

Tauhara Centre Trust

Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30th, 2020

Who Are We?

The Tauhara Centre Trust Board grew from its longstanding Board membership of four Trustees - Catherine Grace (appointed 27/11/12); Leslie (Les) Wraight (appointed 11/11/13); Louise Belcher, Chairperson (appointed 19/08/95); and Stephen Grace, Secretary/Treasurer (appointed 19/12/07); with the addition of Gilma Orozco in June, bringing the Board up to its full complement of five as set out in our Trust Deed. Louise Belcher resides in Auckland, and the other four Trustees all live in Taupo. Two of the current Trustees are past Co-ordinators and staff members of 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 Aspect of the Year 2019/20:

The most outstanding feature of 2019/20 would have to be the onset of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns, which essentially totally shut down the flow of people and income to the Centre.

As soon as the Government made its announcement in late March, the 'phone rang incessantly to cancel or postpone group bookings. What would have been a great ending to the financial year, turned overnight into a wasteland. All understandable, of course, but robbing us of any opportunity to make comfortable adjustments. Even now, in the new financial year, great uncertainty lies in the months ahead, even though we have some great bookings - on paper. Some of our longest and largest groups bring in talented facilitators from the USA and Australia, but that has now collapsed with the ongoing closure of our borders.

In many ways, COVID-19 could be called the mindfulness bug, as it has rendered long range planning pointless, so what we have week to week is all that we can count on. For example, the Auckland shutdown made it impossible for Aucklanders to attend a sizeable Yoga retreat in September, which fortunately was able to be held in October, just days after the lockdown was lifted.

We feel very grateful that a wide range of groups were still able to come and stay between July, 2019 and the lockdown at the end of March. 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 walking groups; Steiner pre-school education lantern festival - around 80 children and parents; senior citizens' luncheon outings; and Maori youth development led by Brendon and Kimi Ericksen), who find the spacious walking spaces and gardens, the peaceful atmosphere and the delicious catering that our kitchen offers, a real drawcard. Weddings continued to feature occasionally in our annual programme, with Tauhara's beautiful grounds and views providing a dramatic backdrop for outdoor ceremonies, and its accommodation, catering and meeting spaces allowing extended family groups to make a weekend of the celebration. We also host musical performance events of various kinds, usually associated with particular, spiritual paths and teachings, or to offer people deeply relaxing and reflective experiences.

Another Big Change in 2019/20:

The Trust Board would like to express its deep appreciation to Tristan Baynham, who picked up the role of Co-ordinator in July, 2013 and carried it right through to May, 2020. This is an extraordinary achievement, comparable with the record of Basil Avery, the very first Co-ordinator of the Centre and subsequently a Trustee. Tristan achieved so much, and left the Centre in a stronger position, having been responsible for improvements to much of our self-contained accommodation, and providing a steady presence for just over 7 years. He is a very practical person, equally at home in the kitchen or grounds maintenance, but extending himself also to the world of administration which can appear overwhelming at times. We wish him much joy and quiet achievement in his new, more spacious life, still living in Taupo. The Trust Board decided 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 is intended that Catherine and Stephen will pull back from their full-time roles which were temporarily renewed in May, 2020, when suitable replacements can be found.

When Did We Do It?

Throughout the year, but this year due to COVID-19 between July, 2019 and the end of March, 2020. With the dropping of levels to 2, we did manage to get a few retreats in, in safety, between May and the end of June. We feel special appreciation to Kavita and her Ananda Sangha, who were the last group to come in before lockdown, and the first to return when we went to level 2.

What has been the focus of the Trust Board in 2018/19?

The Trust Board has continued the big push in 2019/20 to deal with a wide range of projects that needed to be implemented, especially treework (32 gum trees near Mapara Road were felled for processing into firewood), upgrading of accommodation, and major issues that had been growing with stormwater drainage, septic drainage, and upgrading of flooring in public areas. With the Centre having opened in 1977, some 43 years ago now, greater investment has been made in the past year in restoration and improvement.

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 2019/20 year?

We anticipated that COVID-19 would decimate our over-all financial results in 2019/20, but as it turned out, we had a deficit of only \$771 (total income of \$273,778 less expenditure of \$274,549). The year before, we had a deficit of \$2,982 (total income of \$322,724 less expenditure of \$325,706). Depreciation of \$34,902 took the over-all deficit in 2019/20 to \$35,673 compared with \$39,096 in 2018/19. There were two reasons for our better than expected result. First, the lockdown prevented us from working on ongoing projects and incurring those associated costs. Second, we were able to substitute the usual staff and sole trader contractors payments with the COVID-19 subsidies provided by the NZ Government, for which we are deeply appreciative. An unexpected other result is that the grounds and firewood supplies received a real boost due to the volunteers locked down with us for many weeks.

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 two 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. We are also intending to build a shelter for our caravans, which are deteriorating in the open air, and add a new 31,000 litre rain tank after a very dry summer and autumn led to our consuming a lot more water from the Council supply, which is metered, and receiving a 6-months water bill for over \$5,000.

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 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 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, 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 staff so capably led by Tristan (Centre Co-ordinator) until May, 2020, Gilma (Administrative Assistant), our cook, Bridgett succeeded by Leeann, who continued to produce

tasty and nutritious dishes that delight our guests, and our housekeeper, Julie, who led a team of volunteers helping the Centre to shine.

For the cultural exchange volunteers that continued to flow into Tauhara from all over the world until March, 2020, exploring their own consciousness and helping out in the kitchen, housekeeping, organic vege gardens and grounds.

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, 2020