

**Teaming with wildlife**  
***Guardians of the Bay of Islands Inc. Annual Report***  
***Ngā Kaiawhi o Ngā Kaitiaki o Ipipiri***  
For the year ended 30 June 2023



# 2050 Whāinga 2050 Goal

## The ancient dawn chorus is restored

### Mihi

Te Maunga ko Rākaumangamanga o te whare tapu o Ngāpuhi

Te Moana ko Ipipiri o Tokerau

Te Hapū ko Ngāti Kuta me Patukeha

Te Iwi ko Ngāpuhi

Te marae ko Te Rāwhiti

*The sacred mountain is Rākaumangamanga  
of the sacred house of Ngāpuhi*

*The ocean is Ipipiri o Tokerau*

*The sub tribes are Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha*

*The tribe is Ngāpuhi*

*The marae is Te Rāwhiti*

### Tō mātou moemoeā Our vision

The islands of Ipipiri are an archipelago of sanctuaries, alive with the dawn chorus, where both people and Aotearoa New Zealand's unique wildlife prosper in harmony.

#### What we do:



##### Pest Control & Biosecurity

Protecting the wildlife safe haven by stopping non-native predators & weeds from getting to the pest-free islands.



##### Forest Regeneration

Restoring native habitat so that the islands flourish.



##### Restoring Taonga Wildlife

Returning vulnerable native wildlife.



##### Inspiring Learning

Providing future generations of kiwis with inspiring learning.



Kororā | Little blue penguin.



Kākāriki | Red-crowned parakeet. Reintroduced  
2017 and 2021 to Moturua and Urupukapuka.

# Pānui mai i ngā Heamana

## Message from the Co-Chairs

Tēnā koutou katoa,

The end of any year, financial or otherwise, is always a good time for reflection, for looking back at past achievements and challenges, and for using that experience as a guide in planning for an unknown or uncertain future. So, holding on to that thought, what can we take from the year just gone, into the next?

When the Guardians was established seventeen years ago, most of the fifteen founding members were closely involved operationally, pursuing a vision of pest-free islands restored to their pristine wilderness state, with native flora and fauna flourishing and endangered species populations recovering in safe, protected habitats.

In 2023 the vision is the same, but the organisation is vastly different. Some members of the governance committee are still involved operationally.

- Tom Lindesay, with the help of other volunteers, successfully grew this year's plants free from plague skinks in a new trial, which will be continued next year.
- William Fuller, a past Russell Primary School principal, is now one of our four Floating Classrooms educators.

Other committee members regularly volunteer and support the operational team at releases and events, but the day-to-day operational management is contracted out to a growing team, led by General Manager Richard Robbins, whose knowledge and oversight has been pivotal to the Project's direction.

So where has he led us?

- To the successful fundraising for, and to the design, commissioning, purchase, naming, launch and first few months operation of our workboat, Mārara.
- To the gifting of a brand-new work vehicle, complete with standout signwriting that proclaims our presence and mission wherever it goes.
- To the engagement of a dedicated fundraiser, thereby freeing himself to focus more on our core business – ecological restoration, endangered species work and island biosecurity.

Richard's foresight and determination, not to mention his hard-earned experience over 11 years with the Project has ensured that these key components were in place when DOC decreased their participation in response to budget cuts and allowed us as the Guardians to step into the breach.

However, Richard couldn't have done it without the hard work of the operational and governance team he leads.

Following the recent departure of founding committee members, Rod Brown and Blandy Witehira in early 2022 and more recently Fleur Corbett, at the 2022 AGM, three new committee members joined – Nadia Lehmann, Maryanne Hooson and Hetty van Hale, who bring new enthusiasm and fresh perspectives to the governing body. We have engaged two skippers, Tim Grant and Tammy Jameson, an educator, Fletcher Sunde, and a Fundraising Manager, Andy Boor.

With all this extra activity has come extra financial responsibility. The treasurer's role has grown significantly. We are very grateful for chartered accountant Mary Moore's many hours of voluntary work in this demanding role.

The mandated representatives of our Te Rāwhiti hapū, who are mana whenua with an ancestral connection to the islands, complete the Guardians committee and provide vital support for Richard and his team. They represent and guide us in negotiations with other hapū and in tikanga generally, which is embodied in everything we do. Without this support we would not be able to operate.

While we will be easing DOC's cost pressures by taking over some of the island surveillance and biosecurity work, it is possible that sourcing enough funding to pay our contracted team will, in turn, become a cost pressure for us. Looking into the near future, we are well prepared and confident that the Project Island Song team has the capacity to rise to any challenge we might have to face. Our vision remains strong and clear.

Thank you all.

Noho ora mai,

**Barb Elboz (Co-chair) and William Fuller (Acting Co-chair)**  
Guardians of the Bay of Islands Inc.

# Tō mātou tau ki muri Our year in review

Tēnā koutou katoa,

I am delighted to introduce the Guardians of the Bay of Islands Inc. annual report for the year ending 30 June 2023. And what a year it has been. Over these 12 months the Guardians have gone through a remarkable change driven by required adaptation, pure grit, and determination. As the Guardians have evolved to be able to take over vital pest management and operational roles, I've been incredibly proud of our team and their resolve which has resulted in an extremely productive and successful year.

Even with the less-than-perfect weather that we have experienced through this transitional period, our vital pest management, ecological restoration, volunteer, and education programmes have all been effectively delivered. Although the focus on adaptation has resulted in minor delays in planned species translocation delivery, without the preparedness to take on these new roles vital to maintaining the pest-free status of the islands of Ipipiri, these and previous reintroductions would be put into jeopardy. However, progress has been made, and the translocation and release of further wētāpunga onto Motuarohia, Moturua, and Urupukapuka was a highlight.

Saturday 25th March celebrated an especially significant event. The naming ceremony and launch of Mārara, the Guardians' first workboat, marked a moving but also exciting day for the future of Project Island Song. Recognising her support of and commitment to Project Island Song since its very beginnings, the workboat is poignantly named in memory of Rāwhiti Kuia Mārara Te Tai Hook. The purposely commissioned Kingfisher PowerCat 620 was carefully selected to provide optimum outcomes to enable the Guardians to independently carry out both existing and newly transferred roles. Mārara has already proven to be a true game changer for Project Island Song, and it is with great thanks to the donors who made this possible. Without this incredible support, I could not see how Project Island Song could have continued.

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*I've been incredibly proud of our team and their resolve which has resulted in an extremely productive and successful year.*  
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We have had much to be proud of over these last 12 months, but I can safely say that none of it would have been possible without the phenomenal commitment of Fleur Corbett over the many years before. Fleur was Guardians chairperson for 15 years, but this was only a small component of her contribution. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and highlight Fleur's exceptional devotion to Project Island Song. This dedication has helped set up the Guardians for the future.

Ngā mihi nui to all our contractors, mana whenua, Guardians committee, volunteers, landowners, partners, members, donors, funders, and to everyone we have engaged with and worked alongside through this truly transformational year.

**Richard Robbins,**  
General Manager, Project Island Song



## Haere rā Farewell

This year one of our Co-Chairs, Fleur Corbett, decided after 15 years it was time to step away as co-chair of The Guardians of the Bay of Islands to focus on her whānau.

Fleur's work within Project Island Song, including her collaboration with local landowners to establish, maintain, and fund an extensive pest control network along the mainland coastline, has been essential in maintaining the pest-free status of the islands of Ipipiri. This network has become an integral part of the wider Predator Free 2050 project.

Fleur's commitment to working alongside local hapū from Rāwhiti, Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha was unwavering. Her understanding of the importance of restoring the mauri of whenua Māori private and public lands, has been pivotal in creating the healthy and sustainable ecosystems you see today in the Bay of Islands.

The strong relationships Fleur built with iwi and hapū have fostered the connections and collaborations across the

regions for all involved in conservation work on their own whenua. Mana whenua are represented at a governance level within the Guardians, and kaimahi are engaged in vital tasks of habitat restoration, native species reintroductions, island biosecurity and pest control.

In addition to her commitment to conservation, Fleur places great importance on learning in the environment, especially for rangatahi. Her dedication to including young people in all aspects of mahi is commendable, and Project Island Song's well-established learning programme Floating Classrooms with local schools stands as a testament to her vision.

The Guardians would like to acknowledge and thank Fleur for her exceptional contributions to Project Island Song, conservation, community and mana whenua engagement over the last 15 years. Although Fleur has stepped away from her role as co-chair and now has more time to spend with her whānau, she is still involved in conservation across the Bay of Islands and remains committed to this kaupapa.





Pōpokotea | Whitehead. Reintroduced in 2015 and 2016 to Motuarohia, Moturua and Urupukapuka.

# Tō mātou tau ki muri

## Our year in review

### A decade of care from Tim and Helen Armitage

This year saw the tenth anniversary of Tim and Helen Armitage spending a month on Moturua as part of their control of wattle, pine and other invasive weed species.

Enormous thanks and gratitude go out to both Tim and Helen, and the many others who have supported their efforts across the decade; without them this incredible effort could not have been achieved.

We'd particularly like to acknowledge the Goodfellow family whose support over the last decade has enabled Tim and Helen to achieve such a huge outcome.

Tim's full report can be read on our website.



### Mārara & Ute

The new Project Island Song workboat Mārara is fully operational thanks to our contributors who have made this new vessel possible. As our first fully dedicated workboat, Mārara has already demonstrated her effectiveness to deliver core activities across the islands and will be key to our ongoing success as we take on more responsibilities. To support the workboat a suitable truck was also needed. It is safe to say the new Mazda BT-50 ute, gifted by members of the Masonic Lodge Kororāreka No 304, is an eyecatcher and has also enhanced our education and engagement programmes.



# 393

volunteers

# 2119

volunteer  
hours gifted

# 13

years  
pest-free

# 17

corporate  
members

# 200+

wētāpunga  
translocated

# 16

weeding  
trips

# 12

floating  
classrooms

# 1

gifted  
boat

# 1

gifted  
ute

# 500+

trees  
planted



Mārara moored at Waiwhapuku Bay (Army Bay), Moturua.

# Ā tātou pūtea

## Our finances

The Guardians' fundraising efforts in FY22/23 concentrated on achieving donations and grants to fully meet the cost of a new marine-surveyed, twin-hulled catamaran, our workboat, Mārara. While total funds received exceeded FY22/23 budget of \$395,000, grant funding and general donation receipts were behind expectation which is reflective of an increasingly competitive funding environment. Foundation North and Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust continue their grant support for our operational and educational programme delivery. Grants from NZ Lottery Grants Board and Northland Regional Council supported further investment in our kaimahi empowerment, volunteer operations, weeding and pest control programmes. New grant funders include the Stout Trust and Four Winds Foundation Ltd with funding in support of the Island's biosecurity and biodiversity programmes respectively.

We spent 74% of the \$247,024 grant funding brought forward from FY21/22 with the remainder planned for the FY23/24 education programme and pest management for Rakaumangamanga. A total of \$347,612 will be carried over into FY23/24 to continue delivery of the educational, volunteering, biosecurity and translocation programmes.

The capital acquisition of Mārara has inflated the current year surplus to \$200,080. Removal of this component results in a smaller operational surplus of \$11,900 which more accurately reflects the delivery of services during FY22/23. Funding to meet the operational costs of having our own vessel is now well underway along with the scheduling of increased biosecurity management of the Islands. New fundraising streams are being introduced and the work of Project Island Song continues to attract corporate interest in membership, volunteering, and in-kind donations of materials.

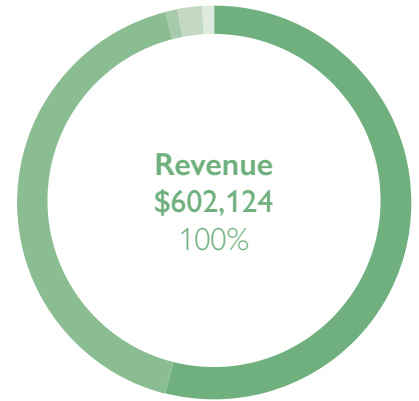
The receipt of a sponsored tow vehicle for Mārara has been a great boost for Project Island Song's visibility in the community. The vehicle itself will be gifted to the Guardians at the end of a three year period, at which time the asset will be recorded as a fixed asset. With the successful arrival of Mārara along with the vehicle, our goal in FY 23/24 is to raise \$450,000 to fund the delivery of our expanding operational programmes in support of the continued biodiversity of Ipipiri.

<b>Surplus</b>	<b>\$200,080*</b>
<b>Assets</b>	<b>\$732,066</b>
Bank accounts and cash	\$385,678
Other current assets	\$128,366
Property, plant & equipment	\$204,278
Other non-current assets	\$13,744

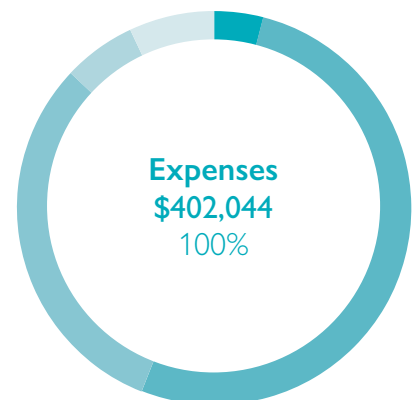
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>\$391,027</b>
Unused tagged grants and donations	\$347,612
Other liabilities	\$43,415
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$341,039</b>

\* The FY22/23 surplus of \$200,080 includes the capital acquisition of Mārara. Removal of this results in a surplus of \$11,900, more accurately reflecting the delivery of services.

FY 21/22: 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022, FY 22/23: 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023, FY 23/24: 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024



Grants	\$327,041	54.3%
Other donations and fundraising	\$254,042	42.2%
Fees and subscriptions from members	\$6,586	1.1%
From providing goods and services	\$8,582	1.4%
Interest income	\$5,873	1%



Related to public fundraising	\$14,816	3.7%
Volunteer and employee/mission delivery costs	\$212,333	52.8%
Costs of providing goods & services	\$128,281	31.9%
Transportation	\$21,746	5.4%
Other expenses	\$24,868	6.2%



Our educator, Fletcher Sunde, with a floating classroom on Moturua.

# Tō tātou ekenga ki mua hāi

## Our future

### Providing future generations of kiwis with inspiring learning

For over a decade our Floating Classrooms have provided primary age tamariki with an in-the-field education programme, enabling them to discover and learn the importance of looking after native taonga species and restoring the diversity and health of the ngahere.

Looking ahead we want to extend this programme to secondary and tertiary students, enabling us to inspire and educate our next generation of conservationists so that they gain an understanding of ecological restoration and enable them to take over this important work and promote kaitiakitanga.

We're already working with other organisations and schools to help fulfil this goal.

### Wētāpunga translocations

Over 200 more wētāpunga were welcomed back to the Bay of Islands in June 2023 as part of Project Island Song's joint reintroduction programme with Auckland Zoo. This time we saw both adults and juveniles reintroduced, to align with the life cycle of both previously introduced wētāpunga and their offspring.

Critical to this species recovery programme is the kaitiakitanga of all mana whenua of Te Hauturu-o-Toi, in particular Ngāti Manuhiri, Ngātiwai, and Ngāti Rehua. We also recognise the dedication of the Little Barrier Supporters Trust. This wētāpunga reintroduction has been made possible thanks to the generous support of Auckland Zoo, the Lottery Grants Board, the Tindall Foundation and WWF-New Zealand as their Environmental Donation Manager for the Community Conservation Fund, private donors, and the generous in-kind support of our volunteers.



A team of crucial weedbusting volunteers on their way to tackle a site on Moturua.

# Ngā mihi ki ngā Kaitautoko Thanks & acknowledgements

The Guardians of the Bay of Islands/Project Island Song would like to sincerely acknowledge and thank all those involved with the Project to ensure these beautiful pest-free islands are around and thriving for future generations. Acknowledging, in particular, Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha, our dedicated volunteers and members; without your time and dedication this incredible wildlife sanctuary wouldn't exist.

We'd also like to acknowledge our 2022-2023 Corporate Members:



## Donors, funders and in-kind supporters

Without the generous support of donors, funders and in-kind supporters we would not be able to continue the work we do.



If you've seen a pest on the islands, please call  
**0800 362 468** immediately, and also email us at  
**[pest@projectislandsong.co.nz](mailto:pest@projectislandsong.co.nz)**

Project Island Song is a unique partnership between community group the Guardians of the Bay of Islands and Te Rāwhiti hapū (Ngāti Kuta and Patukeha).

**5 Pitt Street, Russell 0202**  
**P.O. Box 142, Russell 0242**

To find out more about our work, volunteer with us, or be part of the project in another way, please visit our website:  
**[projectislandsong.co.nz](http://projectislandsong.co.nz)**

Follow the Project Island Song story on social media:

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 [/projectislandsong](https://www.youtube.com/projectislandsong)



Caring for the environment is vitally important to Project Island Song, which is why this document is printed using environmentally friendly, dry toners on responsibly sourced paper.

