

Tauhara Centre Trust

Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30th, 2023

Introduction:

At the close of yet another year, the Trustees of Tauhara Centre send their greetings to all the good folk who have brought their retreats, group and individual to the Centre, and all those who have had a connection with Tauhara over so many years. Although Aotearoa New Zealand has changed so much since the Centre opened back in 1977, when there was no such thing as the Internet nor social media, the Centre continues to serve many thousands of individuals coming on personal retreat, or participating in organised groups with an educational, spiritual, religious, recreational or personal growth purpose. It has also supported the work of other charitable organisations, who come to Tauhara for their self-renewal, reflection and planning.

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 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, may enjoy what our Founders established so long ago.

Important Aspects of the Year 2022/23:

There are three main noteworthy characteristics of the period July, 2022 to June, 2023:

Gradual Recovery From COVID 19:

With the worst effects of COVID 19 behind us, though still very much affecting many, some with longer term effects, and the division created by the vaccine mandates gradually easing, the last year has been a very busy time for the Centre, staff and Trustees. We have been blessed by some significant long and larger retreats, such as the *Non-violent Communication* training in April this year, *Diamond Approach*, and *Women Writing Away* (retreats for academic women). But to our great joy, we have also seen a significant number of new groups that we have never seen before, coming into the mix.

Gradual Improvement in the Numbers of International Volunteers:

Although the return of overseas travellers has been slow, it has come as a great relief to us that the number of younger people willing to come on a work exchange basis has steadily (though unpredictably) increased. They bring a wonderful, youthful energy, and it is a constant surprise to us that so many have behind them remarkable achievements in their work and academic histories.

Financial Stability and Achievement:

In our previous annual reports, we have frequently commented as follows: "The Trust would love to be in surplus after depreciation every year, but with an infrastructure that dates back to 1977, this remains one of the challenges of the Centre's operation. Paying for maintenance will remain one of our most demanding areas in managing our budget. A healthy bequest or two would enable us to catch up on much of this work." Well, 2022-23 has been the year to deliver, with the final result showing a surplus *after depreciation* of just over \$36,000, and the Trust received a wonderful bequest of just over \$180,000 in the will of someone none of us knew, and who wished his bequest to remain private. This has put the over-all financial state of the Trust into a much stronger

position, and given us the ability to keep up with the demands of maintenance of buildings and grounds, including the removal of trees that have become a danger due to the accelerating rate of climate change seen in severe storms.

Who Are the people Who Came to Tauhara Centre 2022-2023?

Despite the lingering effects of the pandemic, the last 12 months have still 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. One of the stand-out themes is the increasing number of groups from the Maori community bringing their hui to the Centre, including tertiary education providers offering indigenous education and training, marae hui, etc.

The various groups that used Tauhara's facilities this last financial year include those involved in community education; earth-based spirituality; education and group study gatherings; 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; workshops for men; writing retreats for academic women; Yoga.

In addition, Tauhara provided a gathering space for a wide range of local groups (e.g; Steiner pre-school education lantern festival - around 80 children and parents), 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.

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 typically 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 1st to June 30th). Other information about the Trust's activities is listed each year on that website, as well as our own website (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 again 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.

An Acknowledgment to Our Honorary Solicitor:

We would like to make a special acknowledgment to our Honorary Solicitor, Mark von Dadelszen, who over many decades has provided our Trust Board with considered and helpful advice on the issues that arise from time to time concerning the operation of our Centre. As the son of one of our most outstanding and long-serving Trustees, John von Dadelszen, who as a solicitor drew up our original Trust Deed, and the grandson of two of our original Founders, Reginald and Ruth Gardiner, Mark has brought a real understanding of the foundations and principles of our Trust both historically and currently to his work on our behalf. We feel a deep gratitude for his ongoing service to our Trust.

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

As mentioned above, 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. We are happy to provide a receipt for any amount over \$5.

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.

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 continue to 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.

Tauhara Centre Trustees,
November, 2023