

By the lake and sea



PHOTO / TED BAGHURST

This suburb's golden mile between the salt and fresh water is coveted land, writes **Sandra Goodwin**

Part of what makes Takapuna exceptional as a suburb is its golden mile, a narrow strip of land with the sea to its east and Lake Pupuke to its west, says Victoria Bidwell of Bayleys Takapuna.

She says: "It's exceptional to get a lake and the sea in the same suburb, even when you look at international cities. You can walk from the beach to the other side in less than five minutes and be on the lake windsurfing."

Late 1800s property development in the area subdivided farmland so wealthy Aucklanders could have summer houses enjoying Takapuna's lake and beaches.

Bidwell says with beach-goings' growth in popularity, seawards-side properties came to command the highest prices, a trend which continues to this day.

She advises you often get comparatively good value for money by buying to the western side of Takapuna's main thoroughfares, securing properties which sometimes deliver views towards the city.

An exception stems from the appeal of prime west-side lake-side properties, the best of which face the sun, run down to the lake-water and have jetties.

Seaward-side Takapuna properties increase in value the closer they are to the beach, the most coveted being waterfront with direct beach access.

Top-end waterfront homes have sold for \$10-million plus. However they're a small subset of those properties seawards side of the suburbs' main thoroughfares that typically cost \$2-million-plus, rising to \$3 million or \$4-million if they're close to the beach.

Bidwell says: "Takapuna is popular with expatriate Kiwi buyers and overseas buyers who've moved here and got citizenship because their experience overseas means they put a high value on waterfront property, whereas sometimes we Kiwis take for granted our access to beaches."

She says: "An interesting feature of Takapuna's waterfront we've retained is The Takapuna Beach Holiday Park, the motor camp where my mother used to stay in her caravan for a month every year. It provides the opportunity for all New Zealanders to enjoy a taste of prime waterfront land."

The big change in the Takapuna market is the number of apartments that are coming on stream or planned, enabled by the Unitary Plan, says Bidwell.

"Apartments haven't really been a big feature of the housing landscape here but that will change. We did have a few townhouse developments along Hurstmere Rd in the 70s and 80s, some of which are very nice.

"The other thing which has been changing is the shopping and dining landscape here which has come of age with more restaurants overlooking the water, and a lot more boutique

shops along Hurstmere Rd. It's more sophisticated and more appealing to young people."

She says Takapuna's enduring appeal is that it still offers a relaxed lifestyle "with all the facilities you'd ever want but without that big city feel."

"It's outdoorsy and it feels safe so if you've got children they can walk to school or to their friends' houses."

"People love the fabulous recreational options we have – swimming or paddle-boarding at the beaches, being able to launch your boat at Takapuna to go fishing and having so many sports grounds."

She says Thorne Bay is a local treasure. There is no road running directly to it, but the Takapuna-Milford coastal walk goes to the bay.

And Takapuna's state secondary schools such as Takapuna Grammar and Westlake Girls and Boys has attracted some buyers to move across the bridge to buy in these zones. But bus services mean families based in Takapuna can send their children to prestigious Albany or city-side schools.

Bidwell says: "I've sold to people who have moved to the Bays because they've got children who are promising sailors and they want them to go to the Murrays Bay Sailing Club, which has produced some renowned sailors."

"And gone are the days when Takapuna people thought of it as a big deal to nip to the other side of the bridge. Off-peak you can drive over to Ponsonby for dinner in seven minutes."