



2021 AGM Devonport Community House Chairperson's Report

To the financial year ending 30 March 2021.

To say FY2021 was a challenging year for the Devonport Community House and Aotearoa would be an understatement. But, here at the House we weathered the storm well and are in good heart.

Thank You's

This is thanks to all those who supported the House and our purpose and mahi this year including Auckland Council and the Devonport Takapuna Local Board, particularly Jo Heaven and Jamie Adkins who have been a great source of support. A big thank you also to our other funders - the Lotteries Commission, AJ Scott, and MSD. Without this funding we couldn't do what we do.

Thank you to Bernie Ransford who was our House Manager through FY21, she is largely responsible for the House weathering the COVID storm. Thank you also to our holiday programme team led by Mana, to our tireless volunteers who generously give their time to support us, and to all our hirers and users, old and new. A final thank you to the Committee, old committee members Lara and Kirti who stood down this year, new committee members Joanna and Lin, and existing committee members Alison, Lynette, and Jenny. I have enjoyed working with you through the ups and downs of this last year.

I quickly mention Justin, our new House Manager and Justine, our new Marketing and Activations Manager now while I'm on the 'thank you' roll - even though this AGM is largely looking at the year that's been. Thank you both for your efforts in the few months you've been with us this current financial year, I'll talk more on that shortly.

COVID-19 Challenges

To briefly talk to the COVID challenges, the House was closed due to COVID lockdowns for nearly 13 weeks during FY21 which severely impacted our hirers ability to run their activities and, accordingly, reduced our hire income (and our vibrancy as a community hub) to zero for

that period. Even when COVID alert levels allowed gatherings and activities to resume, many of our hirers were, understandably, slow to get back up to full steam and some weren't able to start back up again at all. Added to this was the increased mahi required by Bernie and the Committee (largely Bernie) on top of our BAU mahi to make sure everyone using the House was able to do so safely and in compliance with the Government's COVID requirements. These included deep and extra cleaning and daily sanitising, COVID tracing set up and monitoring (and politely challenging those who didn't get with the COVID tracing programme), signage, PPE and hand sanitiser, and checking in with our hirers, among other things. In this, we were well supported by the Council.

CCMA Milestone

A major milestone achieved in FY21 was to agree and sign our CCMA agreement with the Council. Whilst the agreement took a long time for us to negotiate, we are grateful for the Council's patience and its willingness to work with us to accept the changes we sought. We think the changes to the Council's template make the agreement better for both the Council and community organisations like ours. The CCMA replaces the previous approach of a separate lease and funding agreement, we agree with rolling both of these key aspects of our relationship with the Council into one document.

New Strategic Plan

Apart from BAU, successfully facing the challenges brought by COVID-19, and agreeing our CCMA with the Council, we spent time during FY21 reviewing and revising our strategic plan including our priorities, vision, and values. These have been and will continue to be both a guiding star and a measuring stick for us as we look to support our community now and into the future.

Our purpose remains the same - to provide a framework for the organisation of activities and facilities designed to promote the overall wellbeing and enjoyment of the community of Devonport.

However, our new strategic priorities are to be a ***sustainable organisation*** which is ***highly visible and connected to our community*** while providing a ***quality facility for community use*** and ***delivering a range of activities and events that are valued by the Community***.

These priorities are underpinned by our existing purpose which I described earlier and by our new vision and values. **Our new vision** is to be a place where community comes together and **our new values** are connected, responsive to community needs, and wellbeing.

Future

Now I'd like to spend some time looking beyond FY21 to the present and our plans for the future. In May we sadly said goodbye to Bernie so she could pursue an opportunity as the Finance and Business Manager with the Parnell Trust. Bernie had been with us for nearly three years and was a reliably safe pair of hands as our House Manager. However, we decided to take the opportunity to restructure the House Manager's role by splitting it into three separate

components - operations, book-keeping, and marketing and activations. We were beyond lucky to be able to fill these roles with Justin, our new House Manager, and Justine, our new Activations and Marketing Manager. Justin has also been looking after the book keeping but we have just (fingers crossed) filled this role as well. I can't understate the positive impact Justin and Justine have had on the House in the few months since they've started with us. Thank you to you both.

At the same time as splitting our House Manager's role, we were very live to the impact of the challenges of FY21 on our vibrancy and revenue, with decreased community use of the House and the House running at a loss.

In response to these challenges, and enabled by Justin and Justine bringing a new energy, we have kicked off a House Transformation Project. The aim of the project is to return the House to its full potential as a vibrant community facility - otherwise known as a hub or 'a place where community comes together'.

There are three key interconnected elements of the transformation project, we know we need to achieve all three for the House to fulfil its purpose and return to full vibrancy, they are:

1. **Placemaking** - this entails 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** - this entails 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** - this entails 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 key "bundles" of transformation activity will lift the House's profile, welcome the community to the House, and encourage greater community engagement with and use of the House which will enable it to fulfil its purpose and return to full vibrancy. You will see from Justin and Justine's House Manager's report that this mahi is already bearing fruit for us.

On a more prosaic front, we are expecting the new Incorporated Societies Act to be passed this parliamentary term, and so will make a start on necessary re-writing of our constitution once it has passed its second reading and we can be sure of the changes coming.

New Committee Members

Finally, we are keen to build on our priority to be a sustainable organisation by adding more members to our committee to bring diversity of background and skills to our decision making table and to share the load (and the fun!). I won't put pressure on anyone now but if you are interested or know of anyone who could be a good fit, please let me know.

Natasha Strong
Deputy Chairperson
Devonport Community House