

Friends of Maungawhau Annual Report for year to 31 March 2017

The Friends of Maungawhau (FoM) is an incorporated society that has been active on Maungawhau / Mt Eden for the last 20 years. We are a community group of about 200 members and 15 active volunteers. We meet every Tuesday morning to remove invasive exotic plants, bring back the natural native flora and maintain tracks in the west and south of the maunga.

We have also been advocates for improved management of the maunga and wider issues impacting public parks and open space.

1. This past year Sel Arbuckle has been our nominated spokesperson in lieu of an elected chairperson. The committee continues to operate thanks to the secretary April Glenday, volunteer organiser Jean Barton, and treasurer Keith Ayton. Ian Fish still oversees the website.
2. Jean and Keith have attended almost every Maunga Authority Hui since inception. We have a good working relationship with the officers and contractors. However, the changes in staff mean we have to reform these relationships and in some cases go over old ground and issues.
3. Tuesday activities continued throughout the year. The number of participants varied between three and 12, with the usual number being around six or seven. Jean's weekly reports now number over 400 – recording eight years of conservation work.
4. This year we finally gained the required Heritage NZ authority and resource consents to plant on the southern slope and in the Batger Quarry area, based on the approved planting plans prepared in 2016 by Greg Jenks with our input. We bought a total of 215 plants at a total cost of approx. \$1,380, paid for by Council. Suppliers were Oratia Plant Nursery (104 plants), NZ Native Plants in Albany (41 plants) and Ōkahu Rākau at Ōrakei (70 plants). We began planting in early May and should finish in early August. As well as the purchased plants, we have planted seedlings grown or potted on in the Maungawhau nursery. On 16 May about 20 students from Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngā Maungarongo, a Māori immersion primary school in Mt Albert, joined us and planted over 60 seedlings on the southern slope.
5. We acknowledge the receipt of a \$544 quick response grant from the Albert Eden Local Board for the purchase of a saw, saw blades, and 50 pairs of gloves.
6. FoM in Nov 2016 made a detailed submission and presentation to the Tūpuna Maunga Authority regarding the pressure on public open space in Auckland as the population grows and the city intensifies. The growth of tourism and its impact on Maungawhau were also highlighted. There has been no response to this presentation.
7. On 20 April 2017 Kit wrote to the Mayor and Minister of Conservation about the impact of public use of Maungawhau and the need for better funding, and gave them a complimentary copy of the FoM book. Only the Minister replied, passing the responsibility to the Tūpuna Maunga Authority. To date no reply has been received from the Mayor.
8. Over the past year we have made two visits to Ihumatao (Otuataua Stonefields) where we were given guided tours by members of SOUL (Save Our Unique Landscape).
9. We pay tribute to Sue Bulmer, FoM's founder and first chair person, who died on 6 October 2016. Members of FoM attended her memorial service.

10. After four years of campaigning, resource consents and delays the track upgrade and repair from Batger Rd to Hillside Cres is finally underway.