

## Report of the #LoveMotueka event held at Memorial Hall on Sunday, May 3rd

*by David Armstrong*

The meeting was an informal, drop-in occasion, beginning at 10 a.m. and winding up about 2:30 p.m. An attempt was made to count the number of people attending, although this was made a little harder when the side doors were opened beside the sausage sizzle into the Hall kitchen room, allowing people to enter from the front or the side. The best count was between 90 and 95 adults, and about 20 to 30 children, during the 4.5 hour period. About 12 organisers - Vision Motueka people and friends - were also present at various times during the day.

People entering were generally guided in a clockwise fashion around the room. The first available activity was a photo frame of Mona Lisa with a hole to put your head in. Several people took the opportunity for a bit of fun to have photos taken of themselves.

Beside this, the first serious activity centred around a large canvas hung on the wall with the painting of the thematic heart-shaped word cloud, labelled #LoveMotueka, on which people were encouraged to write what they loved about Motueka. A sheet of printer's paper beside the canvas allowed for many other comments to be written. This activity was not largely engaging, perhaps because it was unclear what they could or should do and generally no-one was beside it to explain.

Next was a small competition called Motueka Legends, with 20 A4 sized photos of Motueka people who had made a name for themselves on the world stage, in sport, business, politics etc. People had to work out the names of the legends and submit them for a prize. Although only about 12 people put in entries, the display in fact generated a lot of interest, mainly with people being surprised that some of the famous legends were in fact brought up in Motueka. As such, this activity proved to be very beneficial. A \$20 gift voucher was the prize.

The next activity was a SWOT analysis with four tables set up covered with newsprint paper and encouraging people to write down what they saw as Motueka's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. One or two of the organisers were always present to prompt and encourage people to start thinking and writing. This activity ended up being the most attended in terms of time spent there and the amount of interaction between attendees themselves and with the organisers. We would rate this activity as very successful.

On the stage at the far end of the hall, the projector screen featured a slideshow of about 80 photographs which Vision Motueka has built in its photo library. Although the room was rather light, making it a little hard to see the images clearly, quite a few people paused to watch the photographs and seemed to enjoy them.

Moving round to the supper room, children were provided with entertainment and activities, run largely by three volunteers from the Toy Library. This included face painting, playing with toys from the library, and drawing with crayons what the children saw as Motueka's future. Nothing of great significance came out of these drawings - certainly not worth recording - but many children just enjoyed doing some drawing of their own, allowing their parents to take part in the 'serious' activities in the hall.

Coffee, tea, fruit juice and biscuits were served freely from the kitchen, and around the lunch hour and a half a sausage sizzle was put on at the doors leading from the Countdown park.

Back into the Hall, a table and chair were provided for people to fill in the standard 45-item questionnaire, which was done by about 30 people. Finally, a long set of tables were set up down the southern end of the Eastern Wall with the 20 questions in the standard short questionnaire written out, each associated with two jars labelled Yes and No. A dozen or so pebbles were available with each question for people to indicate their preference, yes or no, for each question by putting them into the chosen jars. This activity proved to be the most popular, and pebble counts at the end of the event show that between 55 and 70 people gave their answers - some questions got more responses than others.

In the centre of the room was a table and chair with a "suggestion box" and slips of note paper for people to write any comments they wished. Quite a few people availed themselves of this opportunity.

Overall, the organisers' impression of the event was that it was largely successful. Although the number coming through was smaller than hoped (an ambitious aim was 150 - 200 people), it was estimated that about three quarters of them were highly engaged in the exercises, many spending more than half an hour in the hall making the choices and discussing the issues with other people.