

President's annual report for the period November 2019 – October 2020

The difference your support made in 2020



Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi

With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive (This whakatauki talks to community, to collaboration and a strengths-based approach. It acknowledges that everybody has something to offer, a piece of the puzzle, and by working together we can all flourish.)

Covid19 has made this the 31st year for the Friends of Hamilton Gardens a very unusual year. We experienced some positive outcomes, like the environment having time to breath and the chance to pause and reset the way we live. For others it has been a distressing time with some losing jobs and homes. While we the Friends continue in our role as kaitiaki (guardians), to support the growth of the Gardens and to provide a key focus for community involvement, we also have an opportunity to help others in need. The Friends continue to nurture our relationship with Go Eco Waikato Environment centre and Kaivolution who generously give to those in need.

Draft Management Plan (DMP)

There has been a significant delay in the adoption of the Draft management plan due to a revision which needed a second consultation process. In order to maintain impetus, the Friends agreed to the revised DMP and presented both written and verbal submissions. It has become fundamental that we continue to lobby the council to ensure the momentum to complete the gardens currently under development continues. We await the Council decision on the DMP later in November.

Funding

Despite covid19 and the predicted gloomy outlook, it has been a successful financial year enabling us to meet our commitment to council for the continuing development. I wish to acknowledge the gifts from Miss Gillian Gorrick, the Firth Foundation, Mr John MacDonald, Mr Noel Wilson, Barry and Catherine Smith, the DV Bryant Trust and the estate of the late Jill Christiansen.

Other successful fundraising ventures have included the popular 'Behind the Scenes' tours, visits to Gibbs Sculpture Park, an increasing number of speaking

engagements around the region and the propagating group continues to grow its profits at its monthly plant sales.

Volunteers

The strength of the Friends of Hamilton Gardens is found in the dedication of its many volunteers like those who staff the information Centre, the tour guides and the propagating and events teams. Thank you to our hardworking and enthusiastic committee members for their commitment and the many hours given freely, throughout the year. They are Bruce Sinkinson, treasurer and sponsorship; Roslyn Gardiner, secretary; Jane Stewart, publicity and sponsorship; Colin Sheppard Medieval and Matariki events, Dennis Gibbs, property purchase and maintenance, Susan Coubrough, Propagating Group and Social Club, Judy Holdsworth, Garden Group, presentations and events support, Pamela Hide, Scarecrow Festival and events, Philip Hart and Jenny Newby-Fraser for funding and events support.

A special mention of Marilyn Yeoman, interim vice-president and of Virginia Graham the Friends' immediate past president for your invaluable support this past year. I also thank Janet Sceats our representative on the Summer Arts Festival Board, membership officer Sally Sleight, Rena Williams for the volunteer rosters and Journal Editor Gay Main who also organizes our fund-raising venture with Vilagrad Winery.

Thank you to retiring member Susan Coubrough for her role as social club organiser. Susan has been an important and much valued member and thankfully she will continue to assist with propagation and plant sales. I'm also very grateful for the support the Friends receive from Tamsin and her team, Gus Flower and the gardeners, and from Craig, Jenny and Zeta Fraser and their staff at the Hamilton Gardens cafe. Thank you also to all our supporters in the community whose names appear in our regular newsletters.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to Dr Peter Sergel, the architect and driving force behind the Hamilton Gardens since 1979. Although he is retiring at the end of this year, we are delighted to learn he will remain involved in the design and development of the Gardens and continue to be involved with the Friends.

Once again thank you to all who have helped support the development of the Hamilton Gardens. I am confident the Friends, with your help, will go from strength to strength and will continue to be a respected, effective voice on behalf of the Hamilton Gardens.

Marleina Ruka
President- Friends of Hamilton Garden Inc.