

# **Mākara Peak Supporters Annual Report 2022**

## **Chair's report**

Thanks to everyone who has volunteered their time to help make Mākara Peak the great place it is. Whether you've turned up to a meeting, dug trails, planted trees, cleared a trap, met a contractor in the rain at the summit to discuss a project, taken photos, filled out an application form, posted something to social media, or cleared a drain, it all helps. Give yourself a pat on the back and bask in the karma.

The following report showcases the enormous amount of time and effort that goes into running a mountain bike park. Particular thanks to the 2021/22 management committee and sub-committee members who give so much to the park. Thanks to Mark Kent and Tim Harkness from WCC. Tim has invaluable knowledge about all things trail building and the inner workings of the Council, and has an understated and considered approach to things, which nicely balances out our passion!

The impact Mark Kent has made since he started almost 12 months ago as Wellington City Council (WCC) Park Ranger cannot be overstated. On top of all the maintenance, moving gear and plants around the park, helping out at work parties, he's organised water at the summit, plus dozens of other things that will fly under the radar. He's taken signage and many other tasks off my plate, which I'm eternally grateful for!

Thanks to Trails Wellington who have not only funded projects like mid and top Pohatu, but have contributed in a wide variety of ways. Taking the membership off our hands, which was a major burden for MPS, has freed us up to focus on other things that we are much better at. Tom Cappleman is a fantastic asset for TW, and his seemingly endless supply of positivity is very much welcome around the table.

## **Park Survey**

It was enormously validating to receive so much positive feedback and compliments in the recently completed 2022 Park Survey. We've got a pile of insights that can help us inform what to do next in the park and it's something we can repeat each year. It's interesting how many expert riders we have in the park – and yet how many of them quite enjoy riding grade 4 trails like Pohatu and Starfish, which were voted the two most popular tracks in the park by some margin. Security is an increasingly important consideration for

many of you, with lighting in the carpark and CCTV near the top of wish lists, after a coffee cart and some toilets in the park. Lots to keep working on.

### **Rain rain and more rain**

The 2022 winter has given us a potential insight into future weather patterns with a seemingly endless string of wet days, resulting in a sodden park. You can't drive 5 minutes around Wellington without coming across another slip half blocking a lane, or a house teetering precariously over a now absent bank.

While this puts our challenges in perspective, it does also reinforce how lucky we were to not suffer any major damage or slips (think Sally Alley from 2020!), and how preventative maintenance and refurbishment must be more of a focus for the Park's work programme.

### **Maintenance – not a dirty word**

The Supporters will never have the capacity (or financial capability to pay contractors) to actively maintain a network of 40km of singletrack to a *world class standard*. Maintenance means different things to different people. But ultimately we're talking about keeping the riding corridor and trail surface free of foliage, ensuring water can drain off the trail surface quickly, doing work to the trail surface to ensure it remains true to the sign-posted difficulty. And then once every three to five years, doing a major refurbish including re-surfacing if necessary.

With some slightly different thinking, between fundraising activities, community grants and donations, Trails Wellington and the Council, there's probably enough funding available to deliver on all aspects of the Park's master plan including trail building and maintenance. A potential solution is for WCC to reconsider how they distribute their financial contribution to the park. Currently the bulk of their funding is used to deliver new trails in the park, with a small operational budget supporting Ranger Mark and his hands-on maintenance efforts.

An alternative approach would be for WCC funding to focus more on the operation and maintenance of the park. For example, give Park Ranger Mark Kent some assistants, equip them to do their job safely, quickly and efficiently (how Mark survives without a ute is anyone's guess!) and "maintenance" would largely be resolved.

### **But what about new tracks?!?**

Now don't get me wrong, I love a new track as much as the next rider. Lower T4 is going to be a magnificent addition to the park and I ride Pohatu frequently. But once they're complete, in my opinion WCC should step back from trail building and focus funding on the other objectives outlined in the master plan, that will ultimately help ensure Mākara Peak remains a world class mountain bike park in a regenerating native forest – which I have no doubt it is.

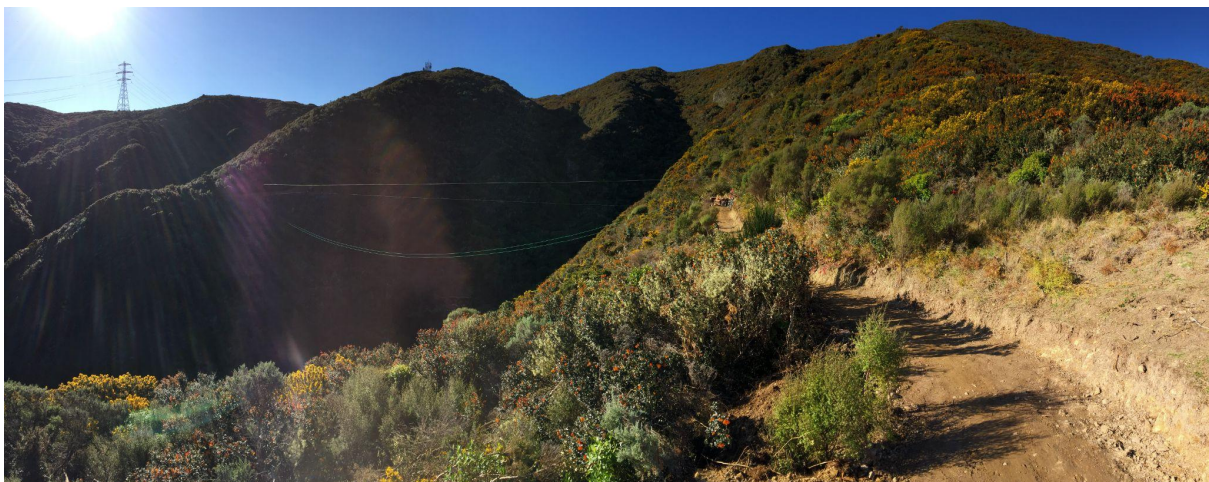
The Supporters will continue to build the trails you all love to ride, plant trees and trap pests. For larger projects, a cost-sharing model should be considered. It's a lot easier to mobilise the riding community behind a new trail building project, and they've been enormously generous when given the opportunity to support major projects in the park (i.e. the swing bridge and the skills area refurb). We just need to ask. Plus there is plenty of funding available in the community through grants, fundraising events, merchandise and general donations.

### **Mākara Peak needs you!**

I've decided to step down from the role of Chair at this AGM. My Mākara Peak journey started exactly 10 years ago, when I was inspired by a MPS tracks plan to help with fundraising.

Since then I've met some amazing and passionate people and been involved in a range of interesting projects. Some things that will stick long in my memory include:

- the project to fund and build the swing bridge - an amazing team of people who came together to do something that is quite astonishing
- revamping the skills area (still needs work!)







- 21st birthday celebrations for the Park
- refining the already brilliant signage and mapping
- the new carpark and main entrance
- building the new website and increasing our social media following
- convincing the Council to build top section of Pōhatu (even though it wasn't technically in the master plan)
- bashing through barberry and gorse helping design trails like middle Starfish and lower Pōhatu.
- meetings in the park, with contractors and the Council, more often than not in the rain or freezing southerly
- helping grow my kids' passion for the outdoors and the park through work parties, clearing storm damage and drains, adopting trails to look after.
- facilitating the refurbishment of Peak Flow, North Face, and Zac's Track
- fundraising campaigns and grant applications - there's a buzz when someone gives you money to help make things happen
- shuttling my family and their bikes to the summit so I could attend a meeting and they could get a free ride.



- generally trying to bring a level of coherency and professionalism to support the passion and enthusiasm from volunteers who would much rather be hands on, than documenting decisions and agreeing plans or processes.



If you're on the fence about getting involved, I strongly recommend it!



The Supporters could benefit from attracting people interested in the “back office” parts of running a world class mountain bike park which I've largely taken responsibility for. There's a lot that goes into running a world class mountain bike park - social media, engaging the community, events, fundraising, planning and “ways of working” are all things we need help with. The time commitment can be as much as you can spare – it doesn't need to be onerous or all consuming.

See you on the trails.

Simon O'Brien  
Chair, Mākara Peak Supporters Inc

## General Committee

Thank you to all the generous people who give up time and resources to make Mākara a fantastic mountain bike park and conservation success. It is greatly appreciated and contributed to another successful year for Mākara Peak Supporters (MPS) and park users.



Mākara MTB Park is unique and fortunate to be within a regenerating native forest. The rider experience is greatly improved in a number of ways, from track style to shelter in native forest. Recent extreme weather events indicate that the balanced MTB and conservation approach will have increasing benefits, particularly in track resilience and ground stabilisation. If you have ever ridden in recently felled forestry, you will know how the riding experience is entirely different and exposed.



You will note in the specific reports another exciting and productive year within the park. With 1900 additional natives planted across varied regions of the Park. The refurbishment of lower Starfish by MPS volunteers proved popular, ranking number one with 409 votes in our recent survey; Pōhatu came second with 295 votes, with the middle (new section) seamlessly connecting to the lower section. The popularity of the combined middle and lower Pōhatu shows the benefits of MPS and Trails Wellington (TW) working together. We encourage all park users to sign up to TW as paid members. We can't wait to complete the upper section (due November 2022). Combined with Starfish, this will be an incredible 2.9 km grade-four track from the peak to the carpark,! (3km if you ride to the bike wash station ☺ which is encouraged).

Improved maintenance may not sound exciting, unless you have been slapped by a low fern frond or disappeared in a track puddle the size of a lake. Hopefully, you have noticed a steady improvement and track

consistency even with the wettest winter on record in Wellington. MPS and WCC will balance the development of new and exciting tracks with managing and maintaining the current network.

### **Our Partners**

Big thanks to our partners WCC and particularly Mark Kent, our park ranger; the only solely focused MTB ranger in Wellington. Mākara is very fortunate to have Mark; his management and hands-on work make a massive difference to MPS and the park user experience. Note Mark and WCC's fantastic work within the track and conservation reports.



Mākara has significantly benefited from our association with Trails Wellington in the last two years; this year, TW accelerated the construction of middle and upper Pōhatu. Thank you.

### **We need you!**

Mākara peak community involvement is a key driver for MPS. We want to ensure our decisions reflect the wider park community and users. Thus we need you!

Good news, we are very flexible ☺ and would love the opportunity to talk about how you could contribute; the viewpoint, park user group you represent, skills or experience you have.

In relation to time we will work with your situation from attending a meeting every 3 months, to monthly or work parties you could attend.

From the general committee:

Andrew Cooper  
Clint Brandon  
Evan McCarney  
Kerei Thompson  
Peter Leman – Secretary  
Simon Kennett  
Simon O'Brien – Chair



Stewart Glynn – Treasurer

Ngā mihi nui for being part of the Mākara peak community

## **Tracks report**

The past year has seen the Mākara Peak trail network continue to grow and enhance through the mahi of the Mākara Peak Supporters Club and our partners Wellington City Council (WCC) and Trails Wellington.

Two of the most significant enhancements over the past 12 months has been the appointment of Mark Kent as full-time WCC ranger for Mākara Peak and the funding by Trails Wellington of the middle and upper sections of the Pōhatu track.

With over 20 years supporting trail building and conservation in Mākara Peak on a voluntary capacity, Mark Kent was the ideal candidate to become the full-time park ranger. We would like to acknowledge the increase in contribution from WCC to fund and support this dedicated role. Mark's impact has been immediate and over the past 10 months or so he has accomplished an enormous amount of trail maintenance and upgrades and has taken a huge load off the shoulders of the volunteer base with management of contractors, repairing equipment, relocating tools and seedlings and generally progressing the long to do list of enhancements to the park. Generally, all the activities that Mark previously did as a volunteer!

The past 12 months has seen a strengthening of the partnership between Mākara Peak Supporters and Trails Wellington with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recently finalised. It is through the generous support of Trails Wellington that the new middle section of Pōhatu has been built by TGL contractors and proving to be a crowd favourite. Trails Wellington, with some additional financial support from WCC and the Supporters, are also funding completion of the upper section of Pōhatu.

Once the upper section is complete (expected in late spring 2022), the three sections of Pōhatu, in combination with Starfish, will form a 2.9km Grade 4 descending trail from the summit to the carpark.

## **Trail updates**

In addition to the build of the upper and middle sections of Pōhatu, the other significant new track build underway is a new grade 3 uphill track from the water tank near the Mākara Road summit to the Varleys/Zacs/Vertigo node. This track will connect with the existing T4 uphill track to provide park users with a fantastic new option for entering the park from the Skyline track or as another loop option from the summit. The new section of track is due to be completed in Spring 2022.

In the past year, WCC also funded a refurbishment of the lower section of Lower Leaping Lizard to remove the bike swallowing ruts, improve drainage and generally bring the track back into grade. Ricky's expertise on the digger has ensured the refurbishment of this iconic section of track has retained its old school character.

### **Track volunteer work**

Mākara Peak volunteers have continued their Sunday afternoon rituals of trail building throughout the year, rewarded with a cold soft drink or beer (kindly donated by Parrot Dog) and a sausage (kindly donated by Gipps St Butchery) at the end of each dig.



The Sunday digs over the last 12 months have been varied, focussing on refurbishment of existing trails. The volunteers completed the upgrade of lower Starfish, including a significant renovation of the last exit berm. Sunday volunteer efforts also tackled spot upgrades to sections of upper Starfish, Pōhatu, Trickle Falls, Lazy Fern and are currently refurbishing the grade 4 line of Live Wires.

The dedicated grade 5/6 volunteers led by Scotty Newman have continued their efforts to upgrade and maintain the park's excellent grade 5 and 6 trails.



## **Corporate groups digging tracks**

Ranger Mark hosted corporate volunteer work parties from Spark, Westpac and KiwiBank during the year, helping with various refurbishment projects on Starfish, Trickle Falls and Smoking. Thank you to those organisations for their generous mahi.

## **Track maintenance**

Thanks to a generous sponsorship from Bark Ltd and funding from the Mākara Peak Supporters, the trails in the park have continued to benefit from the duo team of Geoff and Fran from Bark who spend one day a week in the park keeping on top of vegetation clearing and drainage maintenance.

Regular trail maintenance has also increased through the efforts of Ranger Mark who has spent one day a week with one of the TGL crew focused on trail surface remediation around the grade 2 and 3 loops.

The benefit of this regular maintenance is demonstrated by the generally high standard of the track conditions throughout the park, albeit this has been challenged by the frequent deluges over the winter of 2022.

## **Tracks over the next 12 months**

Over the next 12 months the trail network will have some exciting additions:

- Completion of the top section of Pōhatu to complete the new grade 4 descent from summit to carpark.
- Completion of the lower section of T4 to provide a grade 3 climb from Mākara Road to the summit.
- Completion of the refurbishment of Live Wires and the build of a new section of Live Wires entering off Magic Carpet and bypassing the skills area.
- The planning, design and commencement of a new grade 3 track in the northwest corner of the park, connecting the Varleys/Zacs/Vertigo node to the water tank near the Mākara Road summit.

- A new grade 4 climbing track from Koru bypass to the start of Magic Carpet is in the planning stage and may start in the next 12 months.
- Reversal of Magic Carpet to provide a more logical grade 2 loop from the Big Tom's Wheelie/Koru/Salley Alley node and to improve access to the skills area.
- Koru will get a bottom to top refurbishment, with better drainage, passing bays and stopping areas and a more resilient surface. WCC are planning on kicking this off in Autumn 2023.

Thanks for all the hard work that the volunteers and the tracks sub-committee have put into the park over the last 12 months. The support from WCC, in particular Ranger Mark, Trails Wellington and our regular volunteers has helped to continue to develop Mākara Peak into a world class riding experience.

### **People – Tracks sub-committee**

Andrew Cooper – Tracks Lead, coordinator and planner of tracks development and management

Clint Brandon – Tracks Volunteer coordinator and tong master of the after dig BBQs

Lisa Ng – tracks volunteer and photographer extraordinaire

Simon Kennett – Mākara Peak guru and interface with Conservation committee

Scott Newman – Grade 5 & 6 tracks lead

Dan Taylor – Grade 5 & 6 tracks specialist

Simon O'Brien – tracks planning and coordination, WCC liaison, fundraising grant applications and finances, park surveys, trailforks admin, and kids/ beginners tracks volunteer

Kerei Thompson – tracks volunteer and tree specialist

Simon Hayman – tracks volunteer and lifter of large objects

Ngā mihi

Andrew Cooper

Tracks Lead Mākara Peak Supporters

## **Conservation Report**

### **Planting**



The main goal for forest restoration in 2022 was the weed clearance of an area near the start of Bail Out, followed by the construction and planting out of two enclosures (to keep the feral pigs at bay). Sitting in a sheltered valley, we hope this will be a real stronghold of kahikatea and pukatea, with a few prominent totara and matai too, in about a century's time. Many thanks to WCC's Natural Environment Fund and Wellington Zoo for funding this project.



We've also carried on with infill planting of uncommon species in areas previously planted over the last 22 years.

That's involved planting in a dozen different areas around the park, taking time to hunt for the best spots and match new seedlings with the same species of old saplings to create self-sustaining populations.

There was also some planting associated with new track builds at upper Pohatu and lower T4. In total, we planted 1,900 seedlings across 32 different species.

Thanks to WCC's Berhampore Nursery, the Forest & Bird nursery, Leacroft Nursery, Porirua City Council's nursery, and Te Rito and Norfolk Road nurseries for supplying the seedlings, and Ranger Mark for distributing them all around the park.

And thanks as ever to all the volunteers who came out planting, weeding or fence-building - mountain bikers and local residents, Conservation Volunteers

Wellington, WORD, Trails Wellington, Karori Baptist Church, WSP and Wotton & Kearney Ltd.

We were set back a bit by covid in 2022, but were fortunate to have WCC rangers and TGL contractors step up to keep our ambitious planting schedule on track.

## **Pest Control**

The Katch-22 group continues to do awesome work in keeping pest numbers down, managed as usual by Andrew McLellan. In terms of raw numbers this year:

- Stoats & weasels 13
- Hedgehogs 37
- Possums 63 (most are controlled with bait stations managed by GWRC)
- Rats 411
- Mice 249

The most notable change from last year is a massive reduction in mustiled catches, which is likely due to the addition of Capital Kiwi's trapping efforts in the area.

Thanks to the committed Katch-22 group for their work, and to WCC and GWRC for donating most of the supplies we need (and maintaining the bait stations throughout the park).

One really exciting development this year has been establishing a good working relationship with a couple of key landowners on South Karori Road, whose land runs right up to Missing Link and Nikau Track. Now that we can trap on their land, we should see much slower migration of fresh possums and stoats into that side of the park.

Feral pigs and goats have continued to carry out raids into the park from time to time over the last year. Council's hunting contractor, Trent, heads in regularly to keep their numbers down. This year, we'll be using funding from Zac Pearson's endowment fund to upgrade more of the fencing along our northwestern boundary, to make it more difficult for these pests to enter the park.



## Weed control

With more funding from WCC's Natural Environment Fund, we engaged Kaitiaki o Ngahere to complete a weed survey along all the tracks and stream sides in the park. This came up with a huge list of weeds, including two dozen high-priority ones that have the potential to ruin the forest at Makara Peak.



WCC and MPS already had contractors and volunteers doing a great deal of weed control over the last year. Armed with this new information, we've developed a new plan to focus our resources on the eradication of the high priority weed species before they get out of control. We now have another Natural Environment Fund grant and more support from WCC to get contractors stuck into this work.

Due to limited funding, a couple of the high priority species will need to be tackled by volunteers. If you'd like to join our budding weed-busters team and help with this vital project, please get in touch.

## Birds!

Our latest three-yearly bird count was completed over summer. This revealed a large and sustained increase in tui numbers and a grand total of 13 different species of native birds. The most surprising discovery was a family of titipounamu/rifleman living in the park. This family group was unbanded, indicating they are the result of breeding outside Zealandia. It seems likely they've been breeding successfully in Makara Peak - which would have to be a world-first for a mountain bike park!

There have been several more sightings of Kakariki and Toutouwai/NI Robin in the south end of Mākara Peak in 2022, which is another sign that our forest is an attractive source of food and our predator control is very effective. This end of the park also benefits from some Capital Kiwi trapping, as they prepare for the release of Kiwi nearby.

## Conservation people

Hundreds of volunteers have contributed to the ongoing conservation wins Makara Peak enjoys. Their efforts are largely organised by the conservation subcommittee, including:

Peter Leman - Chair for the last few years, who has now moved on to become secretary for the main Makara Peak Supporters committee

Andrew McLellan - Katch-22 organiser and leader of the Bail Out enclosure project

Evan McCarney - Our main project fundraiser and co-lead of pest control. He is stepping up to manage planting in 2023.

Miro Kennett - Curator of the Makara Peak Restored instagram page, she can often be seen taking photos at planting and releasing work parties

Susan Hutchinson-Daniel - One of our main planting co-leads, who has, sadly, just moved north.

Sarah Bramwell - A longtime leader in our trapping community, Sarah has just joined the committee to boost our social media and develop a conservation newsletter.

Simon Kennett - Organiser of the planting for many years, and keen weed buster. He keeps tabs on our podocarp saplings, and leads our seedling releasing efforts.

## **2021/2022 Treasurer's Report**

### **Financial statements**

#### **Income**

- Income for the year was \$53k – a rise of \$6k (13%) from 2020/21.
- The main source of income was sponsorship – many thanks to Bark for their generous sponsorship of \$10k, and to Wellington International Airport Ltd (WIAL) for \$10k sponsorship of the Wild at Heart suspension bridge. This was the final year of the agreement with WIAL so we are looking for a new sponsor for 2022/23.
- We received almost \$16k in grants: \$11k from the Nikau Foundation (Zacs track), \$2.5k from WCC (Blackberry control), and \$2k from the Wellington Zoo Trust (Kohanga project).
- We also received \$11k in general donations and another \$5k in event-related donations.

#### **Expenditure**

- Our operating expenses for the year were \$65k. A huge effort went into weed control this year with \$25k being spent. The next biggest area of expenditure was on track maintenance and surfacing (\$24k).

- Other notable areas of expenditure were \$5k on the Bail Out Kohanga, \$2.4k on pest control, and \$2k on plants.

### **Overall**

We made a net loss of approximately \$11.5k during the year and finished with \$28k in the bank, down from \$44k in 2019/20. The accounts are run on a cash basis; therefore, the cash difference is explained by GST which was paid out during the year which finished with a net liability (refund due from Inland Revenue) of approximately \$5k.

We retain \$40k on term deposit - this is our backstop to cover the basic operating costs for the Supporters if other funding sources dried up, and any unforeseen or unplanned costs.

With fixed assets of around \$4.5k (shed, signage, and tools / machinery) and the net GST liability, our total asset position at year end was almost \$78k.

**Stewart Glynn**

**Supporters Treasurer**



# Balance Sheet

## Makara Peak Mountain Bike Supporters Incorporated As at 30 June 2022

30 JUN 2022

### Assets

#### Bank

Makara Peak	28,435.36
<b>Total Bank</b>	<b>28,435.36</b>

#### Current Assets

Accounts Receivable	5,040.00
Term Deposit Account	40,000.00
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>45,040.00</b>

#### Fixed Assets

Shed	5,000.00
Accumulated Depreciation on Shed	(2,250.00)
Signage	11,747.10
Accumulated Depreciation on Signage	(10,664.99)
Tools and Machinery	12,008.43
Less accumulated depreciation on Tools and Machinery	(11,354.28)
Website	5,416.51
Accumulated depreciation on website	(5,416.51)
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>4,486.26</b>

<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>77,961.62</b>
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### Liabilities

#### Current Liabilities

GST	(4,419.02)
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>(4,419.02)</b>

<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>(4,419.02)</b>
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<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>82,380.64</b>
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### Equity

Current Year Earnings	(7,209.57)
Owner A Funds Introduced	9,612.67
Retained Earnings	79,977.54
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>82,380.64</b>

# Profit and Loss

## Makara Peak Mountain Bike Supporters Incorporated For the year ended 30 June 2022

2022

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### Trading Income

Donations	11,085.00
Interest Income	59.45
Other Revenue	1,300.00
Subs	52.18
<b>Total Trading Income</b>	<b>12,496.63</b>

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### Gross Profit

12,496.63

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### Other Income

Events	4,929.00
Grants	20,123.61
Sponsorship	20,000.00
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>45,052.61</b>

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### Operating Expenses

Bank Fees	120.00
Conservation - general code	205.80
Conservation - Pest control	2,395.23
Conservation - planting	837.27
Conservation - Plants	1,764.33
Conservation - weed control	24,976.35
Consulting & Accounting	906.50
Depreciation	682.38
Food and Beverage / Work Party	900.59
General Expenses	569.98
Insurance	671.36
Minor Assets under \$500.00	1,124.75
Project - Kohanga o Porokapa	5,346.25
Telephone & Internet	88.12
Tracks - maintenance and surfacing	24,145.00
Tracks - trail building materials	24.90
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>64,758.81</b>

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### Net Profit

(7,209.57)