

*Chairman's Report - Whanganui Community Foundation Trust
Mahuru 2025*

*Ngā kāhui mate o tērā pito, o tērā pito, kia mihi, kia tangihia tonutia e tātou mō koutou,
Nō reira, ngā uri o Hine-nui-te-pō, haere atu rā, haere atu rā, hoki atu rā.
Kapiti hono, tātai hono, rātou ki a rātou, kapiti hono, tātai hono, tātou anō ki a tātou.
Tēnā anō tātou katoa,*

Greetings and salutations to everyone, those who have gone before us, and continue to pave new pathways for us; and to you all who remain as reminders of those who have gone, again, greetings to us all.

Another year has passed, and it has been anything but boring for our communities. As Shakespeare pointedly noted, the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune have made their presence felt across the many areas of our society, and social and political changes have created issues and dilemmas which have impacted upon all the sectors we have supported, and I suspect, these will continue to do so for some time to come.

Special Mihi

As mentioned last year, our rohe or region extends from the wahapū (River mouth) of both the Rangitikei and Whanganui Rivers, to Paretetaitonga (one of the peaks of Ruapehu maunga) so we are continuously looking at ways for us to support initiatives throughout our various communities. So, to all of those groups, big and small, who strive to ensure the Whanganui, Rangitikei and the Waimarino regions continue to be places of intergenerational wellbeing, thank you for what you do, and we hope to continue to support your work where we can.

A special mention must also be made regarding our local MP, Hon Carl Bates. As much as he is a busy man, as can be seen by his face seen in all sorts of Community engagements, Carl always makes time for us when we call him, regardless of whether it is to offer him unwanted advice, tell him off, or to suggest something that might be beneficial to the communities that we cannot do.

Nō reira, e Carl, ngā mihi atu ki a koe mō āu mahi rā.

Grants

A review of the list of our Grants recipients highlights the diversity of support given over this year, with \$317,511 given out as Capital Project Grants, \$570,209 as Community Support Grants, \$50,000 through our Hikurangi Fund, \$113,850 as a Special Purposes (Housing) Grant, and \$218,063 Quick Response Grants, bringing it to a total of \$1,269,633.00 to 64 groups across various sectors and spaces.

We also have provided Social Loans to organisations who had projects that lay outside our parameters. These loans have enabled those groups to develop and enhance their facilities, so they have the opportunity to engage with more people, and transform lives.

Other Developments

There have been exciting developments across our region, the opening and continued prosperity of Sargeant Gallery, and the creation and opening of a Community Hangi Pit at Hakeke Street Community Centre being but two great examples of what can happen when the people of a community decide to make something happen. These places have become hives of activity and spaces for people to congregate, share stories, and generally be a living, lively community.

Another example of community spirit is the erection of a statue to commemorate one of our local (and International) heroes, Chris Amon, in Te Ara Taumaihi - Bulls. The statue and its associated trail came about from a simple conversation between two people which then captured the imagination of others, until everything came together to move from paper to reality. If you haven't seen it yet, I would invite you to go to Te Ara Taumaihi - Bulls and have your photo taken with Chris' statue, then take a look inside the centre that carries his story.

In other areas such as Raetihi, Ohakune and other places that are often overlooked by the general stream, work and community development continues, with the foci upon Community led initiatives that allow for those places and spaces to take ownership of their kaupapa and move forward.

Measures of Success

We continue to challenge all grant recipients to measure success beyond the *Standard Accounting Practices* and begin to actually measure the good that they are doing, in real terms, to ensure that what they are doing is changing the lives of people and having an impact on the future of our country. Some of those impacts are beginning to be seen in local communities such as Ohakune and Raetihi, as well as Marton and other centres. These developments set forth opportunities for other organisations and groups to work together for a brighter future for our communities.

We know that these projects come about because of local determination and initiative, a reflection of just how strong our communities can be when we work together. And so, to all our Grant recipients, keep up the great work you are doing, as we say, *ko koe ki tēnā, ko au ki tēnei kiwai o te kete, ka ora ai te iwi* - *You on that handle and me on this handle of the basket, all shall be well with the people*. By our unity of purpose, and support of our actions, we create a community that ensures we walk together to a brighter and sustainable future.

Green Investment

It was also noted in previous years that the Foundation decided to make some major shifts in operations and provision of support. “Green Investing” has continued to be a major point with our investments, and our continuing support of the Climate Change Collective. We continue to seek investment opportunities in projects that are carbon neutral or sustainable across time, with a reduction in environmental impact from the projects; and a tighter regime on measuring success across the spectrum of projects.

CAWG

And on that note too, the Foundation has been a part of a bigger picture initiative, being involved in the Climate Action Working Group (CAWG), working with other philanthropic organisations to ensure that not only is our grant monies upholding our community views of reducing climatic impact, but also ensuring that how we invest our monies for granting purposes is also in line with these views. Meeting this obligation has meant a restructuring of our investment decisions, as well as a change in the way we measure the impact that we are having across the sectors. This work continues.

Strategic Direction

Our strategic direction as a Foundation continues to develop as societal changes occur around us, and we continue to work hard to ensure we remain relevant and up to date with the emerging initiatives within our communities. As a part of this, we have set aside a development fund to be invested in a project or set of projects across a 3 - 5 year time span that will provide transformational change and lasting impact on our communities. Specific parameters are being developed at this time.

We are also going to be looking at opportunities for others to join the philanthropic journey with the Foundation. There has been a picture, albeit false, that the Foundation does not accept donations in support of the Foundation, so we are looking at how to further share in the celebrations of community success with others. Watch this space for more details.

Trustees

In regards to transformational change, there has been changes to our personnel with Trustees completing their terms of office and moving on whilst others join us. This year we say farewell to John Vickers after 12 years of service; Sally Patrick and Carla Doolan - Blackburn after four years, and welcomed Hinemoa Ransom and Kathy Cunningham to the board. We also saw a familiar face join the Board, albeit as a Trustee now, Douglas Wilson. Douglas was our trusty Secretary for many years before attempting to retire, and now has joined us on the other side of the table. We are still (at time of writing) awaiting news of whom will be joining the Board as we have a number of vacancies still to be filled.

Heoi, although it has been an eventful year, and I suspect that there is still more to come in the next period of time, I still have confidence that our communities have the nous and the belief in the commonweale to continue to move forward and thrive.

Heoi anō, ma te mea ngaro e manaaki, e tiaki tātou atu ki te wā e tūtaki tātou anō - May the unseen look after you all and keep you all safe until we meet again.

Tēnā tātou katoa

Dr. Mike Paki

Chair - Whanganui Community Foundation