



**Annual Activities Report**

**2021**

Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa is a Charitable Trust in operation since 1993.

It designs and delivers diabetes and diabetes complication prevention related activities, advocacy, and specialty research services into the Auckland community and further afield.

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# WHAKATAUKI

He aha te kai o te Rangatira?

He Korero, he korero, he korero.

What is the food of the leader?

It is knowledge, it is communication.

## Board Members as at March 2021

John Baker (Chairperson)

Gerhard Sundborn (Deputy Chairperson)

Fale Lesa

Graham King

Henry Kozak

Pat Spellman

Kate Vennell



From Left, John Baker, Kate Vennell, Graham King, Pat Spellman, Henry Kozak, Fale Lesa. Absent Gerhard Sundborn.

# Team members

Diana Anderson - Co-ordinator Healthy Workplaces

Patricia Harry - Lifestyle Programme/research support

Joanna Bunt - Co-ordinator Cook'nKiwi

Kime Esau - Co-ordinator Tuckshops

Jennifer Leatham - Administration Officer

Richard Main - Project Manager Gardens4Health

Hari Narayan - Facilitator Gardens4Health

Karen Pickering - General Manager

Kate Smallman - Clinical Project Manager/Specialist Diabetes  
Nurse



# From the Board Chair

The Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa faced a very difficult year in 2020 to 2021 because of the extended COVID-19 lockdown periods in April/May 2020 and in August/September 2020. Much of our work is based in the community and involves interaction with workplaces and schools through Healthy Workplaces, Cook'n Kiwi, GetWize2Heath, Healthy Tuckshops, and Gardens4Health projects. These projects couldn't be delivered as they usually would. Our Manager, Karen Pickering did a very good job in keeping the team together, bolstering team morale, and maintaining our financial reserves. Karen encouraged the team to hang in there, come up with new ways to do their jobs, being positive and optimistic and taking the opportunity to learn new things.

The Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa continued to develop its new strategic directions. Our part of the WORTH study was completed thanks to efforts of local clinical investigator, Kate Smallman. The WORTH study was a Health Research Council funded clinical trial of different diabetes medications in 350 predominantly Māori and Pacifica patients with type 2 diabetes. The principal investigator was Associate Professor Rinki Murphy from the Maurice Wilkins Centre, University of Auckland. The Adolescent Bariatric Surgery study started recruiting in August 2020. This is a 1-year study of intense medical management (Optifast) with-or-without bariatric surgery in morbidly obese teenagers with type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes. The Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa team provided day-to-day management and support of this high-risk group. Investigators are Dr Brandon Orr-Walker and Dr Richard Babor and the study was funded by the



Freemason Foundation Potter Trust and the Perpetual Guardians Trust.

Professor David Simmons continued to analyse data from the DCSS audit of diabetes management in primary care in South Auckland. This culminated in a landmark publication in Lancet Global Health in October 2020 and an editorial in the NZ Medical Journal in January 2021. Research findings were presented to stakeholders at a Second Diabetes Summit on 21 August 2020. The Summit was web-based because of COVID lockdown restrictions. It included a debate by political party representatives in advance of the general election and a presentation on diabetic kidney disease by Dr Janak de Zoyza. Finally, the Foundation used its public relations influence to lobby Pharmac to extend access to new diabetes drugs for our disadvantaged communities. This culminated in funding of Jardiance (empagliflozin) in February 2021 with near-open access to Māori and Pacific patients with T2DM.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of new trustees that have joined the Diabetes Foundation Board bringing new skills and different views. These include Pat Spellman (Ngāti Maru) specialising in communications and marketing, Graham King (Ngaati Tai) providing Māori and patient perspective, Kate Vennell with governance and finance expertise, Henry Kozak from a marketing background and Fale Lesa bringing the Pacific perspective.

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." – Henry Ford "



*Dr John Baker*



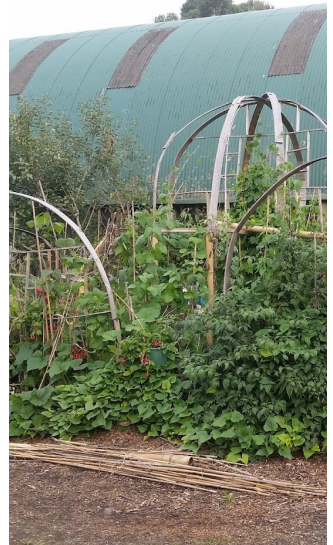


# Main Activity Summary

**Research and Evaluation** - We participated in two Research projects, WORTH study which was completed as described by our Board Chair Dr John Baker, and the Adolescent Bariatric project in conjunction with Counties Manukau Health which is ongoing.

**Healthy Workplaces** – This Ministry of Health funded programme to deliver health promotion/education services into a range of workplaces each year has adapted to more online activity as it continues to try to provide practical guidance and support across Auckland. Some workplaces closed to outside intervention early, and while other workplaces quickly stepped up believing that worker health was important once doors opened, some remained focused in other directions for much of the year. Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa focus was on what could be achieved safely, and those sites still delivering and through this our contract targets were met.

**Gardens4Health** – Funded by Ministry of Health, Auckland Council and other funders or in-kind support. The Gardens4Health team works alongside over 80 community gardens to help them provide fresh and healthy food, beautify and protect the environment and promote increased physical activity, improved mental health, and healthy social context. Activities were changed due to lockdown, and there was increased demand afterwards to get gardens left unattended going again. A very busy year for Richard and his team.



**GetWize2Health Schools** – Telephone and online delivery of support and training to teachers on the GetWize2Health resource has been possible in some circumstances during the lockdown periods however most of the practical aspects of delivery in the 2020-21 year was during the times where we were at level 1. Tuckshop access in particular has been severely limited because the lockdowns and uncertainty have severely impacted these activities in schools. It is clear that there will be much ground to catch up once things have settled. Where delivery hours were down the time was spent on redevelopment of resources, professional development/upskilling and support of other activities funded under the Lifestyle Contract which were still able to be delivered.

**Cook'nKiwi** - Healthy Eating on a Budget. For this popular programme, delivery was impacted particularly for those who are the main priority due to inability to meet face to face and lack of technology.

**Resource & programme development** – Work having moved to more of an online focus has required adaptation of current resources and production of new materials. This activity has been ongoing and has kept the team busy during times they were unable to access the Otara office and their usual clients.

**Student support and capacity building** - Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa continues to support and encourage students from a range of disciplines and professions to understand and work in a way that supports health promotion and prevention activities. We also take a train the trainer approach where needed to increase capacity of other organisations working in the community, particularly where they work with high risk clients so as to deliver informed, research based and effective service.

**Advocacy** - work as described by Board Chair Dr Baker around access to medications.

**Diabetes Summit 2020** - Turning Diabetes Data into Better Health. This online event was the follow-up to the successful 2019 Call To Action summit held at Waipuna Lodge. Co-chaired by our Chair John Baker and Matire Harwood of Papakura Marae.





# Manager Conclusion

It's been a challenging year, starting with Schools co-ordinator Rosie Lee leaving to take up the exciting role of trainee teacher in January 2021. From here other team members re-looked at how they worked together and to take a more co-ordinated approach across the whole Lifestyle service. After that the world obviously became much more complicated with the appearance of Covid-19 on our shores and in our community. I have enormous respect for all of our team, they adapted and continued to find new ways of doing things in and around the various restrictions and complications. They looked after each other and those they had been working with during that tough lockdown time, and most importantly emerged from lockdowns with a positive attitude and into a world which didn't look the same as it had before, that now didn't follow the same rules as it had, and as I wrote this there remains the prospect of more change as this global crisis unfolds.

I'd also like to say that working with Board members on new strategies for the organisation, particularly around how we present to the world and what we offer into the future has been amazing. Taking a role advocating for more equitable access to medication in particular, and also returning somewhat to our research roots adding in our special community approach. Of course frustration exists as planning and implementation paused while the practicalities of lockdown and its aftermath were worked through. Kudos to the Board's persistence and ongoing support of the team in the face of great uncertainty, their commitment and enthusiasm hasn't wavered and I look forward to what comes next..

Plenty was achieved in the 2021-22 year though, and it's also never been clearer that the work we do is important. Promoting health and preventing diabetes and it's complications matters. We are ready for whatever the next year will bring!

*Karen Pickering*



# From the Team

**Diana Anderson - Healthy Workplaces** - I have had the opportunity to support workplaces using different approaches appropriate to staff needs, available technology and time restraints. During COVID I was able to provide some information for company facebook pages and group emails as well as a monthly poster on a health topic. Zoom meetings provided good insight into what peoples challenges were during COVID and the support needed as well as the resources other organisations were producing. There was then an increased demand in support for healthy workplaces after lockdown with a number of organisations keen to support staff health. I continue to get good feedback on staff engaging with the material provided. This has worked much better than sending out nutrition information through a MailChimp newsletter.

There has been a shift in focus from weight loss to eating healthy food in the health challenges, health expo and health nights run in the first half of 2021. Staff attitude to health is impacted on by people in management. Staff who have more empathetic managers are more open to change to a healthier diet. Workplace settings can be challenging with limited time given to releasing staff for health checks and education.

**Joanna Bunt - Cook'n Kiwi programme** - The Covid-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on the Cook'n Kiwi programme during 2020 and 2021. Due to the initial Covid-19 lockdown beginning in March 2020 the Cook'n Kiwi in-person workshops have often had to be put on hold until meeting in groups was possible again. A survey sent to clients during the first lockdown highlighted that many group members of our client organisations do not have access or the ability to use computers, phones, or the internet, or were not comfortable using social media sites such as Facebook. This meant

that it was difficult to provide support to all of our clients while working from home, although some did engage with the newly created Cook'n Kiwi Facebook page and also appreciated resources and recipes we were able to email to some group organisers. All groups were offered the opportunity to have their workshops delivered online via Zoom, with only one group taking this offer up, which eventually had to be cancelled due to disorganisation by the client. Groups seemed to be hesitant to meet at Alert Level 2 and many opted not to have workshops until Alert Level 1, with it becoming clear that our workshops were not a high priority for many of our groups for valid reasons.

We presented a lower number of workshops during 2020 than usual, however as soon as lockdown ended we found that interest in the programme grew and we were often booked over and above our capacity and regularly had to refer on to other organisations.

**Kime Esau - Healthy Schools Programme** - I have extended my role from working in Tuckshops across Auckland to being the Co-ordinator for the whole Healthy Schools Programme since January of this year (2021). Focus has been on re-establishing connections with a variety of stakeholders in the nutrition in schools space, planning, designing and co-facilitating activities including with Healthy Active Learning Advisors, working with individual schools, and collaborating with other team members in their programmes. For Tuckshops which have been in the main closed due to Covid there has been policy development, site visits where possible and taking advantage of other opportunities to work in schools to improve the nutrition environment. Professional development and resource updating have been the focus with the Covid situation.

**Patricia Harry - Lifestyle Facilitator and Research Assistant** - Fakalofa atu, It certainly has been a busy year. Lifestyle team are GO! Out and about assisting Jo with Cook'n Kiwi, GetWize2Health has been awesome attending workshops and assisting Kime, also assisting Diana at Workplaces - attending health nights at a number of businesses, organising weight loss challenges. Been awesome to attend and help and share knowledge.

My new role as Research Assistant has been awesome. From finishing our Worth study to going on to another research project, our Teen study. A high for me is working with our teens to help them with their journey of a healthy lifestyle. Working with them and their families has certainly been an amazing journey and also has helped me along the way. I have gained new skills and learning to navigate more such as communication with all involved. I have certainly gained more confidence in myself overall.

Covid has been a long one, being at home safe with my children and partner has always been number one, I had to upskill myself on also becoming my children's teacher to help them go about as normal as possible which I think we are getting there. Great support as always from Karen and Kate and Board - thank you for your support and encouragement. Fakaue Lahi

**Jennifer Leatham - Administration** - Well, that was a bizarre start to the year – we spent it in Level 4 lockdown – something none of us had experienced before!! While in the past I had occasionally spent the odd day working from home, it now became the new normal. I was very grateful for my home printer/scanner and decent internet connection. Along with the day to day accounts, payroll, IR returns, etc, I was fortunate to have the end of year Finance Report to focus on. We soon had a system going to get accounts and payrolls scanned and approved – having online banking sorted was another plus, and using our Google Drive made file sharing so easy.

During lockdown I did a virtual marathon and enjoyed morning tea sitting in the sun – and that was nice, but I did so miss the day to day interactions with my lovely team mates. I missed the conversations while waiting at the printer, or sharing lots of laughs over lunch, or even hearing what was new on Netflix.

**Richard Main and Hari Narayan - Gardens4health** - During lockdowns, prolonged drought and lengthy water restrictions community gardens have struggled, for the most part survived and often have rebounded to thrive as people realize food security needs are pivotal

to getting through challenging times. The Gardens4Health network is now 82 community gardens strong , with recent new gardens including two Pacifica and two Māori driven gardens. Also support has continued for 6 preschool and primary school gardens in south Auckland. We have reached out to community groups with our team of two, finding achievable ways to support a growing demand for Gardens4Health suite of deliverables. The most sought after services have been seed bank seed packs, practical learning sessions, G4H gatherings and free resources like trays of seedlings from suppliers. Seed collected, dried, packaged and gifted is a way of connecting and sustaining relationships with garden coordinators as well as being ongoing talking points over the harvest and eating of new foods and varieties. The G4H network gathering at different Tamaki Makaurau locations and venues have endured and increased in value for all linked to Auckland wide community food initiatives over the past 12 years. This is the only regional based forum for people to discuss issues, find solutions, share experiences, learn growing skills, and champion organic food resilience.

Thank you to Karen and the team for awesome support as Gardens4Health continue striving to grow communities from the ground UP.

**Kate Smallman - Clinical Project Manager/Lead Research** - early 2020 was an interesting time as Covid hit and lockdown occurred. We were busy with finishing the WORTH medication study. Trying to get participants to carry on with their medications and have blood tests done was difficult. The Study was completed in October and it had been a great achievement. The results are interesting and are being worked on presently with publications to be done.

We then started on a new project re weight loss and bariatric surgery in adolescence. Covid affected the clinics and appointments. We have had to change from one big group to five little groups. Seeing the young people every two weeks. We have been very flexible with this. Different days different times and it's been a great deal of work. Managed to present at several different meetings throughout the year. A challenging year but lucky to have such good staff that are flexible and change with the needs of the patients.



## Acknowledgements

### **Contracts for service delivery:**

Ministry of Health, Auckland Council  
and Local Boards

### **Sponsorship/Grants:**

Estate of Ngaire Smith Nelson  
Wildermoth Family Trust  
Lake Tekapo Lions Club

### **Other**

Freemason Foundation Potter Trust  
Perpetual Guardians Trust.