

**ISSUE 14 – OCTOBER 2020**

He moana pukepuke,
Ka ekengia e te waka

Though there be mountainous seas
The canoe will forge ahead

THIS ISSUE OF TOMOKIA

Welcome to the October issue of our Tomokia newsletter.

In this issue of Tomokia we will be talking about the impact Covid 19 has had on New Zealand's economy and Tourism operators, an update on the Waitomo Glowworm Caves/Free of Charge Whanau bookings, updates regarding development with our Marae and the Grants that have opened and are due to open.

We send a mihi to whanau who have lost loved ones to Covid 19, have had whanau who have been very unwell and those who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. We are now entering a recovery phase that will take some time and while it is uncertain when things will return to normal, we continue to operate and support whanau and marae. It is clear that maintaining good health is important not only in the current environment but in general. Stay strong whanau be well, look after yourselves and others, be kind and lets get through this together.

On the 26th September 2020 our first virtual AGM was held. It was a different experience to what we are use to and hopefully we won't have to hold future virtual AGM's. The Annual Report can be downloaded via the RUHT website www.ruht.co.nz/publications. If you would like to see the recording please contact admin@ruht.co.nz for the link.

Ngā manaakitanga ki a koutou katoa.

Unprecedented Times

This newsletter highlights an unexpected event that has affected all countries, economies and people around the world. Nobody could have guessed this time last year that the entire world would come to a halt because of a virus. These are uncertain times while we wait for a vaccine to become available and life returns to a new normal.

In Aotearoa we are very lucky our geographical location has kept us relatively safe as well as locking down for five weeks to ensure that the health of the nation is a priority. The rest of the world is still catching up.

We are in a position where at least we can travel nationally and domestic tourism is an avenue for income within the NZ Tourism Industry. However it is an extremely competitive space at the moment but a priority for the Waitomo Glowworm Caves to capture our domestic tourism market.

A semi Trans-Tasman bubble is happening at the moment and a Pacific bubble may be on the horizon.

The Waitomo Glowworm Caves is now operating at a much reduced level and as a result of this royalties are significantly less than previous months. We estimate it will take between 2-3 Years to return back to pre covid levels, this estimate is based on the amount of time it may take to produce a vaccine, reopen borders and entice people to travel.

The Trust acknowledges that this is a difficult time for all whanau located across NZ and the globe who have lost their jobs or had their incomes reduced as a direct result of Covid 19. While the Trust has been impacted with a significant reduction in income the Trustees have committed to supporting whanau through distributing our annual grants for Education, Kaumatua and Marae. The Trustees have also committed to funding the Marae Capital Works programme as well as Maths Buddy and the Train Me programme which make up a large portion of our outgoings for the year.

The Trust have been working with local providers to support whanau with kai. We also have information available on our website www.ruht.co.nz regarding job opportunities and where to go for additional support if needed.

Waitomo Glowworm Cave – Updates

WGC Updates:

During Alert Level's 3 & 4 our beautiful taonga had a well deserved rest and re-opened on Saturday 23rd May 2020. Since the re-opening of the caves, visitor numbers have been restricted and opening hours have changed due to Ministry of Health guidelines.

Despite the restricted numbers and the impact Covid 19 has had on the tourism industry within NZ the caves are still receiving visitors and are generally fully booked every weekend. Unfortunately THL had to reduce staff numbers across all their business units which impacted on whanau who were working at the caves. There were a number of redundancies across the whole of the Discover Waitomo brand. A positive response to this situation has led to whanau reflecting on and pursuing different career pathways, retraining and spending more time with whanau. The caves are operating at Level One and are now able to take more visitors through.

Strategic Tourism Asset – Waitomo Glowworm Caves:

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment have recognized the Waitomo Glowworm Caves as a Strategic Tourism Asset. The Trust worked alongside THL and the NZ Maori Tourism Council to ensure that the Caves were recognized and included in the Strategic Tourism Assets Protection programme (STAPP).

The STAPP intends to protect assets in the tourism industry that are essential tourism offerings and ensure the survival through the disruption caused by the Covid 19 pandemic.

As part of this programme the Caves are recognized as a culturally, environmentally and historically significant attraction. In recognition of this a grant of 2 million dollars was provided to the operators of the Waitomo Glowworm Caves (THL) to ensure the survival of the business with a further offer of a 2 million loan if required.

Feedback from Visitors:

While Covid 19 has had significant economic impacts for the Trust, whanau working in Waitomo and the tourism sector have seen positive outcomes and feedback relating to this. Environmentally the cave has fared well with a reduction in numbers and carbon dioxide levels. Feedback from visitors has seen an increase in

customer satisfaction due to smaller group numbers. From a guiding perspective staff satisfaction has increased due to less numbers and more time to share information with visitors. A guide has reflected that with smaller numbers they are able to host manuhiri in a way that offers higher value quality tours. This gives an opportunity for the operator(THL) to balance the quality of the tour with the yield per tour. Therefore the question is, what is the magic number of people per tour to achieve this balance?

Whanau Free of Charge Bookings:

Whanau who whakapapa back to one or more of the four tupuna (and their spouses) can now go through the Waitomo Glowworm Cave Free of Charge.

Please ensure that you book at least three days in advance. Group bookings of more than 10 must book a week in advance. Please note only RUHT members are free, non hapu members will be required to pay. Large group bookings will require a list of names.

The caves are open Thursday to Monday until further notice. **Please note Saturday is the busiest day for trips therefore they are not available for Free of Charge whanau bookings. If you wish to go through on a Saturday you will be required to pay and pre bookings are essential.**

Times for whanau going through are still the same 9am-10am or 2.30pm-4.00pm.

If you and the whanau would like to go through please ensure that you pre book by contacting the RUHT office, office hours are listed at the end of the newsletter. If you need to amend or cancel your booking please ensure you contact the Waitomo Glowworm Caves directly on 0800 456 922.

Please share this information with whanau so they are aware of the booking process.

Education and Kaumatua Grants

Kaumatua Grants:

The Second Round of the Kaumatua Hauora Grants have now opened and close Friday, 11th December 2020. This round is for Kaumatua who did not apply in the first round.

If you have any questions regarding the Kaumatua Grants or need help filling in the application forms please don't hesitate to contact the RUHT office.

Intermediate and Secondary Grants:

These will open on Monday, 02nd November 2020 and close Friday, 11th December 2020.

The Intermediate and Secondary Grants are for children who are Years 7-13 and are for the 2021 School Year.

When the grants have opened forms will be available to download from the RUHT website under Grants and Initiatives.

When applying please ensure that:

- The School have stamped or signed the application form confirming your child will be attending in the 2021 School Year.
- Proof of Bank has been supplied. If you have applied in previous years this is still required.
- All sections of the form have been completed and the application form has been signed.

Marae Development Updates

Congratulations to Tokikapu Marae for securing funding to build Phase 1 of their Marae Development Project which is to build their ablution block. Thank you to Miria Davis for posting live updates through social media and keeping whanau informed about what's happening and are engaged in the process. It has been wonderful seeing Tokikapu building progress to date. We are looking forward to seeing the completion of the build and are sure that Marae Trustees are excited about Phase 2.

Tokikapu Marae have also started restoration of carvings which has been lead by Danny Lurman and local carvers. It has been 35 years since the carvings were installed and the team will spend the next couple of months restoring the carvings back to their original state. This process will be documented for future generations.

OUR PEOPLE

In this issue of Tomokia we will be highlighting Arama Davis a local artist who provided stunning images in last year's Annual Report. Arama's tupuna is Te Riutoto Aihe.

Here are some examples of his work:



We asked Arama to highlight his journey. These are his words:

The doors of possibilities opened up far and wide while I was attending Toi Houkura in 2000-2005. It was this platform that gave rise to my desire to pursue contemporary Māori art as a potential path in re-connecting to myself, to cultural identity and to the sacred fibre cords of our cultural heritage. It provided an elevated boost to my sense of worth. The legacy and power behind the stories of old, the knowledge and wisdom adorning the imagery of the ancient ones was uplifting and empowering and underpinned my reason to pursue it even more.

As a wee lad of 9-10 years old, I came home from Waitomo school and saw that we had a visitor in our homestead tattooing a relative on our kitchen table of all places. This proved to be a pivotal point in time as I was fortunate

to witness something extraordinary and this particular experience fuelled my quest to emulate what I thought was extremely impressive.

The highlight of what I do is being able to passionately and consistently enjoy the process of creating unique treasures for people to enjoy time and time again. Then there is the ultimate all time high when you witness first-hand the impact that your creation can have on the wellbeing of others. Being able to reach into the heart of others and adding something sacred, important and significant as well as adding value into their lives, observing real and raw emotions bubbling to the surface is heart-warming and invigorating.

The lows, I have experienced many and they have become part and parcel of my personal creative spirit. It is my constant pursuit of perfection and the seeds of doubt and shame that will dominate and drown my creative spirit. However, I have learnt a few tricks that enables me freshen up my perspective quicker, so instead of spending years drowning in an ocean of chaos, I can find a way to flow with the current that will quickly move me away from the chaos of negative self-talk, doubts and the feelings of guilt and shame.

If I could go back in time and talk to my teenage self. I would tell him to be strong, to be brave, to be steadfast and never be afraid of what may unfold. Relax and don't be so tense, live a little, bend the rules and most importantly - have some fun man - geesh!!

What's next for me? Transmutation and healing spiritual wounds has become an important part of my journey. From there I enable myself to grow deeper into the soils of the land, absorbing all the rich nutrients and embellish my wellbeing with authenticity and unshakeable strength. I aspire to master the ancient ways of living and giving more of myself to my people, to plant seeds of inspiration and thrive in this ever changing world we live in.

CONTACT DETAILS AND OPENING HOURS

We are always looking for whānau to add to "Our People" stories. So if you want to share your story or would like to profile a whānau member please let us know 😊.

Address:

Level One
46 Taupiri Street
Te Kuiti

Opening Hours:

Monday-Thursday
Closed Public Holidays
9.00am-4.00pm

Contact Details:

0800 525 626
admin@ruht.co.nz
www.ruht.co.nz