

## Vision Motueka Development Trust

### Chairman's Report for 2016

*Presented by David Armstrong to the Annual General Meeting, January 26th 2017*

This meeting marks the completion of five years of activity by Vision Motueka, so firstly, a quick review of key activities and developments over that time.

In our first year, 2012, we were a loosely organised collection of people trying to build a realistic, medium- to long-term vision for the town, and to think of some viable and achievable projects to advance that vision. A year later we organised into a Charitable Trust, then a year later a registered Charity.

During those first years our work and proposals received quite a bit of publicity. These included the painting of the four popular murals, running a Volunteers Celebration and Awards event, and putting together a researched and detailed proposal to create a community hub in Decks Reserve based around a new library. There were others, but these were the most visible ones in terms of media publicity and people talking about us.

In 2014, we began looking at some deeper issues and wondering how we could initiate or promote further development on a bigger scale. After a winter of soul searching we changed our name to Vision Motueka Development Trust and our board structure to include representatives of key Motueka groups. This reorganisation had the express goal of using broad community input, debate and consultation to put together a community development package that would benefit the largest number of people.

This resulted in what I personally think was our greatest achievement - running the Motueka 2030 consultation in May 2015. The results of that programme have been used by a number of organisations including the Community Board as one guide to future work.

Those results strongly informed the decisions by our board of trustees on where to put our limited and diminishing resources. Around the end of 2015 we looked at all the findings of Motueka 2030 and broadly categorised them into (1) things that are already in progress by us or other community organisations, (2) things that are important that Vision could tackle alone or in partnership with other groups, (3) things that are outside the capabilities of Vision but possible by other groups or Council, and (4) things that are outside the control of our community.

With this list of do-able projects in priority order, we set about 2016 working on the top ones. And so now we come to my report for last year. And as a teaser, I can say that it has a surprise ending.

## Achievements of 2016

Last year saw the start of two activities which have the potential to make a big impact on this town - the Motueka Kai Fest event and the Youth Employment and Skills Training initiative.

Before looking at these, it's worth noting four other activities:

(a) We played a small but key role in the community project - raising money for the proposed indoor Community Swimming Pool;

(b) We maintain ongoing activity of the Motueka Online website and our moderated Motueka 2030 Facebook group, which now has nearly 900 members;

(c) We ran another good Volunteers Award event in October.

**1. Motueka Kai Fest.** A strong finding from Motueka 2030 was the desirability of an annual signature event for Motueka, which led to ideas about a harvest festival. Ideas around this had been floated occasionally over the past decade or so but got nowhere, so in late 2015 Vision initiated meetings of people interested in making this happen. From those responses, we facilitated early meetings and assembled a planning team.

In 2016 we stepped back from running the group but took on the role of funds manager of the team and project, as well as providing expertise in certain aspects such as documentation and publicity and employing contractors to initially design and now coordinate the event. A particularly pleasing outcome, to me, is a team of highly motivated team members and contributors from across the community who are doing a fantastic job and collaborating beautifully.

I'm pretty confident now that when we look back on the Kai Fest, we will see an excellent example of how to put together a large community project by leveraging skills and expertise from a broad range of people, none of whom have their own special agendas or ego ambitions.

## **2. Youth Employment and Skills Training (YEAST).**

I won't say much about this because it is the topic of this evening's talk and discussion. But one key outcome of Motueka 2030 was the unsurprising agreement that a crucial target for our community was meaningful jobs for our young people, and general skills training and community engagement amongst youth. We all know this is a problem, and ideas around it have surfaced in the past. But we decided to bite the bullet and conduct a serious, comprehensive and scientific fact-finding project to ascertain the extent of the problem as seen by employers, training organisations and young people themselves. And to gather initial ideas about possible solutions. Linda conducted that project over the past six months or so, and will present her report and talk about "what next" later this evening.

## Plans and Goals for 2017

So, what's the twist in the tale, the surprising ending I mentioned a few minutes ago? As the year progressed, we suffered the loss of several trustees through resignations and the ending of their two-year terms. Both Linda and I have also completed out terms. Advertising in recent weeks for a new set of up to 7 trustees has drawn just two nominations - from Linda and I. Our constitution states that nominations must be made before the AGM. So - this puts us in an interesting position. Do we continue, or wind up the Vision Motueka Community Trust?

There are two possible ways forward.

1. Start the year with two trustees and use the other rules in our constitution that allow us to appoint trustees. Linda and I believe that a minimum number of appointees should be three, making a total of 5 out of the permitted 7 trustees. We also agree that the appointed trustees bring something new to the table, and not just attend meetings while only two trustees did all the work. That "something new" should be new approved projects that they will work on, or a commitment to help actively with our existing projects.

2. Use the whole of 2017 to close Vision Motueka in an orderly fashion so that the projects for which we are currently responsible are passed on to other willing groups. If this course is chosen, we envisage no great problem with at least our two biggest projects, the Kai Fest and YEAST programme, as these can relatively easily be taken up by new or existing umbrella groups with those specific purposes in mind.

Our decision to stay or go will likely be taken over the coming fortnight. If some people offer themselves to become appointed trustees and commit to working on new or existing projects, then we will continue. If not, then we will initiate discussions and plans to spin off our existing projects to other partners and close down.

Contrary to what some of you may think, Linda and I don't see a winding up as necessarily a bad or sad thing. When I began the group five years ago and enlisted Linda soon after, it was not for any glory seeking but to try to make a difference, and to see what could be done with well organised, community led development.

And I believe that us and the dozens of people who have worked with us as committee members or partner organisations have made at least a difference. And maybe our time has come, and new or developing initiatives can be taken up by other people and groups. I thank all who have helped over those years in the work of Vision Motueka.

Please be assured that we will keep you informed of the next steps.

David Armstrong, Chairman