

President's report to the 2021 AGM of the Friends of Te Papa Tongarewa

Report to the Charities Commission.

You will have received the full report. It is in the public domain and shows in some detail what the Friends have been up to over the current financial year. It contains all the facts and figures members might be interested in and I commend it to you. Many thanks to our treasurer, Tim Steel, for his contribution to the preparation of this report.

This year I want to bring to your attention some of the highlights of the year and some of the changes that have taken place.

The functions of the Executive Committee

During the past year, the functions of your Executive Committee have undergone a major change. In previous years, the Friends employed a Manager and a Membership Programme Coordinator. After the organizational change process early last year occasioned by successive deficits in the Friends' accounts, the Friends employed an administrator only and the Executive Committee became more of an executive committee in practice as well as title. It now has a dual role. It provides oversight of the Friends' activities to ensure that the Friends constitutional obligations are met. It also has an operation role organizing the in-house programme, the local tours programme, the away tours programme and much of the communication with the Friends' membership, Te Papa, and the wider community. Members of your committee have therefore taken on big workloads wonderfully supported by the Friends' administrator, Aloema Ioani, without whom much of what has been achieved over the last year would have been impossible.

The Executive Committee has also recently appointed Sharon Taylor-Offord, part time, to administer the communications of the Friends.

Given that all your committee are volunteers it is a huge credit to them severally and together that the programme which the members have been offered this year has been as successful as it has.

In detail, the members of the Executive Committee have taken on specific roles. Much has been learned in the process, not least liaison with the staff at Te Papa on whom the in-house programme depends. The events team has got to know many curators, back-of-house staff and interesting corridors to hidden offices. Building on previous communication processes, the comms team has continued to improve the way members are informed about Friends' events including by the use of new media.

Given how much of what Friends' members receive is dependent on volunteer effort, the Executive Committee has tried to ensure that there is backup for all the major portfolios. The committee is also working on succession planning, given how much work is involved in each of the portfolios and how much background one needs in terms of building relationships with Te Papa staff and Friends' members and competencies in understanding how the office interacts with members and the committee. Some of that work is on-going.

I am hugely grateful to the members of your Committee for the alacrity with which they have picked up these new roles and the highly professional ways they have developed them. They have put in many hours so that the Friends remained and remains a lively worthwhile organization to be a member of.

I also need to express my thanks to Demi Heath, the previous manager, for the training that she provided to members of the Committee in the last month in which she worked for the Friends.

As well as maintaining an exciting programme, the Executive Committee has also commenced investigation into increasing the visibility of its gift memberships, the use of plastic membership cards with bar codes and begun a process of liaising with other museum and gallery Friends organizations to create mutually useful channels for information flows and cooperation.

And then there are the many other volunteers who work to support the office and the committee, I am grateful for all that they do to keep the office and the programme running

Programme

At the outset I want to acknowledge that the Friends' in-house programme is completely dependent on the goodwill of Te Papa staff and management. That goodwill has been manifest and I want personally and on behalf of the committee and all the Friends' members to say a big thank you to Courtney Johnston, Arapata Hakiwai and all of the Te Papa staff with whom we have contact for continuing to support our outreach to our members.

Given the incursions which various levels of discomfort, 1,2,3,4, have made during this year and the disruptions to the Friends programme, the programme has been most successful. Many events have been over-subscribed. A second tour to Gisborne allowed those to missed the first tour to come to Gisborne. That tour was followed by a geology-focused tour to Golden Bay. Con Flinkenberg played a major role in organizing these tours. The art tours around Wellington have continued, the in-house programme has been systematized so that members have regular back-of-house tours, floor talks and previews and longer-term planning has been on-going.

Last, a big thank you to all our many members for their continued support. You are the Friends of Te Papa and your continued support is vital to the ongoing success of what we all do. Thank you.