

Tauhara Centre Trust

Annual Report for the Year Ending June 30th, 2012

Introduction:

The timing of the Board's Annual General Meeting in December this year provides a great opportunity to look back over the financial year July, 2011 - June, 2012, as well as noting the trends and achievements of the first half of the current financial year, with a sense of what is to come. In general terms, it has been a time of steady progress, with encouraging signs of diversification in the range of groups using the Centre, at a time when world events, escalating climate change and worrisome financial trends continue to be of great concern to the community at large, both global and local.

Whom Does Tauhara Centre Serve?

It has been most encouraging to the Board to witness a constant cavalcade of a very diverse range of groups using the Centre. The past year or so has seen a lively blend of established group retreats in areas as diverse as: **education** (e.g., academic women coming on writing retreats twice a year, professional development for pre-school teachers and childcare Centre staff, a music camp for secondary school students, training retreats for pre-school professionals, a writing retreat for teachers, Leadership NZ, Otago University Pasifika professionals); **personal growth and training** (e.g., the Co-Counselling international retreat, meditation retreats using different approaches); **universal spirituality** (e.g., Dances of Universal Peace, yoga); retreats focusing on healing retreats (e.g., our annual Reiki gatherings for practitioners); training in the area of **physical disciplines** (e.g., black belt karate instructors); gatherings for young adults working in the area of community development and eco-consciousness (e.g., ReGeneration); crafts, etc.

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 areas of **leadership training** (*The Courage to Lead*, based on the work of renowned American educationalist Parker J. Palmer); **training and education** (Te Wananga O Aotearoa retreat for Maori arts practitioners/teachers); the **Muslim community** bringing events to Tauhara for the first time (e.g. The Al Ghazzali Easter retreat attracting some 150 participants, and in January, 2013, another branch of the Muslim family bringing over 30 people for 5 nights); and very moving, indeed, to witness, two retreats now organised by the Aratika Trust for **cancer sufferers**, led by trained professionals from the Gawler Foundation in Melbourne, teaching complementary therapies (nutrition and meditation) to participants.

We have also observed a growing connection between the Centre and the local Taupo community, 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. We continue to be blessed by enthusiastic local volunteers coming up each week to work in our grounds and kitchen. In this regard, we are so blessed, also, to have such a good turn-out at our twice-yearly Working Bees, that leave 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.

Staff and Volunteers:

Given that the Centre in times past has had as many as 8 full-time staff, the Board wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to Centre Manager, Catherine Grace, and her small team of part-time staff that today work together so effectively to serve the needs of many, very diverse groups and individual retreatants, with the assistance of work exchange volunteers who come for widely varying times. That Carola Laraj, our ever-optimistic and doughty chef manages to produce professional meals for groups with volunteers who often have no kitchen experience whatsoever, is nothing short of culinary alchemy! For this reason, Carola was funded by the Centre to undertake training in September this year at the Gawler Foundation in Melbourne. The knowledge and experience she gained there has already been put to good use at the second Aratika/Gawler retreat held at Tauhara in December, 2012. A wonderful feature of these retreats is that each participant plants on their last day here a fruit tree or shrub that becomes a symbol of personal hope.

Financial:

The past year has been a relatively successful one in terms of financial results, given the state of the global and national economies, especially since most of the activities people participate in at Tauhara are aspirational rather than compulsory. From a Centre operating viewpoint, there was an encouraging increase in income from accommodation (+11%) and catering (+ 9.8%), the latter being offset by an increase in the cost of catering supplies. (It was only in August, 2012 that the significant rise in the cost of food over the past two years was reflected in our revised charges.) Of course, the additional bookings at the Centre also attracted increased costs for part-time contractors and laundry overheads. On paper, the Trust reports an over-all loss of \$22,355, much of that represented by a significant increase in depreciation, and funds shifted from the Trust's investment account for the maintenance of buildings and grounds (the latter including a significant amount of tree work). Hence, the Trust ends the year to June 30th, 2012, in around the same financial position as the year before in terms of assets and invested funds. The detail of this and previous years' results can be found on the Charities Commission website www.charities.govt.nz (search the register under Tauhara Centre).

The Board remains optimistic for the future, despite the worrisome world financial situation, with the "fiscal cliff" looming over the US economy in the next few weeks and months, with its concomitant anticipated impact on the rest of the world's economies. For this reason, the Board is committed to following conservative fiscal practice. We remain able to meet all our financial obligations without major stress, through paying all our ongoing predictable costs by weekly direct crediting to service providers. Bookings are looking about average for the first half of 2013, though less vigorous than the first 6 months of the 2012-2013 financial year. It appears that in these tough financial times, people are still placing value on the need to withdraw and focus on their "soul work" in group and individual retreats. Long may it be so.

Sustainability Project:

The costs associated with installation of solar water heating in 2010-2011 continue to make themselves felt in our balance sheet. There have been immediate benefits in the constant availability of hot water around the Centre, and a significant reduction in the costs associated with water heating. We are working with our eco-conversion contractors on the compilation of

comparative tables, and should have accumulated sufficient data by the end of the current financial year to assess the over-all benefits of solar conversion.

At <http://www.splashmonitoring.com/system/tauhara1> interested folk can monitor the performance of our solar installation.

Internet Access:

Over the past year, a decision was made to instal a hot spot wifi internet access pay-as-you-go system at the Centre, to recover much of the costs associated with providing internet access for guests. This has been a great success, with most understanding the need to instal this, given the vast array of digital devices that people seem to need to bring with them when they come on retreat! This has resulted in a steady stream of income that is off-setting the Centre's own needs for sophisticated internet access and support. In the past year, also, the Centre has installed its own server, providing instant networked in-house access to its own files and emails, regardless of internet availability.

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. One of our main concerns was the drainage at the back of the main kitchen, which had led to flooding in the dining room and kitchen during major weather events. Having taken good advice, we have now re-routed all the water pouring down the back driveway towards the kitchen through an underground pipe out to the bush line, where the water harmlessly falls away over a stone raceway and dissipates gently into the bush and down the hill towards Mapara Road. In this regard, we must make a mention of the fine stonework that one of our longer term work exchange volunteers, Rahaman David Brown has constructed around this drainage project, for which we are deeply appreciative.

The Board is now turning to addressing reconstruction of the deck around Tui Lodge (known to many in the past as The White House), and developing it further to provide attractive outdoor break-out facilities for groups using the Meeting Room. A local drafting firm has been engaged to produce over-all designs, engineers have surveyed and mapped the site for construction requirements, and a resource/building permit application is almost ready to go to Taupo District Council. The deck will be constructed in stages as funds become available, with stage one set down for completion by July 1st, 2013.

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. A spectacularly successful strawberry patch has been established on previously scrub-covered ground near the retreat chalet track, producing sufficient fresh berries to feed resident groups and staff over a period of many weeks recently, and sufficient surplus to turn into jam in the months ahead from the freezer. Tui Lodge gardens in particular have come in for much

reconstruction, with a considerably larger recycled retaining tyre wall replacing many of the smaller original beds, the walls of which had been collapsing over the past few years. This has enabled us to establish significant plantings of garlic, potatoes, corn and zucchini for spring/summer 2012/13, and to rescue a group of ailing lemon trees from the clutches of all manner of invading vines and weeds. Clearance of encroaching trees and scrub, combined with the limbing up of several very tall Douglas firs, has both showered the Tui gardens with growth-promoting light, and restored the direct view from the back units down to the volcanoes. In fact, the volcanic vents on Tongariro are now in plain view, as they release a steady cloud of gas and steam.

It is wonderful to observe the growth that has occurred in the plantings of previous years. The hazelnut, feijoa and fruit tree orchard established in 2008 in front of Kereru Lodge (former staff and later volunteer accommodation) displays very vigorous growth, and has produced several years' cropping of very encouraging proportions. The fruit trees planted down our western boundary, near the Sanctuary and in front of the main Centre buildings after our first Aratika Trust/Gawler Foundation retreat in March, 2012, are growing like triffids, many of them already laden with fruit, including several walnut trees. Varieties of apple and pear trees planted along the bushline from the Sanctuary and near Tui Lodge in 2008 are this year groaning with fruit, fulfilling the dream we share with Harriot Felkin, one of the Centre's Founders, of producing health-enhancing food on the property.

Zuvuyaland:

Over the past few years, the Board has spent a considerable amount of time and effort helping to maintain this beautiful property known as Zuvuyaland, established by Vivien Johnson (now deceased) and offered to Tauhara Centre Trust in 2008. In recent times, in discussions with the Zuvuyaland Trustees, it has become clear that it would be best for Zuvuyaland with its different vision and circumstances to remain in their hands, and this has been agreed to by Tauhara Centre Trustees.

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.