



## Manager's Report to AGM - 2022

Prepared by: Pete Huggins, General Manager

### Management Report – Peter Huggins

#### **Membership**

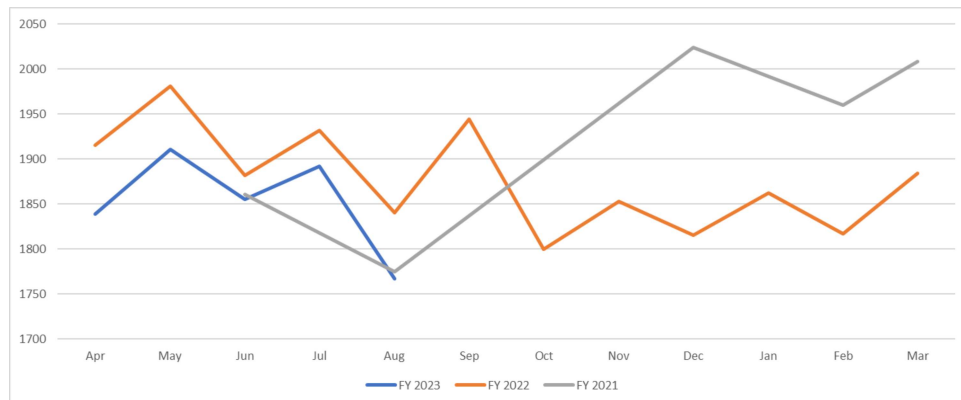
Our current membership is 1830. There are also 286 people who have expired within the last 6 months and may renew.

#### *Membership trends*

The 2022 financial year saw a net loss of 31 financial members (1915 in April 2021 to 1884 in March 2022).

Our membership stabilised and began to grow (slowly) from October 2021 right through to June 2022. The last few months of 2022 have been challenging and we have not seen the same level of new members or renewals coming forward. We believe this is due to the economic conditions.

*Chart – end of month membership figures by financial year*



Soil & Health memberships expire on a rolling basis every two months, as people receive their sixth and final magazine issue. We continue to see 30-50% of expiring members declining to renew, each time this occurs. We have not been able to substantially improve retention rates despite better communications and payment options.

In line with previous years, we continue to attract roughly 40 new members a month. We have not been successful in growing this number.

#### *Online readers*

We also have 35 people with an online subscription who read the magazine via our website, [www.organicnz.org.nz](http://www.organicnz.org.nz), without being subscribers and members.



**Soil & Health Association** ( Est. 1941 )

Healthy Soil, Healthy Food, Healthy People

## **Magazine**

Organic NZ continues to be the single major focus of the Association. Upwards of 85% of our investment in staff and contractors is focused on the magazine (this includes a large proportion of management time). Our magazine strategy continues to be one of growth, to utilise the publication as a tool to attract members and deliver on our advocacy function. The ongoing viability of this strategy is not assured, especially when our ability to market and promote the magazine is limited.

We have had to absorb large increases in costs to both paper and postage over the last 12 months. These magazine costs have affected our finances at a time when subscription rates and retail sales are underperforming against expectations. This double whammy of financial impacts has resulted in a substantial deficit this year.

We are very grateful to outgoing editor Philippa Jamieson who supported a smooth transition to our new editor Rachel Clare, who started in November 2021. Rachel is now moving on to a new role and we are in the closing stages of appointing a new editor for the magazine. These changes have provided an opportunity to reflect and reorient the magazine with mixed success. Feedback about the new look to the magazine has been largely positive, with some criticism that the stories are less in-depth than people would like. We expect to be able to make changes which respond to this feedback in coming months. The whole team is very focused on balancing content for attracting new and less knowledgeable readers, with more cutting edge and journalistic pieces that satisfy longer-term subscribers.

## **Soil4Climate**

We have decided to discontinue the practical elements of this work due to lack of momentum caused by Covid restrictions, and subsequent changes in priorities.

## **Advocacy**

### *Glyphosate*

Despite the petition remaining online we have not been able to advance the other planned aspects of this campaign, which included web development work and a ground campaign to generate funds and engagement.

We are currently focused on research and planning around the EPA's anticipated review of glyphosate.

### *Organic Week*

The Soil & Health Association is maintaining its support for Organic Week by hosting the campaign's steering group and administration. We are grateful for the support from volunteers helping to develop Organic Week 2023, and for the sponsors who have indicated they will again help us deliver the work.

This year we plan to better integrate our magazine with the Organic Week campaign to deliver co-benefits such as increased awareness of the magazine and alignment of Organic Week with the Organic NZ brand.

*GE*



**Soil & Health Association** ( Est. 1941 )

Healthy Soil, Healthy Food, Healthy People

Soil & Health is participating in group conversations about the future of GE-Free campaigning in Aotearoa and is willing to commit resources where possible. A recent report from the Productivity Commission has prompted some renewed focus on GE in the public domain. The Association is committed to seeing the current prohibitions on the release of GE organisms retained, and a strengthening of regulations to encompass emerging technologies. We are grateful to GE-Free NZ, OANZ, Te Waka Kai Ora and others for the joint approach to this work.

### **Financial**

Please see the annual performance report filed separately.

Our financial position has suffered as a result of magazine production cost increases despite being upheld by a large bequest to the Association. Subscription revenue was \$82k, up from \$74k in the previous year, which also supports our bottom line.

Print costs for the magazine were \$60k for the 12 months (compared with \$43k for the previous year) and postage was up to \$34k from \$29k in the previous year.

At the same time our retail magazine sales revenue was \$45k, down from \$73k in the previous year. This reduction is partly due to Covid disruptions artificially inflating the 2021 FY results (some payments in that year were for magazines produced in the 2020 FY).

Pete Huggins

**General Manager, Soil & Health Association of New Zealand**

Sept 2022