

# Annual Activity Report 2021-2022



**Diabetes**  
Foundation Aotearoa

Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa is an Otago based Charitable Trust and has been in operation since 1993.

The Foundation designs and delivers diabetes and diabetes complication prevention related activities, resource/programme design, advocacy, and specialty research services into the Auckland community and further afield.



## Contact details

Street Address: *2/100 Alexander Crescent, Otago*

Mail Address: *PO Box 61144, Otago, Auckland 2159*

Phone: *+64 273 9650*

Email: *admin@diabetesfoundationaotearoa.nz*

# Who we are

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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.

## OUR BOARD

John Baker (Chairperson)  
Kate Vennell (Deputy Chair)  
Graham King  
Henry Kozak  
Fale Lesa  
Pat Spellman  
Gerhard Sundborn

## OUR TEAM

Diana Anderson - Co-ordinator Healthy Workplaces  
Gary Andrew - Facilitator Gardens4Health  
Patricia Harry - Lifestyle Programme/research support  
Kime Esau - Co-ordinator Schools  
Jennifer Leatham - Administration Officer  
Richard Main - Project Manager Gardens4Health  
Hari Narayan - Facilitator Gardens4Health  
Karen Pickering - General Manager  
Kate Smallman - Nurse Practitioner/Clinical Project Manager

# From the Board Chair

The Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa has had a much better year 2021 to 2022 as the country started to emerge from the shadows of the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of our work is based in the community and involves interaction with groups and individuals through Healthy Workplaces, Cook'n Kiwi, GetWize2Health Schools, and Gardens4Health projects. These projects are gradually getting back to normal. Our Manager, Karen Pickering has done a good job in keeping the team together, bolstering team morale, and maintaining our financial reserves. We'd like to acknowledge Karen's hard work and the understanding and support of our sponsors through this difficult time as we start to seek new challenges in the year ahead.

The Adolescent Bariatric Surgery study has consumed a lot of our time and energies. The Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa took over the administration of the study in January 2020. Investigators are Dr Brandon Orr-Walker (endocrinologist) and Dr Richard Babor (Bariatric surgeon) and there was a target recruitment of 20 morbidly obese teenagers with associated health issues. The 1-year study duration was extended to 3-years by protocol amendment and this was approved by the ethics committee in January 2022. Further funding was received from the sponsors, the Freemason Foundation Potter Trust and Perpetual Guardian Trust. By year-end, 18 teenagers had been recruited and most had lost some weight, although only one participant had a bariatric procedure. This is because of limited elective surgery services as COVID-19 and influenza raged in our community.

The Foundation is grateful for a project grant from Foundation North that supported a public relations/patient advocacy activity. Trustees worked with Blackland PR to promote newly funded diabetes drugs (Jardiance and Trulicity) to patients in our community. The activity targeted Pasifika with type 2 diabetes and showed a significant increase in prescriptions for new diabetes drugs.

Another major initiative this year was to start work on the upgrade of our branding, web design and marketing presentation. Senior management team and trustees are working with the Renew Room, celebrated as a 100% female and 50% wahine Maori owned business. Together, the team have made excellent progress. An attractive new website will be ready for launch in the near future.

Professor David Simmons continued to analyse data from the DCSS audit of diabetes management in primary care in South Auckland. David is a prolific publisher and produced a number of new manuscripts throughout the year. These publications are prepared in collaboration with the team and enhance the standing of Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa as a genuine research organisation. Research findings were presented to stakeholders at a Third Diabetes Summit on August 2021. The Summit was again web-based because of COVID lockdown restrictions.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the contribution of our Trustees to critical governance and strategic direction. Our Trustees continue to bring passion and commitment to meetings and Foundation activities. Graham King (Ngaati Tai) provides patient perspective and acts as media spokesperson, Kate Vennell gives governance and finance expertise, Gerhard Sundborn provides Pacific perspective and academic support, Henry Kozak bring his extensive experience in marketing and communications and Fale Lesa contributes valuable Pacific perspective and strong governance experience. Sadly, Pat Spellman (Ngāti Maru) who has been instrumental in inspiring and driving the changes to the public face of the Foundation has signalled that his resignation is to come in 2022.

*John Baker - Board Chair*

*Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organisational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results. Andrew Carnegie*

# Main Activities

**Research and Evaluation** - We participated in two Research projects, WORTH study with Professor Rinki Murphy 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, others changed direction. Some workplaces quickly stepped up believing that worker health was a priority once doors showed signs of opening, others remained focused in other directions for much of what was a challenging year for them. Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa continued to focus on communication, online support, and what could be achieved safely.

**Gardens4Health** – Funded by Ministry of Health, Auckland Council, other funders and in-kind support. The Gardens4Health team works alongside over 80 community gardens to help them grow and provide fresh and healthy food to community members, beautify and protect the environment, 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 that had been left unattended going again. It turned out to be a very busy year for Richard and his team.

**GetWize2Health Schools** – Telephone and online delivery of support and training to teachers in the use of 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. 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. This popular Ministry of Health funded programme had its delivery impacted particularly for those who are in the highest risk groups. This to some extent was due to lack of access to restrictions on face to face meetings, which could not be made up for using 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 possible/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** - a successful project was delivered as described by Board Chair Dr Baker around access to medications. Other activities where issues are identified, including supporting local initiatives around fast food access, submissions and advice being put together.

# Manager's Conclusion

In reflecting on the last 12 months, I can't help but feel like 2021 was rather like an extension of the challenges faced in 2020. Almost as though 2020, 2021 and the beginning of 2022 were just some super-long year joined together by the impacts of Covid-19.

Here in Auckland in particular we had a challenging time managing multiple lockdowns and ongoing restrictions to activities, both personal and professional. If I do look more closely at the April 2021 to March 2022 time period, what stands out is adaptation and resilience in the face of uncertainty. All the work we do in the community had to be adjusted to fit the circumstances of that particular time. This included our annual Diabetes Summit which for a second year we moved to online at short notice,

I will never forget the feeling of re-opening of the office in January 2022 after months of working from home and how strange everything felt. I recall the intense discussions that went on, the checking of ever-changing guidelines, the trying to marry up the myriad of instructions such as whether we could ask for masks, restrict entry, was vaccination mandatory for whom, what was legal and what wasn't, and most importantly, what was safe but didn't exclude those who we needed to reach most. Where we are now is a credit to our team as they just got one with things in their usual positive fashion.

After everything, I was very proud to report to our funders that we achieved most of what we needed to do. Some things were done differently, a notable example was the Bariatric project described by Board Chair Dr Baker. In reflecting on why we managed to achieve what we did, I have to look at how much support we received. For example, Our Board of trustees showed a huge amount of fortitude continuing to plan strategy to take us into the future. This planning was interrupted multiple times requiring several complete restarts, their perseverance is legend as was their unstinting support of the team.

We can't forget the whanau and supporters who were right alongside through the tough times, quite literally in many cases with the advent of the home office! Others who helped included our contract holders and those who provided services. Projects that should have taken months, took a lot longer or are still underway, for example The Renew Room working on our branding and website, their patience is much appreciated. I also have to mention our supportive landlady Elaine, who dealt with drama on the premises that occurred during our absence, and who helped us out with rent-relief. That has been a long term relationship, with many a cake shared, and we were very fortunate in having her understanding.

So in coming successfully through the past 12 months, clearly we have ample reason for gratitude. We're still here and looking to the future. We've also learned a lot that we can take forward to make what we do better. I normally say some variation of "bring on the next year", but that perhaps that has extra meaning this time.

*Karen Pickering - General Manager*

# From the team

**Diana Anderson - Lifestyle Team Co-ordinator** - While we were able to engage successfully with workplaces between lockdowns, they were difficult to access during lockdown. Reasons for this included staff shortages due to COVID adding to the pressure to be productive and decreased time for staff health development. Staff at Factories, Warehouses and DC's do not work with computers and therefore are difficult to access while at work. A few solutions to these challenges has been to do staff inservice, the monthly poster and emailing information to support HR staff. HR Staff have appreciated the personal contact through email and have had some positive responses. Staff training workshops have provided a great opportunity for us to share our resources with organisations who see clients on a regular basis. Our resources are well received and well positioned to help with health challenges in the workplace and the community.

**Jennifer Leatham - Administration** - I always struggle to write my update/'blurb' for the annual activity report. Maybe that's because I feel that I don't have anything new or exciting to add. I spend my time doing the same old accounts, payroll, GST, and PAYE returns, etc. Each month is the same – but can also be VERY different. I find it so rewarding when all my work comes together – and all the figures balance! There is a great sense of achievement in completing our Annual Finance report and knowing that our work has passed inspection.

During July/August we migrated over to using fibre and had networking installed at the office. Scheduling the move was a bit of a challenge, but so worth the effort. Internet speed is much better, and having our internet connection 'drop out' is a rare event these days.

At midnight on the 18<sup>th</sup> August, Auckland went back into a Covid19 Level 4 lockdown – and stayed there for 107 days. So we went back to our home offices. We had Zoom meetings each week and they were great for keeping us all connected. During the time at home, apart from the usual accounts work, I did some online training. I completed a very basic *Te Reo Māori: Introduction to Pronunciation* course, a course on *Unconscious Bias*, and also some *MYOB Payroll courses/updates* in preparation of moving our Payroll online in February. I enjoyed the knowledge gathered from each course.

And then Xmas arrived – and I managed to break my arm during the Zoom Christmas party!! Thankfully, it didn't need a cast – just had to be kept immobilised in a sling for a while.

To wrap up my year, I'd like to thank our Board for their support of the team during the lockdowns. Grateful thanks to Karen – for your kindness, for your encouragement and your understanding. And to the Team – thanks for being so awesome. You add the 'happies' to my days 😊

**Kate Smallman - Clinical Projects Manager/Nurse Practitioner** - April 2021 was a good time. No Covid in NZ, work was continuing as normal. August 2021 we went into lock down and work changed for the next few months. Working from home became the norm. Clinics and teaching was all on line. Zoom was our way of communicating. I was back studying to become a Mātanga Tapuhi or Nurse Practitioner. The Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa supported me through this journey and in January 2022 I passed all my exams and became a Nurse Practitioner. What is a Nurse Practitioner? A Nurse practitioner is a highly skilled autonomous health practitioners who has advanced education, clinical training and demonstrated competency. I am now able to offer more clinical support to the research that we conduct, more teaching and leadership. I am very grateful for the support given to me during this year and ongoing support.

**Patricia Harry - Lifestyle and Research** - Well what a busy time we have had coming out of mini lockdowns to major ones, where do I start! Getting back into the routine of all hands on deck, we've been back out in the Community which has been really great, sharing information to our communities has been a worthwhile experience for all!

Assisting in our Cook'n Kiwi program and Schools program has been really exciting, getting out there and gaining more life experiences. Been also busy with our Adolescent study - this has been an awesome experience. The Research Assistant role for me has kept me busy - interaction with the whanau to support our teens has been an eye opener - has given more wider skills for me personally.

I've also been learning other new things as I go - maintaining our social media such as our Facebook pages, Cook'n Kiwi, Gardens4Health and our Adolescent study as well. Taught me to learn to navigate pages and sharing information etc.

On a personal note it has been a busy year but as a team we work well in helping our communities. My journey with the Foundation has been a 30 year journey and I can say I am still learning and it has always been my passion to help our community. My family is well and we are blessed to succeed over covid. Fakaue lahi to the Foundation for going strong!

**Trish and Diana (with early work done by Joanna Bunt) - Cook'nKiwi** - this programme started off busy however a number of these workshops were then postponed or cancelled due to the evolving covid-19 pandemic. Many of our clients were unable to engage in online workshops so this was often not an option as a replacement for our in person workshops. A project proposal to pivot the Cook'n Kiwi programme during the covid-19 lockdown was proposed and a number of workshops were held online.

The Cook'n Kiwi programme started off busy for the first half of the 2021 with in person workshops and this trend has continued post lockdown with the programme being fully booked. It is evident that the programme is most successful when it can be run as an in person workshop in the community, a position which is backed by research and previous experience.



**Richard Main - Gardens4Health** - Community gardens as Living Foodbanks continued to be a key source of fresh food for communities around Tamaki Makaurau during covid outbreaks. Eleven new gardens started during this period despite Covid restrictions, although three gardens closed and 10 other gardens remained in survival mode due to a range of factors including wide spread infections, those in isolation and looking after loved ones. Accessing free seed potatoes, asparagus, kumara tipu and tray lots of herbs and vegetable seedlings from supplier networks helped community gardens struggling with supply constraints and rising costs of materials.

Among our key highlights, over 1900 people were active at 91 community garden sites as of January 2022 however participation numbers are lower due to Covid. The NZ Organic Market Report 20/21 highlighted the value of community garden food initiatives in Auckland. Four students are undertaking PHD and Masters studies around the central theme of food security and sovereignty. The Afghani Women's Baghcha Garden is the smallest at 15 square meters and the Tongan garden in Pukekohe the largest at 2.5 hectares. Generating some income is becoming the norm for community gardens with produce sold at gate, at markets and online, produce swaps also popular.

The Gardens4Health team saw changes in December 2021 with Jake Clarke departing to take up a full time managerial role at Organic Market Garden and Gary Andrews filling the position of Facilitator for West and North of the bridge in March 2022. Jake shared his commitment to sustainable best food growing practice while Gary skills in creating landscape plans for new community garden projects made a difference. Hari Narayan is in his 9th year with the Foundation and has grown the south Auckland web of community garden. As always, Growing *localfoodforlocalpeople*.



## **Acknowledgements**

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Foundation North  
Auckland Council Local Boards

### **Other**

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Perpetual Guardians Trust.

*Information on finances available on Charities Commission Website*