

## *Tauhara Centre Trust*

### *Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

#### **Introduction:**

As we compile this report for the 2020-2021 financial year of the Trust, for our forthcoming Annual General Meeting later this month, there is a sense of unreality in describing the *relatively* peaceful and straightforward circumstances of that year compared with the growing turbulence around us.

We are in the grip of the Delta strain of the COVID-19 virus, and in the last 24 hours the tide of new cases sweeping the land has finally reached Taupo, with a cluster of four people testing positive. As a measure to bring this spread under control, the Government is introducing its "traffic light" COVID management system, which has the intention of enabling a great deal more freedom, preventing the need for lockdowns, and supporting local economies throughout the land.

Being based on 90% vaccination in each District Health Board area, and introducing mandatory vaccination for about 40% of the working population in key activity areas, this has sparked a degree of unrest, leading to demonstrations around Aotearoa New Zealand. It will also require us as a Trust to accept only guests who are fully vaccinated, and all our sole trader contractors who provide support services at our Centre will need to be fully vaccinated, as well as all our volunteers.

The long-standing Auckland lockdown from August this calendar year has had a significant impact on the Centre from the point of view of the type and range of activities that we have been able to sustain, and the consequent financial results for 2021-2022, which will be reported on in November, 2022. It seemed important to us as Trustees to flag this up, though the future results may be rosier than expected, with the majority of groups booked to come in the period August to December, 2021 electing to postpone to the first half of 2022. The impact of the full vaccination policy, on the other hand, is yet to play itself out.

In the past, the Trust has had many other challenges to meet, has worked its way through a great deal of change, and has made its way eventually into calmer waters. The pandemic will be one more challenge to add to our historic portfolio. We are very fortunate that our five-member Trust Board is united in its approach, with shared values and a strong sense of carrying the uplifting vision of our Founders into the future. Long may it be so.

For the purposes of this Annual Report, let us now turn to the important issues we report on in more "normal" years, and the detail of the July, 2020- June, 2021 year.

### **Who Are We?**

The Tauhara Centre Trust Board has five Trustees - Catherine Grace (appointed 27/11/12); Gilma Orozco, Minute Secretary (appointed 23/05/20); Leslie (Les) Wraight (appointed 11/11/13); Louise Belcher, Chairperson (appointed 19/08/95); and Stephen Grace, Secretary/Treasurer (appointed 19/12/07). Louise Belcher resides in Auckland, and the other four Trustees all live in Taupo. Two of the current Trustees are past Co-ordinators, and three are working Trustees forming a Leadership Team at the Tauhara Centre in Acacia Bay, Taupo.

### **What Are Our Vision and Mission Statement?**

The following statements developed by the Trust Board in 2007 describe our work in the world:

**Vision:** Transforming Lives

**Mission Statement:** To provide a unique environment for individuals and groups to experience renewal with opportunities for participation, education, healing, writing and spiritual retreat.

### **How did Tauhara Centre Trust come to exist?**

The Trust was originally formed as the Mount Tauhara Estate in 1938, its origins lying in an initiative from farsighted visionaries resident in Havelock North, who anticipated the huge upheaval and disintegration of the old political order in Europe as a result of World War I, the Great Depression of the 30's and the inexorable approach of World War II.

They perceived the need for an educational centre that would provide a meeting place for people of many different faiths, philosophies, methods of working and political beliefs, but united through goodwill to achieve mutual understanding. From these origins, momentum gradually built for the opening of a Centre in Acacia Bay, Taupo in 1977. The original Trust was reconstituted as the Tauhara Centre Trust in 1989.

Since 1977, Tauhara Centre Trust has provided through its retreat centre reasonably priced retreat and conference facilities, including accommodation, catering, meeting and quiet spaces. These have been put to good purpose by both individual people pursuing opportunities for inner renewal through taking time out from their regular lives; and a huge range of groups, many themselves founded on charitable principles, gathering to carry out their group work, whether that be educational, religious, broadly spiritual in nature, recreational, etc. Because the Trust has as part of its founding document (trust deed) the relief of poverty and any purpose beneficial to the community, the Centre regularly makes its facilities available to both individuals and groups (especially those with a charitable purpose) who are poorly resourced, and are in need of support.

It is often the intangibles of this place that visitors remark on: the sense of relief experienced as they pass through our front gates, leaving behind the tumultuous pace of modern life; the deep quiet and sense of spaciousness; the presence of Nature in all its many forms and beauty; the

contemplative perspective on life offered by an elevated place overlooking mountains, distant ranges and a beautiful lake. How few places there are in our towns and cities where this is offered today. This is precious. And our Trust Board is committed to the care of this place so that it may be offered intact to the coming generations, so that they, too, can enjoy what our Founders established so long ago.

### **Important Aspects of the Year 2020/21:**

The most outstanding feature of 2020/21 would have to be the continuing impact of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns, which essentially totally shut down the flow of people and income to the Centre.

In the previous annual report for 2019/20, we noted that from a financial point of view, the Centre had not suffered significantly, as substantial reserve funds had been built up due to the many groups that had come during the nine months before the pandemic shut us all down. But in the 2020/21 financial year, several lockdowns in Auckland not suffered by other parts of the country, prevented people from our largest catchment area from coming to Tauhara. We had some great bookings - on paper. But some of our longest and largest groups traditionally bringing in talented facilitators from the USA and Australia and very good numbers of participants, could not proceed. That problem will continue into 2021/22, with some major group organisers postponing any planned retreats in 2022 to 2023, when they anticipate that a world emerging from the pandemic will provide more favourable conditions.

We noted last year that in many ways, COVID-19 could be called the mindfulness bug, as it has rendered long range planning fraught with difficulty; what we have week to week is all that we can count on. We are fortunate that some of our group leaders and facilitators have postponed their events as many as four times, so keen are they to hold their gatherings in the special atmosphere that Tauhara has to offer.

We feel very grateful that a wide range of groups were still able to come and stay, though we had fewer gatherings and lower numbers of participants. Despite the pandemic, the last 12 months have seen a wonderful series of groups coming to stay, to learn and to deepen in their understanding of a particular spiritual practice or body of professional knowledge, thereby fulfilling the spirit and letter of our founding Trust Deed. There has been a great combination of groups that have been bringing their retreats to Tauhara over many years, who still find it the right place for their purpose, and new ones that are either starting out or gathering strength.

They include those involved in community education; those who take advantage of special opportunities offered by the Centre for people to come without payment, but supporting Tauhara's purpose through working bees and other gatherings; earth-based spirituality; education and group study gatherings; family gatherings (birthdays, weddings, wedding anniversaries); healing retreats; health related education; meditation; personal development; pre-school and childcare training; professional education and training workshops; sport and recreation seminars; universal spirituality

gatherings: groups fostering interfaith understanding; women's spirituality and personal development; writing retreats for academic women; Yoga.

In addition, Tauhara provided a meeting space for a wide range of local groups (e.g; Steiner pre-school education lantern festival - around 80 children and parents; days of mindfulness), who find the spacious walking spaces and gardens, the peaceful atmosphere and the delicious catering that our kitchen offers, a real drawcard. We also hosted musical performance events of various kinds, usually associated with particular spiritual paths and teachings, or to offer people deeply relaxing and reflective experiences.

### **Lack of Volunteers:**

With our international borders closed, we have in 2020/21 experienced a real dearth of volunteers who of many nationalities have very much helped the Centre to thrive over many years. We do get a significant number of New Zealanders as well, but it is overseas volunteers who in big numbers in the past have really enriched the Centre through their dedication, involvement in Centre activities, as well as sheer grit and people power at the work face. There was a pool of volunteers or Wwoofers locked into New Zealand by the pandemic, and we count ourselves fortunate to hear from any of them and to receive their help when fits for them. But many have now drifted back to their home countries, or have sought paid work in NZ. From November, 2020 to about April, 2021 we had no Wwoofers at all. It was our Taupo local volunteers and neighbours who stepped into the gap, for which we were extremely grateful.

### **Leadership at the Centre in 2020/21:**

The Trust Board decided in 2020 in the light of COVID-19 not to seek a new Co-ordinator, but to establish a short-term senior Leadership Team consisting of Catherine Grace, Gilma Orozco and Stephen Grace to provide a steady presence until the new reality with and post COVID-19 shows its hand. It was intended that Catherine and Stephen would pull back from their full-time roles which were temporarily renewed in May, 2020, when suitable replacements could be found. But the arrival of the Delta variant of COVID in August, 2021 may delay this process.

### **What has been the focus of the Trust Board in 2020/21?**

The Trust Board has continued the big push in 2020/21 to deal with a wide range of projects that needed to be implemented, especially the renewal of firewood supplies, upgrading of accommodation, and major issues that had been growing with stormwater drainage, septic drainage, and upgrading of decks in public areas. With the Centre having opened in 1977, some 44 years ago now, greater investment has been made in the past year in restoration and improvement. Thanks to a generous donation, an extra 30,000 litre rainwater tank was purchased, drawing water from all the rooves in the workshop area. This is now pumped into the main water tank system through double filters and a UV treatment plant, thereby mitigating the need to draw so much water from the town supply at the gate. A shelter for our caravans has been constructed, providing protection from sun and storm ensuring that they remain the popular accommodation they have become over

the years. Two of them have undergone major refurbishment, and all three now have private decks and outdoor furniture.

As we have pointed out in previous annual reports, the biggest issue for the Trust remains the same: how do we take care of our physical assets (land and buildings), maintaining them to the best possible standard within the restraints of income generated by Centre activities? The continuing relatively low inflation rate in New Zealand over the past year has offered a real opportunity to make progress in our maintenance and development programme.

### **So what did this all cost, and what were the financial results for the 2020/21 year?**

The relatively mild impact of COVID-19 on the results for 2019/20 due to 9 months of good earnings, could not continue into 2020/21, with the ongoing lockdowns in Auckland. [The figures in brackets next to the following stated results are for 2019/20 and 2018/19 respectively.] With a total income of \$247,674 [\$273,778 / \$322,724] and expenditure of \$254,632 [\$274,549 / \$325,706], the result for 2020/2021 was a deficit of \$6,958 [\$771 / \$2,982). Adding in depreciation of \$36,452 [\$34,902 / \$36,114], the overall loss for the Trust was \$43,433 [\$35,673 / \$39,096]. The net loss (income vs expenditure) was covered, as in previous years, by funds set aside in a reserve fund during more abundant times.

Over the course of this last COVID year, at times of low and sometimes no income, relief was provided by sole trader contractors being able to apply for the COVID-19 subsidies provided by the NZ Government, for which we are deeply appreciative.

Clearly, the Trust would love to be in surplus after depreciation every year, but with aging infrastructure, this remains one of the challenges of the Centre's operation. In the year ahead, with much of the maintenance now achieved over the past few financial years, important projects still remain, such as; repairs to all our driveways; ongoing refurbishment of shared accommodation bathroom facilities; repainting and refurbishing the exteriors of some of our buildings. Paying for maintenance will remain one of our most demanding areas in managing our budget.

### **How Did We Account For What We Did?**

The Trust has its annual accounts prepared by Business Like Accountants in Manukau each year, and these are made available on the Department of Internal Affairs Charities Services website before Christmas each year after the Trust has held its AGM, usually in late November or early December (the Trust's financial year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>). Other information about the Trust's activities is listed each year on that website, as well as our own website ([www.tauharacentre.org.nz](http://www.tauharacentre.org.nz)). The Trust's accounts are prepared in accordance with the External Reporting Board (XRB) standards for tier 3 charitable organisations. The Trust Board has really appreciated the professional advice that we have received from Business Like, who manage to undertake their professional role in a supportive and friendly manner that enables us to understand and remain consistent with the accounting standards expected of us by both Charities Services (NZ Department of Internal Affairs) and the IRD.

### **What Do We Need in order to be Able to Continue What We Do?**

Our biggest challenge is keeping up with maintenance of what we have. We don't have any grandiose plans to expand the Centre, but are keen to take excellent care of the facilities we already have, and to improve on them. Our depreciation schedule points to the ongoing costs of maintenance and replacement.

### **How can you help?**

Become a regular donor. Those we have make a real difference, making it possible for us to replace equipment and upgrade our facilities. The Trust's bank account for donations is: Kiwibank 38-9009-0271000-04

Bring your group to Tauhara, thereby creating the income that will aid its ongoing development and maintenance.

Come on a personal retreat or join a group retreat, helping to sustain our income flow.

Make a bequest in your will for Tauhara.

If you have enjoyed a visit or stayed at Tauhara, record that experience on social media (Tauhara has a Facebook page).

Come and help as a volunteer.

Organise a family gathering at Tauhara.

If you are a local Taupo person, come and join us on Volunteer Tuesdays, when we harvest firewood, look after the grounds, help in the kitchen, tidy our Library.

### **Gratitude:**

If there was one word that summed up how our Trust Board members feel about Tauhara, it is *gratitude*.

For the vision that inspires us to do all that **we** can to help Tauhara thrive, and to pass it on in good spirits to the upcoming generations.

To the Founders and early Trustees, for their commitment to a vision and purpose that almost all did not live to see manifested in the physical. We hold dear in particular Harriot and Robert Felkin, Reginald and Ruth Gardiner, John and Michael von Dadelszen, Charles McDowell, Ethelwynne Felkin.

For the succession of Trustees, Co-ordinators, staff and volunteers down the years whose dedication and hard work created the Centre that we hold dear today.

For the current team who do all the liaison and organising with group organisers and individual retreatants, continue to produce tasty and nutritious dishes that delight our guests, our housekeeping crew who work so hard to help the Centre shine, and those who work in grounds and building maintenance.

For all the informal friends of Tauhara who continually think of this place, and who feel gratitude that it exists.

***A word from the Chair (Louise Belcher-Breuer)***

This has been a very difficult year for the Tauhara Centre, and our Trustees have shown real leadership in the way that they have handled the challenges, and supported the staff and the groups that use our Centre. Special acknowledgment to the people who worked here on the ground during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected us all in so many different ways. We are coming through this more resilient and more determined to continue our work in a world that needs our services more than ever.

Tauhara Centre Trustees,  
November, 2021