held later this year to discuss the location.
- Planned hybrid fields for Becroft Park, Forrest Hill, have been knocked back due to sub-soil problems. Two fields to be upgraded will now be surfaced with a sand-carpet. Detailed design is taking place.
- The upgrade of Hurstmere Rd, Takapuna, is expected to start in June. The Devonport-Takapuna Local Board has allocated \$20,000 to support businesses affected by the upgrade.
- Movies in Parks will screen *Christopher Robin* at Milford Reserve on 5 April. The event is zero-waste, and smoke- and alcohol-free.
- Food Truck Thursday is back in Milford on 21 March, with a range of food trucks and a small craft brewery offering their wares in the car park from 5.30 to 8.30pm.



On the route... Paul Firth in front of the cottage purchased in the 1940s by his father, portrait photographer Clifton Firth, and now in the sights of Auckland Council

Continued from page 1

of concerns about the property, where he was born and has lived his entire life. However, he was happy for people to walk through his front yard.

The council's plans were for a more extensive new bridge than the one that was washed away, in order to withstand storms, tidal surges and climate change, North Shore councillor Chris Darby said.

Auckland Council said construction of a bridge could be prohibitively expensive, because the stretch of coastline is a significant ecological area, and may not be possible at all.

Now, council representatives are in talks about purchasing Firth's property, as a heritage site and to protect the walkway.

The cottage was built in the 1920s, and bought by Paul's father, portrait photographer Clifton Firth, in the 1940s.

Clifton Firth and his wife raised their three children in the 110 sqm cottage, which sits on a 1072 sqm section.

Paul Firth still lives in "Firth Cottage", as it is known, paying almost \$11,000 in rates a year. The property has a council valuation of \$5.25 million.

Recently, Firth says, he asked for a rates reduction in light of the fact the public are using his property as a walkway, but was turned down.

On a busy day, more than a thousand people would use the walkway, he says.

Council rules prevent it from reducing rates, and compensation would be more normal,

Devonport-Takapuna chairperson George Wood said.

Safeguarding the walkway is a major project for the local board, something Darby describes as a "legacy challenge".

People have used the walkway since the early 1900s to walk between Milford and Takapuna. However, numerous properties along the track have riparian rights and owners have allowed people to walk across their land, Wood says.

Wood and deputy chair Grant Gillon said council has been talking individually to those property owners about options for access across their properties.

Most recently, talks have focused on the possibility of purchasing Firth's cottage.

Negotiations with Firth and others involved was complicated and sensitive, but the local board was hopeful of a positive outcome, Gillon said.

In addition, Auckland Council is negotiating with Watercare over an easement that would ensure the pipes that people currently walk over are not damaged.

In response to questions, the council provided a statement saying there is no allocated project budget, as there are currently no plans to renew or develop a boardwalk along the coastline.

It said the local board's role was to support council officers' discussions with Firth, and ongoing efforts to inform walkway users about the route and the respect required to preserve it.

The coastline walk is not a formal walkway

owned by the council, but rather crossed private property, Watercare assets and beaches, the statement said.

"The public has access to this shoreline walk thanks to the goodwill of local residents and Watercare.

"The council asks all walkers to please respect the privacy of local residents and their properties when enjoying this walk."

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Sacred trees become unholy menace:

Residents at apartments at the north end of Takapuna Beach are frustrated by council inaction over a “sacred grove” of massive protected pohutukawa trees that has become unsafe.

For the past 14 years, residents of the Mon Desir apartments concerned for their safety have been asking the council to prune the trees. In that time, about six have fallen over, including five on apartment grounds, says resident Terry Smith.

While the council has done occasional emergency work, regular maintenance hasn't been done, he says.

When three five-storey trees, possibly 400 years old, fell in storms in early 2017, residents had to shell out \$60,000 to get them removed.

The last straw came in June last year, when Auckland Council closed a boardwalk that runs in front of the Mon Desir and nearby The Sands apartments, because of rotten boards and danger from the pohutukawa that are part of the Sacred Grove/Te Uru Tapu.

The boardwalk was installed to give walkers a dry option at high tide.

In December, council arborists and consultants briefed a Devonport-Takapuna Local Board meeting, attended by residents, on a management plan for the Sacred Grove



Held up... Using cables to restrain dangerous limbs, as with this pohutukawa at the north end of Takapuna Beach, is one option council arborists and landscape architects are considering

and surrounding area, part of a project scheduled to run to June.

One unhappy resident at The Sands, Graeme Markwick, describes the briefing from the council's landscape architects,

Opus, as inconclusive.

Markwick wants council arborists to regularly prune, or even sculpt, the trees and remove dangerous boughs, mainly for safety, but also for the health of the trees and to allow more light into the apartments.

“There should be a better balance of the needs of the trees and the public who use the walkway,” Markwick says.

He says elderly people have moved out of The Sands because the trees keep light from their apartments.

He and other apartment residents also want the boardwalk repaired or replaced.

Eighteen of the trees are scheduled notable trees in the Unitary Plan, as well as being in a significant ecological area, so any work on them requires a resource consent, Markwick says.

A report by Opus is due to go to a local-board workshop in late March or early April.

Local board chairperson George Wood says the main reason the boardwalk was closed is the trees are unsafe, but detritus from the trees has also rotted much of it so it would need to be rebuilt.

Residents were invited to submit to the management plan by 25 February. Wood says mana whenua had to be involved, because of the significance of the trees to Maori.

Auckland Council provided a list of 12 iwi who attended two recent hui to discuss the pohutukawa grove, which extends from the north end of the beach to Thorne Bay.

Historically, travellers passing the sacred trees would place floral tributes at the foot or hang garments in the branches, as a mark of respect to ensure safe travels.

Mon Desir property management chair Fay Freeman says residents met to discuss

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residents frustrated with council



a submission to Opus' plan.

"They want to preserve the trees and make sure they are well maintained and don't present a risk. It's not about getting rid of the trees," Freeman says.

Residents want a risk-assessment and appropriate work done, with the stone "steps to nowhere" preserved, the boardwalk upgraded and reopened and lighting installed in the grove.

The council has occasionally pruned trees where it identified defects, and did so recently, says its head of operational management and maintenance, Agnes McCormack.

She says council arborists and Opus are developing a management plan that will include pruning and other measures to ensure the safety of the public and longevity of the trees.

No go... Mon Desir property management chair Fay Freeman at the entrance to the boardwalk closed because of unsafe trees

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Roger Hall: plays still centre stage for veteran hit-maker

Takapuna resident and prolific playwright Roger Hall is excited to be on stage himself at this year's Auckland Writers Festival in May.

Hall will appear with six fellow writers in a gala night event and be interviewed alongside fellow popular writer Catherine Robertson in another session.

"I'm thrilled because I really enjoy it [the festival]. Some years I'm away, but it's a jolly impressive thing."

Hall knows all too well the work that goes on behind the scenes after co-organising New Zealand Theatre Month last year, with theatre administrator Malcolm Calder.

Typically, Hall produces a play a year, but he couldn't manage it last year on top of the demands of organising Theatre Month, which took place in September.

He's working on a play now, but at 80 admits he's winding down a little.

"It's very hard work. You have to be quite fit. Day-to-day, writing is easier when you are feeling really fit."

Few playwrights have work spanning decades.

"You have a feeling, 'Have I said it all?'"

Hall has more than 40 plays, musicals and pantomimes to his credit – and numerous box-office hits.

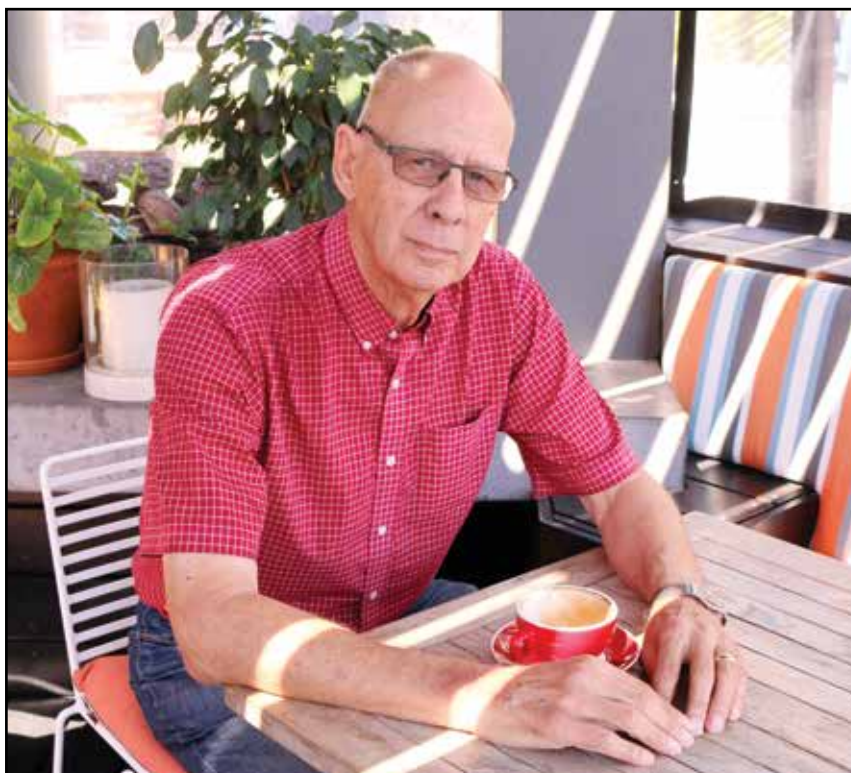
The organisation of Theatre Month has been taken over by agency Playmarket this year, freeing up Hall for other projects.

Hall will soon help out with readings of three of his plays at Devonport's The Vic Theatre in June and July, which should raise funds both for The Vic and hopefully New Zealand Theatre Month.

Theatre Month requires fundraising of \$50,000 per year for the next four years.

Similar play readings at The Vic last year were very successful.

North Shore audiences should enjoy a reading of *Book Ends*, which is based on



Off-script... Roger Hall, these days resident in Takapuna, fitting a coffee into his schedule of writing and other engagements

Hall's weekly coffee meetings at Devonport's Stone Oven with "The Cabin Fever Club" or other men working from home, mainly in writing or publishing.

Hall is also helping out with another three play readings at The Vic in September.

After four decades, his play *Middle Age Spread* is still as relevant as ever.

With themes such as the gap between rich and poor, there's sadly been no need to revise it for productions this year in Palmerston

North and Takapuna's PumpHouse Theatre (8 May).

Hall is enthusiastic about his work with Tadpole Theatre, which is taking the one-woman show *The Book Club* to Waiheke (11-13 April).

He says the play, starring Jodie Dorday, is among his favourites.

"She [Dorday] does such a wonderful job. She's got so much energy and the audience is almost cheering by the end."

What's On

Alice in Wonderland

Fri, 29th March at 7:30pm



Melbourne City Ballet's Michael Pappalardo (Artistic Director) and Brendan Bradshaw (Artistic Associate) pay homage to the well-known novel by Lewis Carroll, *Alice In Wonderland*, with this enchanting ballet complimented by one of Tchaikovsky's most famous scores.

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Legendary Divas is a show starring award winning actress and singer Ali Harper and honours the talented, hardworking, courageous and legendary women that inspired us with their music. Shirley Bassey, Dusty Springfield, Judy Garland, Doris Day, Barbra Streisand and many more.

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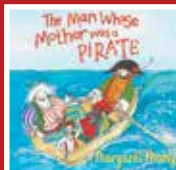
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Fears of slim, shady town square

A Takapuna group fears residents are being short-changed in plans for a new town square.

Heart of Takapuna believes the town square will fall short of the required 3000 to 4000 square metres, and claims the council is not following its own directives.

Group spokesperson Ruth Jackson says when the council's planning committee approved a change of use for the car park at 40 Anzac St, in March 2018, it said the town square must be located on the 40 Anzac St site.

Marketing material instead shows a town square of about 1300 sqm on the Anzac St site, with the remainder of the space falling on the 30 to 38 Anzac St portion of the development.

Further, the committee said the town square would have to follow council rules in its 2016 "Open Space Provisions for a Civic Space", which requires town squares to be 3000 to 4000 sqm.

Heart of Takapuna wants a town square larger than the currently planned "circa 3000 sqm", but fears current plans could lead to a square smaller than that.

It has laid out its concerns in a letter to Mayor Phil Goff and North Shore councillors Richard Hills and Chris Darby.

"We have consistently queried the disparity between council's clear instruction and the actual size and location of the town square which is now being advanced," said Jackson.

In a response, Auckland Council chief operating officer David Rankin said, in 2018 consultation, the public selected a town square located from Lake Rd to Hurstmere Rd.

Panuku is calling for expressions of interest from developers by 22 March. It could not provide plans showing measurements for each part of the development.

"As the design of the town square is not yet finalised, the area measurements provided for this and other development sites in all [Panu-



Square fears... Heart of Takapuna's Ruth Jackson says she spoke to hundreds of people opposed to the Anzac St car-park sale at the Sunday Market on 2 March

ku's agent] CBRE literature advertising this development opportunity are approximate," development manager Kate Cumberpatch said. "The town square will follow council guidelines and is anticipated to be around 3000sqm to 4000sqm in size."

In marketing material, CBRE said, "Takapuna-specific rules" had been put in place for the development. Buildings can rise to nine storeys on the Anzac St site, with a set back of three to four storeys. Buildings on Hurstmere Rd could be up to six storeys (with a setback of two to four storeys).

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board member Jan O'Connor fears the square will be shaded

by the nine-storey buildings, even with the setback.

Anzac St will continue to be used as a car park until mid-2020 when the new multi-level Gasometer car park building, 200 metres away, will open.

Construction has started on the the building, which will have about 420 car parks, electric-car and bike charging stations, bike storage, motorbike parking, and changing rooms.

Auckland Council will also be upgrading Hurstmere Rd with a redesigned streetscape that prioritises people and reduces traffic to a one-way street. Work is due to start mid-2019.

Preparing for End of Financial Year

If your business has a 31 March balance date, then your end of financial year is approaching fast. Make sure you are prepared by reviewing the following:

- **Debtors** – are they all recoverable? In order to get a tax deduction for bad debts, they must be written off before balance date.
- **Creditors** – make sure you have all unpaid invoices to hand and recorded into your accounting system.
- **If your business holds stock**, carry out a stocktake on 31 March. Stock is valued at the lower of cost price or net realisable value. However, if your annual turnover is \$1,300,000 or less, and your stock value is reasonably estimated to be less than \$10,000, then no stocktake is required.
- **If you have a service business**, review your work-in-progress at 31 March to ascertain a value.

- **Fixed Assets**. Review your prior year's asset schedule and note any that have been sold or are obsolete.
 - **Repairs & Maintenance** expenditure is generally 100% tax deductible. If there is any expenditure of this nature, then it may be worthwhile doing before 31 March.
 - **Low Value Assets**. Generally, minor assets that cost less than \$500 are fully tax deductible in the year they are purchased, so now may be a good time to purchase that printer or office chair you've been holding out for.
 - **Staff Leave Reports**. If you employ staff, make sure you have all leave reports from your payroll system. Also, remember that IRD's new Payday filing system is active from 1 April 2019, so make sure you're prepared for this.
- If you need assistance with your end-of-year processes, contact me and I can help.

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Beach Series racers make a retro-themed splash



Swim finishers... from left, Daisy Proctor, Rachel Helsby, Sarah Moore and Mark Beckerleg



Super paddler... Jerry Stephenson (left), and Sharlene Griffen and Suzy Sampson (at right)



On the mic... Takapuna Beach Series organiser Nick Carroll (above) led the way on the event's 70s-and-80s themed finals night for paddleboarders, swimmers and runners



Blasts from the past... Jo Aleh and Kelsi Miller



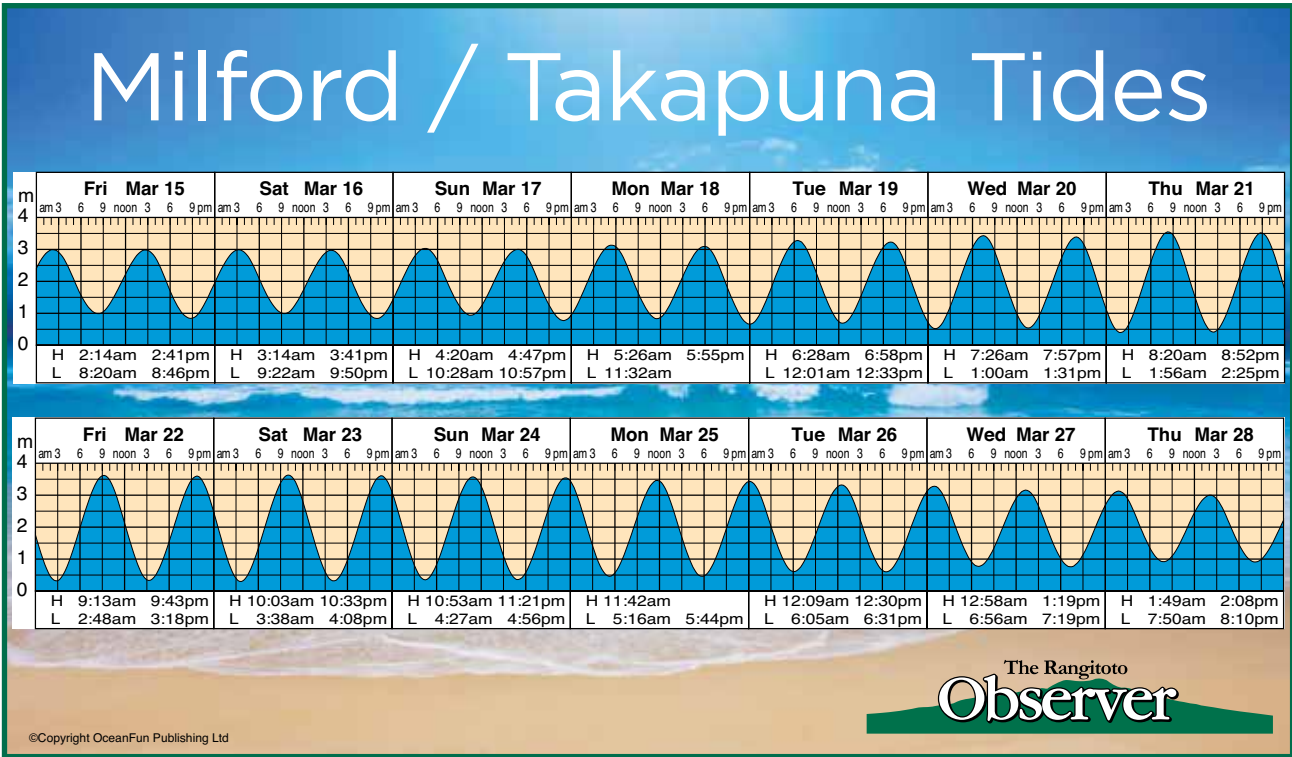
On the water... Jo Aleh (above) and Tudy Lile (right)

Team Seal gets in the swim, with Samoa the goal



Team seal... (from left to right), Tate Pichon, Troy Rangi, Josh Vegar and Shazzel Saheb

One team at the Takapuna Beach Series deserved a special round of applause, and not just for their awesome outfits. Team Seal – a group of open-water special-needs swimmers – got into the 70s and 80s theme at the event, but have another international competition on their radar. Tate Pichon, Troy Rangi, Josh Vegar and Shazzel Saheb are busily preparing and raising money under the guidance of coach Sarah O’Dwyer to go to Samoa for a three-day ocean-swim series from 30 July to August 4. Team Seal swim a variety of events at the Beach series, over distances from 1km to 2km.



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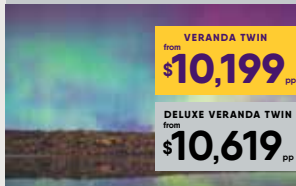
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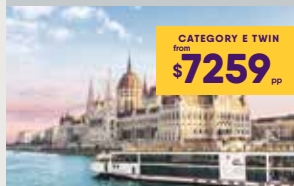
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Massive apartment development on cards for Smales Farm

Apartment block buildings up to 100 metres high are planned for Smales Farm.

Up to 1300 residential units are earmarked for land which is currently solely a business park.

The tallest building on the North Shore is the Sentinel building in Takapuna at 30 storeys and 150 m high.

Smales Farm owner Northcote RD1 holdings is applying to Auckland Council to change the Auckland Unitary Plan to allow the development to go ahead.

The residential development would be up to 75 metres high, with some parts of the buildings 100 metres high. No reduction in office floor space is planned.

When originally developed, the area near the Northcote interchange and Smales Farm Station was envisaged solely as a business park. Under its current zoning no residential development is allowed.

The owners are now proposing a mixed-use transit zone, to allow residential development which fits in with Unitary Plan goals to encourage housing around transport nodes.

Auckland Council staff and "independent experts acting for council agree that the proposal plan change has... potential", a report to the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board said.

The higher apartments would be located near the motorway.

Officers told the board that the North Shore Hospital buildings across the road from Smales Farm were up to 65m in height.



Rising high... an artist's impression of what the apartments might look like

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Apartment block breaks the rules

A group of Milford residents is lodging an appeal against a resource consent granted for a six-storey apartment block, which breaks a number of rules in the Auckland Unitary Plan.

The apartment development covers two sites at 110 Kitchener Rd and 1a Pierce Rd, where 20 apartments and a cafe are planned.

The consent was notified in August. Of 67 submissions, 19 were in support and 48 in opposition.

A panel of three commissioners heard arguments for and against the plans in a December hearing, with two voting to approve the consent and the third dissenting in a decision released on 1 February.

Commissioner Greg Hill objected to the excessive scale and bulk of the building.

That lack of consensus has given neighbours strong grounds to lodge an appeal to the Environment Court, said Devonport-Takapuna Local Board deputy chairperson Grant Gillon.

The first step is usually mediation, Gillon said.

The board made a submission opposing the consent, because of the size and scale of the building, plus the extent of earthworks, that could lead to pollution at Milford Beach.

The apartment block is closer to the boundary than allowed in the Unitary Plan, is taller than allowed, has less setback at upper floors, and has less landscaped area than it should have under the plan.

In addition, it would include a cafe that needs a consent as it is close to residential dwellings, doesn't have enough parking and will have noncompliant signage.

Neighbours raised concerns about shade, privacy, noise and parking.

"Initially people could accept the Unitary Plan, because, while it was challenging, it set the rules," said Gillon. "I think what people can't believe is there's another process that can go over and beyond it."

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Suspected polluter slapped with a wet bus ticket

Plaster dumped into a stormwater drain was discharged onto Takapuna Beach, causing a noxious white pool near an outlet, but the suspected polluters were let off with an "educative" letter from the council.

On 18 February, a member of the public called Auckland Council's pollution line at 9.45am to complain about a white foamy substance issuing onto the beach from a stormwater pipe near the end of Ewen St.

The officers visited a nearby address at about 11.30am to find waste plaster and wash water appeared to have been poured down the public stormwater drain, team manager compliance investigations Kerri Fergusson said.

"The compliance officer talked to a nearby tradesman who denied he was responsible for the matter.

"As we were unable to definitely link the breach with the person we spoke to, we issued them with a formal warning," Fergusson said.

The council has a graduated enforcement approach, where officers work with people to fix problems in the first instance, and only escalate to significant formal enforcement action if the effects are serious or the offender has continued to ignore the requirements, Fergusson said.

However, the local board and environmentalists would like to see the council respond more swiftly and issue fines more frequently in order to send a message to businesses disposing of waste down Takapuna's stormwater system, as pollution events have frequently been reported.

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board chair-



Foam fail... Tradespeople suspected of dumping plaster down a stormwater drain got off with a warning, after a white, foamy toxic residue poured onto Takapuna Beach from a stormwater outlet

person George Wood was surprised there was no penalty.

"More enforcement would be good. What we need is for the council to follow up on these incidents. They need to get a field officer there quickly and issue fines," Wood said.

Unfortunately, incidents like this, where pollution from businesses is dumped in the stormwater drains and pollutes the beach, are common on Takapuna Beach.

Feedback to the board suggest council officers take a while to attend, if they come at all.

"It's difficult for people to get the council to

respond. If you get through, you need to lay it on thick," Wood advised.

Forest and Bird would like see more education on the fact stormwater drains lead directly to the sea and information in a number of languages.

Where the council knows where the pollution came from, fines are a good deterrent, North Shore branch president Dr Richard Hursthouse said.

"If we are to stop the decline of the health of the Hauraki Gulf we need to get tough on pollution."

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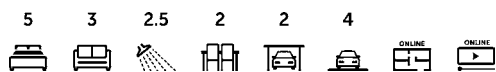
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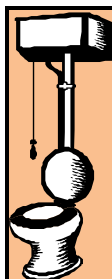
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Jack was part of the fabric of Takapuna business

Long-time Takapuna businessman Jack Sheehy has been remembered as a keen enthusiast for the area.

Sheehy, who died in January aged 95, opened Home Fabrics Ltd in Takapuna in 1958, and went on to build a flourishing business, serving the entire North Shore.

He was among the businesspeople who pushed the local council to purchase 40 Anzac St for car parking, agreeing to pay a rates surcharge for the purpose.

Sheehy grew up in Raetihi, in the King Country at the time of the Great Depression. At 14, he left home to find himself work and lodgings in Auckland, working as a junior at Ashley Fabrics and at ABC stores in Karangahape Rd. Four years later, he joined the Army, then the Navy to help with the war effort.

On his return, he married his wife Betty and settled in Bayswater, where he continued to live until a few years before his death.

Sheehy travelled widely to find new products and styles for his business, constantly looking to refresh Home Fabrics' image.

In 1986, Jack sold the business to his sons Gerald and Michael. After 60 years in Hurstmere Rd, Home Fabrics moved to Constellation Drive last year.



At home with fabrics... Jack Sheehy

Local identity remembered for seaweed campaign and much more

North Shore identity Geoff Bonham, who passed away in January, was deeply involved in community matters for much of his life.

He was on the Takapuna Community Board in 1995 and 1998, was a past president of the Takapuna North Rotary Club, and remained active in pursuit of Rotary projects.

His club spearheaded the idea of building the YES disability centre at Albany.

In recent years, Bonham lobbied Auckland Council and in particular the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board to keep Takapuna Beach clean of seaweed and other material. He campaigned vigorously, and could claim success with the development of the Takapuna Beach seaweed-removal policy document. He wanted to go further and have a beach-cleaning machine.

Bonham was raised in the Milford area and attended Westlake Boys High School in its early years. He worked in the swimming pool industry for many years, specialising in the manufacture and sales of spa and swimming pool covers.

He represented the swimming-pool industry in government and local body submissions and negotiations.

Bonham began competing in motor racing events in the 1990s in an MGB GT car. He became so enthusiastic for this sport that he eventually sponsored a class of races through his company Leisuretime.

He is survived by his wife Nora, four daughters and nine grandchildren.

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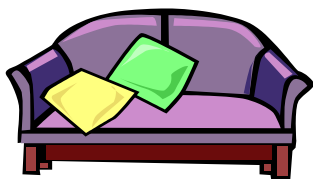
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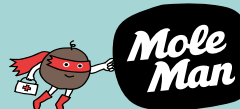
The deadline for receipt of applications for out of zone places is 29 April 2019.

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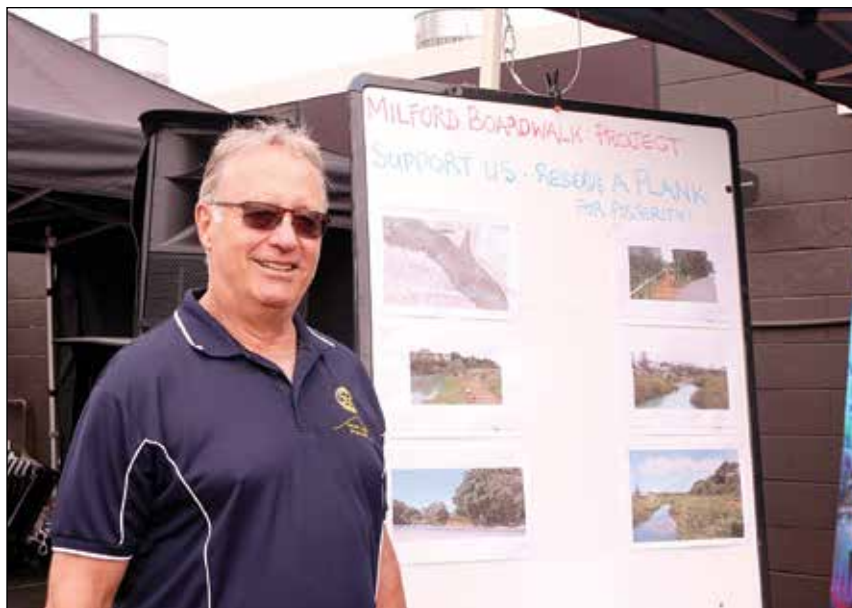
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More steps taken on long road to Milford boardwalk



A plank for posterity... Milford Rotary's Clive Menkin offers named planks at Milford's Vive La France! market day on 23 February

Community organisations in Milford are calling for sponsors to support a new boardwalk through the mangroves of the Wairau Creek estuary.

The walkway, which is in its early design stages, would run from the Milford shopping centre to the lifting bridge at the marina.

"The idea is walkers could enjoy being in the middle of nowhere and it could get people off those busy, cramped streets," says Debbie Dunsford, co-chair of Milford Residents Association.

The boardwalk would be 3 metres wide and 450 metres long and have occasional viewing platforms with seating for relaxation.

It would accommodate walkers, dog-walkers and cyclists.

Milford Rotary has offered to front the project and lead fundraising activities, Dunsford said.

Clive Menkin of Milford Rotary was talking to people at the Vive La France! market day on 23 February, encouraging them to buy a plank to carry their own or their family's name.

At this stage, the community groups are taking names of those interested in sponsoring planks, or helping with funding in other ways. They will set up a bank account when they start to get funds coming in, Dunsford said.

The walk is backed by the Milford Business Association and Milford Residents Association, who are working with Auckland Council and the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board to get concept designs, technical reports and engineering reports completed,

with a view to applying for a resource consent.

This year will be focused on getting all the technical work done and plans ready, Dunsford said.

The project should be completed by 2021 and is currently estimated to cost about \$2 million, she said, adding it's really too early to know what the costs will be.

A survey of residents in the area last year showed wide support for the project.

It will be designed so it doesn't go too close to people's homes.

The project has in part grown out of community clean-ups of the estuary.

Originally, the boardwalk was identified by the community as an aspirational project in the Milford Centre Plan 2015.

In 2016, the local board provided \$19,000 to the Milford Residents Association to undertake conceptual work.

The residents and business associations have engaged Simon O'Connor of Sentinel Planning and Mike Rogan of Sola Landscape Architects Ltd.

With their help, the groups succeeded in a pre-application hearing with the council.

This paved the way for Devonport-Takapuna Local Board to allocate \$250,000 funding from its local board transport capital fund budgets towards the project.

The council's healthy waters team last year commissioned a restoration plan for the Milford estuary, which is due to be completed early this year.

This would provide options for the area the boardwalk traversed, local board chairperson George Wood said.



Ooh la la... At the Vive La France! day in Milford, Patsy Sackx (above) talks to people about Boutique Tours to France, and (below, from left) Molly Good, Jess Lunny and Brooke Doherty soak up the atmosphere





Vive la France market day 'best ever'

Milford's Vive La France! French market day was "magnifique", organisers say.

The 23 February event included wine tastings, French cooking demonstrations, circus entertainment, food trucks and stalls, and even petanque. Alliance Francaise showed two films and gave a free French lesson.

MC Monique Bradley kept entertainment rolling along in Dodson Ave, which was blocked off to create a dining and entertainment area.

"It was the best we have ever had," Milford Business Association manager Murray Hill says.

The market saw a greater range of activities than past years, there was a very good turnout and the day had a great vibe, Hill explains.

A huge number of businesses got involved and made the day such a success.



Getting into the spirit of the Vive La France! market day, hosted by Milford Shops, are (clockwise from top left) Lisa Cameron of Posh Labels, MC Monique Bradley, Jason Dasadio and Finnli of Forrest Hill, Milford Fine Wine's Helen Sun and Esther Linn and Arazzo's Susan Simpson.





Looking after the community

Working locally is a passion for Nicola Jones, owner and founder of Nicola Jones Insurance.

Jones has been in the insurance business for 20 years and specialises in Life, Mortgage Repayment, Income Protection and Medical Insurance.

"I work primarily with families who have children and mortgages," she says, "to protect them if an unexpected medical or traumatic event were to occur."

Jones is not affiliated with any one insurance company, so "this allows me to provide a range of options depending on my client's specific needs."

Originally located in Takapuna, Nicola Jones Insurance is now in Belmont, where Jones has lived most of her life.

She has a strong family connection to the area with her grandparents, parents and brother all having grown up locally. Now her daughter, Mikaela, attends Belmont Primary School.

"Having the office so close to home and Mikaela's school has been amazing. It gives me the opportunity to be more involved in her activities as well as supporting the local community."

Jones enjoys working locally. "I find that when I see clients on the North Shore,

there is often some immediate common ground, whether discussing schools, local events."

Jones' clients enjoy individual human interaction as opposed to dealing with a computer or an 0800 number.

"I believe my main job is to assist at claim time. When dealing with clients going through a traumatic event, knowing they have someone on their side to help guide them is comforting."

Nicola Jones welcomes you to call her for a free insurance review on 09 488 7480 or drop in for a visit at 156a Lake Road.



NICOLA JONES INSURANCE

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Pushing the boat out – 300 dozen bluff oysters consumed in day at Regatta Bar

Seafood lovers converged on Takapuna's Regatta Bar & Eatery restaurant last Friday and devoured more than 3000 bluff oysters.

The Regatta Bar and Eatery located on Takapuna's Strand and over-looking the Hauraki Gulf and Rangitoto Island, hosted its Annual Bluff Banquet last Friday where diners consumed 300 dozen bluff oysters.

"We went through over 3000 bluff oysters with a sell-out lunch of 150 guests," Regatta's owner Andy Ruzich said.

"This is our fourth year of business and our fourth oyster sell out event," Ruzich said.

Ruzich is a principle sponsor of the Takapuna Beach Business Association and is a big advocate for promoting Takapuna as a must visit destination for locals and tourists alike.

The Annual Bluff Banquet was an ideal fit for clientele who were increasingly heading to Takapuna for top quality dining.

"Takapuna Beach is lucky to have the award winning Regatta Bar & Eatery overlooking our stunning beach," Takapuna Beach Business Association CEO Terence Harpur said.

"Not only do they serve delicious fresh food and tasty drinks, but their service and atmosphere is outstanding.

"They are big supporters of the community, hosting and supporting many events and initiatives to showcase Takapuna and drive visitation to our little slice of paradise," he said.

Starting in May and running once every two months through to September the Regatta Bar and Eatery has a series of bottomless Rose Brunches where guests can book for a two-hour lunch seating with bottomless Le Petit



Bluff gold... Regatta Bar & Eatery's owner Andy Ruzich shucking oysters for his customers

Rose, and Rose mocktails and a three-course set menu.

"It's a fun afternoon of high energy dining with DJ entertainment," owner Andy Ruzich said.

The Regatta also hosts the B.E.N (Business Excellence Networking) breakfasts (five a year) with the first one kicking off on March 19, with guests speakers former All Blacks Grant Fox and Ian Jones discussing the 'Business of Rugby'. This is a charitable event held to raise funds for the North Harbour Club for which Regatta is a corporate sponsor.

Melbourne Cup is a another huge event on

Regatta's event calendar with a live on site TAB and 4-course lunch and all the racing action on the big screens.

"We also hold summer parties with various artists including Peter Ulrich and Bevan Keys on Waitangi day every year where the entire venue is turned into a day time Ibiza dance party," Ruzich said.

Other events run by the Regatta Bar include the Chef Series in which it partners with top NZ wineries and holds degustation evenings with six courses matched with six wines hosted by Ruzich himself and the winemakers from the featured wineries.

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END OF LIFE CHOICES...A PUBLIC DEBATE

No matter what your age, the topic of end-of-life care is an important one. It will inevitably affect all of us and the people who matter to us and although the subject is difficult at the best of times, it is a discussion we need to have as a compassionate country.

David Seymour's End-of-Life Choice bill aims to change the Crimes Act to allow euthanasia and assisted suicide as they have in Holland and Canada and will be returned to the House at the end of the month. Ninety-two percent of the 37,000 submissions on this bill were opposed to a law change and I commend in particular the courage it took to appear in front of a group of strangers in a public select committee hearing about why they were in favour or against the bill.

As the deputy chair of the Justice Select Committee, I have personally found it an often harrowing experience listening to around 1000 first-hand accounts from people who shared distressing life and death events, and I respect their views even if I didn't agree with them.

After listening carefully and going through the bill in line-by-line detail, I am more convinced than ever that legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide through this bill would forever change the way we treat our most vulnerable – the elderly, mentally ill, suicidal and disabled New Zealanders.

This bill is not about turning off life support, 'do not resuscitate' requests, refusing medical treatment or using morphine for pain relief. Those practices are ethical and already legal, and would not change. But this bill is not just talking about the terminally ill. Under the term 'grievous and irremediable condition', your loved one with dementia, depression, arthritis, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, blindness, eating disorders, tinnitus or with a general belief that they are 'sick of life' may be eligible for assisted suicide.

Your local North Shore MP

Hon Maggie Barry ONZM

Member of Parliament – North Shore

National's Spokesperson for Seniors, Veterans, and Associate Health

worst statistics for youth suicide in the world, and the often desperate efforts to reduce those heart-breaking figures feature regularly in the headlines. A law change to enable access to euthanasia and assisted suicide will send confusing and mixed messages that it is okay for some people to be helped to end their lives while we spend millions on programmes trying to prevent others committing suicide. As the disabled community told us repeatedly, their lives would be defined as suffering from 'grievous and irremediable conditions', so their lives would be seen as being of less value than people who are able-bodied.

My mother had a 10-year journey with dementia and, as her only child, I saw how at risk and vulnerable older New Zealanders without advocates and family can be. As the former patron of Hospice NZ and Mary Potter Hospice in Wellington where my father died, I know that the right level of expert care at the end of people's lives is precious and transformative.

I have drafted my member's bill 'Access to End of Life Palliative Care' which is currently in the ballot, to require all DHBs to fund and provide end of life care for people in their own homes, hospices, hospitals and aged care facilities. With demand for palliative and hospice care expected to increase by 51% in the next two decades, this is a discussion we need to have now.

This is an opportunity to find out more about legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide and making your views known. It's a question the Government has said will be included in a binding referendum at the next election so it's important to understand what's at stake.

Contact 486 0005 for more information.

End of Life Choices Public Debate

Monday 25 March, 7-9pm

Netball North Harbour,
44 Northcote Road, Takapuna

Join Sir Bill English, Hon Maggie Barry, Canadian palliative care expert Dr Leonie Herx and euthanasia advocates to discuss the David Seymour Euthanasia/Assisted Suicide Bill. Make your views on this subject count.

RSVP to northshore@parliament.govt.nz



Authorised by Maggie Barry MP, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.



Hon Maggie Barry ONZM

MP for North Shore and National's Spokesperson
for Seniors, Veterans and Associate Health



Sir Bill English KNZM

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



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No reduced speed limit for Milford shopping centre

A few brows were left furrowed when Milford's main road was left off the list of streets getting lowered speed limits in a new road safety bylaw.

Auckland Transport (AT) is consulting on the proposed bylaw with a view to reducing speed limits and improving safety on a number of roads, but Kitchener Rd is not one of them.

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board chairperson George Wood was initially shocked at the news, given AT staff had presented plans to the board to reduce speed limits on Kitchener Rd and Devonport's Victoria Rd. However, his inquiries suggested this is just the first tranche of changes.

Auckland Transport's speed-management programme is a three-year project, according to senior media manager Joanna Glasswell.

AT is starting in the areas which present the highest risk, including roads with high death and serious-injury rates, as well as those with large numbers of vulnerable road users – those walking, riding bikes and on

scooters.

Approximately 90 per cent of the roads targeted in the proposed safer-speed bylaw are rural roads, with the others in the city centre and some town centres.

"We [AT] are at the beginning of this programme and, while Devonport and Milford are not included in this first year for changes, we are currently investigating opportunities to deliver the programme in these centres later on," Glasswell said.

"Devonport and Milford are both locations that can benefit from speed management, given the numbers of people walking and cycling."

North Shore councillor Chris Darby said reducing speed in a shopping centre like Milford involves more than putting up new signs.

The roads and intersections would need to be redesigned, which is costly and needed to be done well.

AT invites feedback on its bylaw proposals at www.at.govt.nz/speed by 31 March.

Goodbye and Thank You!

It is with great sadness to report that our Garden Centre will be closing its doors for the last time on Sunday 31 March 2019.

Owing to the increasing traffic congestion that has been created by having to unload large delivery trucks on-site, we have had to address a new way of receiving goods and, with that, comes the demise of the Garden Centre.

The success of the Garden Centre has only been achieved by all our lovely, long-standing and supportive, not to mention garden-crazy customers.



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