

# **Tauhara Centre Trust**

## **Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

### **Introduction:**

We members of the Tauhara Centre Trust Board extend our warm greetings and kind regards to all those people, near and far, who continue to take a kindly interest in the activities and ongoing vitality of the Centre. We really do appreciate all the many expressions of support and goodwill that have flowed into the Centre over the past 18 months, which is essentially the period on which we are now reporting.

What have been some of the keynotes of this time?

### **Centre Leadership Transition:**

After five and a half years in the challenging and "character building" position of Centre Co-ordinator, Catherine Grace made the decision to step down from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 in order to take up semi-retirement. The Board is deeply appreciative of all the fine work that was carried out over that period under her direction. She brought a very welcoming and inclusive style to all that she undertook, and a raft of vital maintenance renewal work (buildings and grounds) was achieved under her careful eye. Added to all the other roles that Catherine has undertaken in a service to Tauhara career extending back to 1986, this has been a time of high achievement for which the Board extends to her their deepest gratitude. The Board is especially thankful that her long years of service and "institutional memory" will not be lost to Tauhara, as she is staying on to take up her new role as a Trustee. Remaining residential at Tauhara, Catherine will continue to invest her energies into maintaining the gardens and grounds, as well as serving in any other areas where her skills and experience can be put to good use.

### **New Centre Co-ordinator:**

The Board wishes to extend a warm welcome, also, to the incoming Centre Co-ordinator, Tristan Baynham. He has a personal relationship to Tauhara going back over 30 years. A meditator, solo Dad of two children that have now flown the nest, small business operator and double black belt in Aikido, Tristan brings a younger energy to the day-to-day challenges of leadership at Tauhara, and is already making his mark. In what is probably a first for the Centre, which has often seen one Co-ordinator leaving and their successor taking up the post some time later, Tristan spent his first 2 months in training before Catherine officially retired. The Board wishes him well in the years ahead.

### **Trust Board Changes:**

The Board has been considerably strengthened in recent times by the addition of Catherine Grace and Les Wraight as our newest Trustees, joining Louise Belcher-Breuer (appointed August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1995) and Stephen Grace (appointed December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007). Catherine Grace is well-known to people connected with Tauhara, and now having put her day-to-day leadership responsibilities behind her, is able to serve in her new role. Les Wraight, along with his wife, Gwen, has been a weekly volunteer since December, 2008. With a long career as a secondary

school teacher in the UK in the practical and technical skills area, Les has brought a great vigour and skill to many areas of our ongoing outdoor maintenance, including track clearance, grounds grooming, tree maintenance and firewood generation. We extend a warm welcome to both these new Trustees, and look forward to the years ahead when they will help to guide the governance of the Trust.

For the first time in the history of Tauhara, three out of four Trustees are resident in Taupo. There is a balance of two men and two women. And two of the Trust Board are former Co-ordinators, who between them bring many years' experience and knowledge of what it takes to run and maintain such a Centre on a day to day basis.

We would also like to record our deep appreciation to our Honorary Solicitor, Mark von Dadelszen, who has continued to offer us on a pro bono basis, sage advice on the many aspects of the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board. Mark gives us a direct link back to the Founders of Tauhara, as he is the grandson of Reginald Gardiner, and his father John, who drafted up our original Trust Deed, served as one of our founding Trustees for many, many years. Around the time of our AGM, Mark will be conducting along with his wife, Eileen, who has considerable experience in this sector, a professional development seminar for Trustees and staff on charities legislation and the obligations arising from it for people working for charitable trusts. We are truly blessed by this practical, ongoing support.

#### **Recognition of the Founders:**

In recent weeks, the Trust has negotiated with staff of the new Hawkes Bay Museum, Theatre and Art Gallery in Napier the loan of several items that came originally from Whare Ra in Havelock North, the home of "The Havelock Work" from which Tauhara Centre evolved. The Museum is running from May to October an exhibition entitled "Dr Felkin and the Forerunners". Museum staff have made several visits to Tauhara, and have been deeply interested in our Founders' Library. The Museum will be holding a launch ceremony on May 9<sup>th</sup> this year.

#### **Whom Does Tauhara Centre Serve?**

The Centre continues to serve the needs of a very diverse number of groups, who come to do their "soul work", undertake training and educational seminars, or to hold gatherings that explore and reinforce recognised paths of a religious or cultural nature. A steady stream of individual people, also, beat a path to our door simply to take space, retreating from very busy and challenging lives. We wish to express our deep thanks to all of you, who ensure that Tauhara continues to serve its well-defined role in the world, as set out in its Trust Deed.

A trend that does provide the Board with growing confidence for the future is the patronage of new groups that leaven the "bread" of established groups. In the first half of 2014, it is noteworthy that the Centre is taking bookings from groups it has never seen before, and this is most gratifying.

The strong connection between the Centre and the local Taupo community continues, with groups organised by Age Concern, gardening and women's groups coming up for talks on the

history and vision of Tauhara coupled with catered morning teas or lunches. The *Cutting Edge* weekly Wednesday evenings, featuring in the main DVDs and online presentations of an inspirational and exploration of consciousness character, organised and facilitated by Ken Wakefield, have drawn a steady group of "regulars" as well as Centre retreatants and staff. A number of sweatlodges guided by David Rahaman Brown have been very successful. The monthly Dances of Universal Peace evenings continue to attract a steady flow of participants to deepen in the spiritual traditions of humankind. Tauhara has traditionally been such a natural community space for the exploration of human consciousness in its huge diversity of forms, and this continues to be so.

The local Council is now using Tauhara for teambuilding activities, and the Bay of Plenty Community Trust held one of its regular meetings here.

### **Staff:**

The Board has been very blessed by the quality of the staff that it has managed to attract in recent times, and in this regard it wishes to express its special thanks to Gilma Orozco, our front of office "presence" and Office Administrator. As with so many other people who have gone on to become Centre staff members, Gilma (from Colombia in Latin America) first connected with Tauhara as a volunteer in our Library, and it soon became apparent that she could offer so much more, with excellent digital skills, and a background as a qualified research psychologist. She and her husband, Juan, also a frequent visitor and participant at the Centre, have been much inspired by the vision of the Founders of Tauhara, and they, in turn, are helping to ensure that this vision and purpose are carried into the future.

### **A Tribute to Volunteers:**

Tauhara's work in the world is to reach out to people of all ages, nationality and life experience, who are often at critical crossroads in their life journeys. A key part of that is its volunteer (often called "intern" in overseas centres) programme, which enables participants to work alongside others from many different walks of life, language and culture, creating lasting friendships and helping them to realise that in essence, human beings from all over share the same needs and aspirations at the most fundamental level. At Tauhara, the human spirit that we all share is highlighted, but we also celebrate the differences that make folk from the many different parts of the world endlessly fascinating. At our morning circles, we often use the phrase "we, the United Nations of Tauhara".

Without the support of the volunteers who flow through the Centre, Tauhara could not continue to do its work in the world nearly so effectively. Predominantly young folk who are travelling in New Zealand during a gap year after completing formal education, but also including wiser souls in their 70s and even 80s, or simply experiencing the world at large, they arrive fresh and enthusiastic, ready to experience the community experience that a spiritual retreat centre such as Tauhara can offer. Many of them arrive with excellent academic achievements, but few practical skills at the most fundamental level, such as knowing how to make a bed, light a fire, prepare vegetables in the kitchen, clean a bathroom or weed a garden. Somehow, Tauhara synergistically manages to weave them into a team that cares for all the "sacred spaces" of the Centre, delivering delicious meals on time to the

groups and retreatants that stay at Tauhara, tending to the organic gardens and grounds, making all the beds and cleaning all the bathrooms. Thus both the volunteers and Tauhara benefit from this programme. They are a vibrant part of the energetic fabric of Tauhara: long may it be so!

Special mention must be made here of volunteers who come and help us out on a weekly basis. They provide a steady lift under the wings of Tauhara with their endeavours, and, in turn, are enriched by the experience of giving of themselves to a greater cause. These local volunteers have been in recent times a source of new employees and Trustees, with our newest Trustee, Les Wraight, and our Office Administrator, Gilma Orozco, both emerging from our volunteer programme after giving willingly of themselves to Tauhara.

In this regard, we are so blessed, also, to have such a good turn-out at our twice-yearly Working Bees, leaving the Centre glowing, with all sorts of corners tidied away, and firewood processed for our 8 fireplaces to keep the home fires burning and warming everyone throughout the crispy winters of Taupo.

### **Financial:**

The 2012/13 financial year turned out to be a year of two halves, much busier from July to December, 2012, and noticeably quieter January to June, 2013.

It is ironic that during the global financial crisis, Tauhara thrived in a financial sense, but as we emerge from that worrisome time, our "financial performance", to use accounting-speak, was less assured. Perhaps this reflects the caution that people still feel around "letting the financial reins out", and recognises that at a time of escalating basic price increases (food, energy, etc), much of the activity that occurs at Tauhara is aspirational and discretionary, rather than essential spending. Fortunately, there are many people who still affirm that at a time of financial stress, it is even more important than ever to invest in their own soul work, whatever form that may take. One of the great privileges of people who work at the Centre or who do work exchange at Tauhara, is to observe at first hand the wonderful range of approaches that the human family brings to its search for truth and inner wisdom.

That having been said, the Centre still recorded for 2012/13 a net surplus of \$27,637 before depreciation, but with depreciation of \$59,360, the overall result was a loss of \$31,723 (compared with \$22,355 in the previous financial year). The impact of this result is simply to lessen the overall equity value of the Trust (reflected in assets and investment funds), but in terms of cash-flow, the Centre is still managing comfortably to meet its financial obligations by remaining committed to following conservative fiscal practice through, for example, maintaining a prudent level of reserves, and by paying all our ongoing predictable costs by weekly direct crediting to service providers. This can be quite challenging given aging infrastructure which, when it fails, usually entails unplanned expenditure, at times of a magnitude that can be breathtaking. Since July last year there have been many instances of this (see Maintenance below), requiring the use of invested funds to carry out replacements or repairs.

The Trustees acknowledge that the ongoing challenge of depreciation, representing the aging plant and buildings which will require replacement or upgrading in the medium to longer term, is something that requires appropriate resourcing. Raising the income of the Centre and making savings where possible are obvious immediate solutions, as well as targeted fundraising for specific projects. The Board would deeply appreciate substantial donations from those who support its vision/kaupapa, and strongly encourages them to include a bequest for Tauhara Centre in their wills.

The detail of this and previous years' results can be found on the Charities Commission website [www.charities.govt.nz](http://www.charities.govt.nz) (search the register under Tauhara Centre).

#### **Maintenance:**

The Board continues to place significant emphasis on maintaining the buildings/assets we already have in place, rather than investing in developments that might not bear fruit in a very uncertain financial world climate. The quieter time in the period January to June 2013 provided an opportunity to refurbish some of the accommodation, while simultaneously enabling the proper training of the incoming Co-ordinator. Much of the final preparation and planning for replacement of the deck on Tui Lodge (known by an earlier generation of Tauhara folk as "The White House") was carried out during this time, construction taking place August to October, 2013, with final Council "sign-off" being achieved in November. In this matter, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to The Southern Trust, which made a grant of \$5,000 towards this \$20,000 project.

We have been very fortunate to obtain the services of Ken Wakefield, a regular member of our Wwoofing team in earlier years and a very experienced artisan builder, who was contracted both to build our new Tui Lodge deck, under the supervision of certified master builder, Steve Belcher, and to provide ongoing weekly maintenance support at the Centre. Ken brings a fine appreciation of the crafted aspect of construction and maintenance, producing an harmonious appearance to the various kinds of work he carries out. He also brings a commitment to the use of natural materials wherever appropriate. We continue to be blessed, also, by long-serving maintenance contractor, Kieron, whose wonderful painting skills have covered almost every building in the Centre, not to mention his heroic efforts in the grounds maintenance and firewood areas.

As part of its ongoing intention to make energy savings, the Board was very happy to support this past year an initiative from Tristan, our incoming Manager, to have both Tui Lodge and Felkin Cottage/Kereru insulated.

The last few months covered by this report have seen a series of building emergencies of the water variety, with three old hot water cylinders in the shared unit bunkroom bathrooms 'giving up the ghost" and requiring complete replacement. This was followed by a difficult to trace and fix repair to one of our water mains running alongside our vegetable gardens. To cap all this off, our longest serving water pump then expired. Thus in the region of \$15,000-\$20,000 walked out the door, greatly enriching our local trades people in order to restore functionality to the Centre. This graphically represents the unpredictability of maintenance

for a charitable trust with aging infrastructure, and the purpose of setting aside any surpluses into a rainy day account.

One long-standing problem the Board is glad to report, is that after 5 years' of negotiation, our local lines company finally agreed to instal another lamp post to lift their transmission lines that were regularly stretching and drooping into our front hedge.

### **Grounds:**

The grounds and gardens have continued this past year to be the focus of much effort and commitment from the staff and work exchange volunteers. The vegetable gardens produce a steady stream of fresh vegetables and salad greens to the kitchen, providing a tasty, organic supplement to the thousands of meals that the kitchen produces for group retreatants and staff.

The plantings of previous years are really bearing fruit now, with all our newest fruit trees responding (ironically) to an indifferent summer of warm days and cold nights with enthusiastic croppings that will be bottled for guest catering. The hazelnuts have produced a generous crop this year (2014) which, after shelling, will find its way into many a vegetarian loaf in the year ahead. We have been very fortunate to have the organising and green-fingered skills of Catherine Grace at work in guiding and teaching Wwoofers the finer aspects of garden planning, planting and harvesting. That she began her days growing up in Paisley, Scotland, in an upstairs tenement with only a garden the size of several tea towels, growing a bit of rhubarb and a few spuds, and is now directing the ongoing maintenance of large organic gardens and ornamental beds, is rather impressive. The Board places a great deal of importance on the gardens and grounds, which make Tauhara such a beautiful place to visit, and which group participants and retreatants alike frequently compliment in their evaluation/feedback forms.

### **Bees:**

One of the highlights of the past year has been the establishment of a bee colony at Tauhara. A joint project between our Trust and the Aratika Trust, which has run two retreats for cancer sufferers based on the principles of the Gawler Foundation in Australia, it has taken advantage of all the plantings of native shrubs and fruit-bearing trees that both we have planted over the past 5 years, and Aratika have subsequently added, one for each person who has participated in their residential retreats at Tauhara. The honey is currently being harvested, and the hives are expected to produce around 200 litres, shared between the two Trusts and our very experienced professional apiarist, David. Aratika will use their honey for fundraising to enable more people to participate in their retreats: Tauhara, similarly, will bottle and label some for sale to group participants and retreatants, the balance to be used in the kitchen and at the Centre's tea station. For those who might be concerned, we can confirm that the honey has been independently tested by a certifying laboratory as uncontaminated (by tutu), and therefore suitable for human consumption.

### **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication:**

No report on the past year or so could be complete without acknowledging the wonderful contribution of former staff member, Vernon Smith, who published last November *Tauhara Centre 75 years on*, a pictorial record from the early Founders to the opening of Tauhara in 1977 and on to today. It provides a poignant "feel" for the changing cavalcade of people who have contributed to the life of the Centre over a very long period, and captures the images that have remained part of the memories of thousands of people who have walked through Tauhara's gates over the decades. Vernon has personally shouldered responsibility for preserving and making available Tauhara's visual archives, for which we feel a deep gratitude.

### **Conclusion:**

The Board wishes to express its deep appreciation to all the people who have made, and continue to make Tauhara Centre a place of relevance in the modern world. To its dedicated staff, work exchange and local volunteers, suppliers and maintenance folk, and especially to all the people who continue to hold Tauhara in their hearts, who come and stay at the Centre, or simply those who energetically support the Centre from a distance, glad that such a place exists for the upliftment of humankind, the Board offers its heartfelt thanks. Namaste.

Tauhara Centre Trust,  
March, 2014