

SOIL & HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF NZ (AUCKLAND BRANCH)

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AGM



A FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2020

From the Executive Committee comprising Dave Woods, Ross Kesby, Adrienne Grace, Sheryl Phillips, Yazdi Khambatta, Zane Brown, Emma Wilson, Bruce Grenville, Laurence Speedy (part year), and Ian Fielding (Past President).

Monthly Speakers, Field Trips and Covid-19 Disruption – This was a year of disruption due to Covid-19 restrictions. There were 10 monthly meetings scheduled, but only 4 were able to be held. Also 5 Field Trips scheduled and only 2 held, 6 committee meetings held and 4 others were cancelled. The AGM was held in October instead of March 2020.

Change of Meeting Venue - Auckland Horticultural Council – Our move to the new venue was finally confirmed to take place during January 2021. There was considerable concern about the suitability of the new venue that the Auckland City Council permitted the Auckland Horticultural Council (AHC) to use for our future needs.

Membership – The Branch membership numbers declined overall with the move to the new venue and with Covid-19 to a moderate number of 80 subscribers.

Postage Stamp – Zane Brown designed a new Soil & Health Auckland stamp for 2021. This new stamp was produced by Bruce Grenville through NZ Post and used for the first newsletter in 2021. As in previous years many of these stamps were sold as First Day Issues to collectors for the financial benefit of the Branch, then some used for our 2021 mid-year newsletter, and then the remainder were made available for purchase by members.

Newsletters – Two issues of ‘Organically Speaking’ were produced and posted out using the branch’s own postage stamp. The editor, Gillian Woods, has kept members informed of many current issues such as Regenerative Farming and the move by NZ Government to adopt a national Standard for Organic Produce. Thanks to Gillian for her hours of work.

Facebook Group – Another important means of communication was set up by Emma Wilson. Members are encouraged to join the Facebook group called ‘Friends of Soil and Health of NZ Auckland’ and add their own contributions.

Promotion of Organics in Auckland - The Soil & Health Assoc. of NZ (National Council) has kindly provided our Branch with copies of ‘Organic NZ’ for promoting readership in the Auckland area during the 80th Year of Soil & Health. The magazine is an attractive asset of the organic movement and an invaluable gardening, health and lifestyle reference. In every promotional copy distributed (excluding the current issues) we’ve included an ‘insert’ with an invitation to attend the Auckland Branch meetings and emphasising the benefits of subscribing to the magazine ‘Organic NZ’.

Organic Week September 2020 – Six hundred promotional copies of Organic NZ (excluding current issues) were distributed to locations such as Auckland health shops, organic bakeries and cafes, Kelmarna Gardens and OMG (Organic Market Garden) etc. for special promotions during Organic Week 2020. Few other special activities took place as Auckland was still working through the Covid Alert levels.

T-Shirts - A limited number of T-shirts with the colourful logo of our Auckland Branch were produced to help promote the Branch, especially for use at events and shows.

Donations Outward – A Branch donation of \$200 was made to the Soil & Health Assn. of NZ Inc.

- to support the expansion of ‘Soil4Climate Community Project’ to more locations,
- to continue to raise awareness and build the case for keeping glyphosate out of our soils, parks, berms, food-chain, and waterways.

B UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY – AUGUST 2021

1 **2021 Committee Elections** – Held at the Branch AGM on 16 March 2021, we saw eight committee members elected. Specific roles were assigned at a later date with the committee announcing Zane Brown as President, Emma Wilson as Vice President & Treasurer, and Linda Ceato (part year) as the new Secretary. Other duties and roles assigned to committee members included Laurence Speedy – Membership Records, Ross Kesby - Monthly Meeting Facilitator, Adrienne Grace – Programme Coordinator, Bruce Grenville – Library, Sheryl Phillips – General Committee, and Yazdi Khambatta – General Committee.

2 **New venue and attendance** - The Branch held monthly meetings at the new venue at Western Springs Garden Community Centre, 956 New North Rd (opposite Western Springs Lake) for the period March to July 2021.

The venue however is now considered too small, partly because of difficulties with the room size that makes it difficult for the audience to see and hear the speaker, and because the regular attendance to our monthly meetings has increased. We have moved to booking a neighbouring larger hall to provide more space and to better accommodate this emerging growth in attendance.

3 **August monthly meeting cancelled** - Again Covid-19 has returned and moved Auckland into Lockdown. Our August meeting was cancelled on the afternoon of the Government’s lockdown announcement and the committee has since met and considered Covid-19’s long-term impact on our monthly meetings. Much work is underway to prepare to move our Covid affected monthly meetings online while Auckland works through another set of social distancing measures and restrictions. Zane and Laurence are now overseeing the online programme and the new technology challenges for our new online monthly meetings to see us through the Covid levels.

Our September monthly meeting will be held online using ZOOM as the meeting platform, and this meeting will contain both the August and September speaker line up.

Signed

President.....ZANE BROWN.....

Date07/09/2021.....