

DEVONPORT COMMUNITY HOUSE



2023 AGM Devonport Community House Chairperson's Report

To the financial year ending 30 March 2023.

**E ngā mana
E ngā waka
E ngā reo
E rau rangatira mā**

**Tēnā koutou katoa
Ko Natasha Strong taku ingoa**

The year to 31 March 2023 has flashed by in a blur, as has the period since. I think that is a function of how busy we are at the House as well as the usual speeding up of time I'm experiencing as I get older...

In FY22/23 we farewelled the worst of COVID-19, swapping the challenges of lockdown for the challenges of flooding, high inflation and, in February 2023, the challenge of extreme funding uncertainty. It felt, and still feels, like the usual uncertainty we have about our funding is now on steroids. The Auckland Council budget setting process was stressful for everyone involved and, while we are conscious we have come through unscathed so far, we know there are more budget cuts to come and third party grant funding will continue to be more competitive. We are also extremely aware of the impact of these cuts on the mahi of our friends at the Devonport Peninsula Trust.

However, I am confident we will weather the storm and remain in good heart, as we always have done – this is largely due to our able team - those around the committee table, our operational staff, and our supporters in the community.

Before we move on to our thank yous, I want to acknowledge Lin Aylward. She was a treasured member of our committee and her passing in January this year hit us hard. I like to remember

her as she appeared at all our committee zui – with a glass of wine in hand and a twinkle in her eye. We miss her.

Thank You

Now to my thank yous, I always like to start with the thank yous because without these people we couldn't do what we do. Stand by, the list is quite long...

Thank you to all those who supported our purpose and mahi this year, including Auckland Council and the Devonport Takapuna Local Board, particularly Jamie Adkins and Karen Durante who have been good sources of support and advice both for our operations and for our building – the House itself, particularly through the recent House Manager transition. We were also pleased to get some traction this year to fix the our leaky internal gutters which have caused ongoing disruption.

A big thank you also to our other funders and Sponsors - the Lotteries Commission, Foundation North, Four Winds, Pub Charity, AJ Scott, Island Interiors, Creative Communities, California Community Foundation, and MSD. This funding has enabled us to do all sorts of things from purchasing mats and mirrors for the hall to running our popular swap shops and participating in the Matariki celebrations. We couldn't do what we do without these generous funders.

A HUGE thank you to Nigel Bioletti, our House Manager and Gemma Dickinson, our Marketing and Activations Manager who both joined our team this year. I have enjoyed getting to know them both as they have carried on the excellent work of Justin Mitchell and Justine Kinsella - they are building on strong foundations to take us to the next level. We love their fresh thinking, energy, and genuine love for the House and our community. Thank you to Rixt Brownlow our Volunteer and Activations Coordinator, she is building our "friends of the House" volunteer team and brings a real warmth to the House.

Thank you to Sharon Bailey, our outgoing Playgroup Coordinator and Elise Wishart, our new Playgroup Coordinator. This is a popular longstanding weekly event and we're grateful for you both for running it so ably.

Thank you to Terehia Walker – which is inevitably a thank you to her Tane Ngahiwi and her whānau too because they're always working alongside her. We've also really valued her te ao me te reo Māori expertise – helping us to slowly lift our game in this space.

Thank you to Deb Farmer who skilfully manages our accounts, and to our holiday programme team led by Mana, to all our volunteers who generously give their time to support us, and to all our hirers and users, old and new.

Thank you to the Committee – Joanna, Alison, Lynette, and Steve. I have enjoyed working with you this year. It's not always been easy but I know we're driven by our shared purpose and values and we can certainly have a good laugh.

Finally, thank you to Wendy Bailey, our founder and patron. I appreciate her wise counsel and gently given advice. We were having a cup of tea earlier this week at the very dining table around which the House was founded – it is thanks to her foresight and efforts that we are here today.

Delivering On Our Strategic Plan

In the year to 31 March 2023 our focus was on recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 with what I hoped would be a theme of ‘consolidation’.

However, another theme for the year was ‘resettling’ which always accompanies periods of staff turnover. This year saw both our House Manager, Justin Mitchell, and our Marketing and Activations Manager, Justine Kinsella, moving on to other opportunities. While recruitment is always a bit of an unknown, we’ve been lucky to have attracted Nigel Bioletti and Gemma Dickinson to fill those roles – they’re proof that while the need to recruit new staff is scary it is also an opportunity to bring in new thinking and energy. We’re grateful to have attracted such top quality community-focused talent!

We have this past year, as always, been guided by our strategic vision, values, and priorities. We are on our way to achieving our aspiration of being a sustainable, vibrant, connected community hub. I’ll leave Nigel and Gemma to talk about our activity this year but want to briefly touch on the three key interconnected elements of this aspiration:

1. **Placemaking** - improving the look and feel of the House (both external and internal) so the community easily understands what we are, where we are, what we offer, and feels welcomed when they step inside.
2. **Marketing and Activations** - developing and implementing a comprehensive brand and marketing plan to increase our visibility in the community and encourage increased activations at the House.
3. **Community Connectedness** - strengthening the House’s existing relationships within our community and fostering new relationships, with a three-pronged focus on activation providers, other local community facilities (to enhance collaboration), and Ngāti Paoa as mana whenua.

Together these bundles of activity have lifted the House’s profile, more proactively welcomed the community to the House, and encouraged greater community engagement with and use of the House.

Future – Looking Forward

Turning now to the the current year, we have nearly finished revising our strategic plan. Although we are refreshing our vision and values. Our 4 pou or pillars remain the same, these are to be a **Sustainable Organisation** which is **Highly visible and Connected to Our**

Community providing a Diverse Range of Events that are Valued by our Community and a Quality facility for Community Use.

We are actively aligning our priorities under these pou more closely to the 2023 objectives of the Devonport Takapuna Local Board and are initially focussed on lifting revenue, building capacity on our Committee, and developing a closer connection with our neighbours at the Depot.

A new focus for us this year is expanding our team to include a new community activator function, funded by the Devonport Takapuna Local Board. I've started calling this our 'community connector' which I think is a good description for the role. We're excited about the opportunity and have been working closely with Gus Ferriera and Deb Doyle at the Council on what this will look like and how we'll measure success. We release more details as our plans firm up over the coming month or so.

Committee Members

We welcome a new treasurer to our committee tonight, the marvellous Bill Jaques, and have had recent strong interest from others to join our committee.

Finally, we bid farewell to Alison tonight as she steps off the Committee after many years of service. Alison has been a our secretary for many years. I have relied on her knoweldge of our history, policies and procedures throughout my time as Chair – she helps keep us on the straight and narrow. Thank you Alison, we'll miss you!

Huri noa

Tēnā koutou katoa

Natasha Strong
Chairperson
Devonport Community House