



Annual Report

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

I am pleased to present, on behalf of the Committee, the Annual Report of Mangawhai Artists Incorporated (MAI) for the year ended 31/3/24.

I want to start by recognising members who have died in the last year.

Remembering those who have died

We offer our sympathy and love to all members who have lost family and friends in the last year. In particular we remember Wayne Whyte, Annie Kitchener, Petra Pilkington and Wayne George.

Sculptor, **Wayne Whyte** will be particularly remembered for his corten steel work found in many gardens in Mangawhai and throughout New Zealand. Mixed media artist **Annie Kitchener** was a longstanding member, becoming a 10-year Star member during the Workspace campaign. **Petra Pilkington**, a more recent member, shared her mixed media work with us at last year's August opening exhibition. While not a member **Wayne George** was a great supporter of MAI and created the movie of the community project Magical Mangawhai Goes Bush.

Highlights

2023/24 was another year of consolidation, doing the basics well, while adding some innovations.

The new committee gathered soon after the AGM for a strategic planning session. This helped us get to know each other and to set priorities for the future. We confirmed our values as: welcoming, respectful, creative, inclusive, inspiring, reciprocal, collaborative, supporting learning, and providing opportunities.

We set strategic goals concentrated on the Gallery, Workspace and Organisation.

Key area	Goals	Progress markers
Gallery	Offering maximum opportunities to members to exhibit including other venues	Numbers of exhibitions, exhibitors and visitors Range of exhibition venues
	Develop and support a system/process to support engagement of volunteers	Number of volunteers engaged
Workspace	Develop and implement a calendar of learning opportunities	Hireage trends Number of participants
	Increase the number of tutors and provide organisational support	Number of tutors and range of learning opportunities
Organisation	Develop and implement a comprehensive promotions plan focussed on building community awareness of and engagement in MAI	Membership growth Number of visitors Number of participants in learning opportunities and events Connections and relationships with other groups Media presence

Gallery

Exhibitions at the Gallery are the jewel in the crown of MAI activities. The changing fortnightly exhibitions ensure that visitors always have something new to look at. The feedback we receive from artists and visitors alike tells us we have a treasure in our midst.

The exhibition season is made up of individual and group exhibitions, plus four members' exhibitions, these being important to ensure all members have the chance to exhibit work. With exhibition seasons always booked out it is a real challenge for the Gallery Coordinator to juggle the applications to ensure everyone gets a slot that meets their request.

A huge thank you is due to Gallery Coordinator **Chris den Hartogh** who not only ensured the smooth running of this last year's season but also spent hundreds of hours sorting the programme which will come into effect in August for the 2024/2025 year. We generally call for expressions of interest in November/December for the season beginning in the following August. We know it is hard for everyone to plan that far in advance. As a result, next season we are recommending planning the exhibition season in **six month blocks** – rather than the full year.

This last year we changed the exhibition **opening events from Thursday to Friday evenings** but kept the exhibition changeover day of Wednesday. This has worked well but there has been confusion with some exhibitions opening on Friday morning and others waiting until the Friday evening event. As a result, for the coming season, the exhibition changeover will be on Thursday rather than Wednesday, with the exhibition opening on the Friday evening at the exhibition launch event.

In the last year there was a substantial increase in the **number of artists engaged** through solo and group exhibitions with 63 artists across 18 separate exhibitions (compared to 38 across 17 the previous year). The number of members engaged in members exhibitions was constant at 146 compared to 144.

The **number of visitors** increased significantly from 9,780 to 13,009, possibly reflecting the waning impact of the earlier Covid years and greater awareness within the community of the Gallery.

	1/4/23-31/3/2024	1/4/22-31/3/2023
No of exhibitions	23	23
Individuals/Groups	18	17
Members	4	4
Kaipara Art Awards	0	1
Other (The Small Print)	0	1
Artists engaged – Solo/Group exhibitions	63	38
Artists engaged – Members exhibitions	146	144
Artists engaged – KAA	0	55
Visitors	13,009	9,780

Exhibition support

In addition to administration support to exhibitors provided by Chris, **curation support** is provided by Nicola Everett, Elena Nikolaeva and Grainne Whittle-Pegg and Howard Esler's **lighting team** ensures that works are shown to best effect. In addition, a small skilled team of volunteers frequently assists with the **hanging** of members exhibitions.

A big thank you to each of these teams who add to the professionalism of our artist exhibitions. And also thank you to Steve Marsh who singlehandedly repainted the Gallery late last year.

Alternative venues

In addition to the Gallery our artists have the opportunity to exhibit work in the reception area of the Council offices in Molesworth Drive. Committee member **Janél Collé** coordinates this, including liaison with the Council, identifying artists and generating media coverage. Janel has impressed by just getting on with the job and making it happen.

Another exhibition opportunity is at the Mangawhai Club where our artists are invited to display work for sale in the Club rooms. This is managed by the Club.

Workspace – Learning Opportunities

A special initiative to promote learning opportunities was led by committee member **Shann Whitaker**, supported by **Clare Wells and Lynley Bradnam**. The **Creative Workshop Series** – a concentrated fortnight of workshops in November 2023 - providing 17 workshops by 11 artists, with 6 artists offering two workshops. The majority were held in the Workspace, with a couple held off site. There were 104 participants.

The workshops were promoted through the website, media and social media. To ease administration for tutors we managed the bookings through a booking management system called Eventbrite. However, while simplifying the booking process, the

combination of both uploading information to Eventbrite and the website resulted in a significant administration workload which was borne by Clare. Several lessons were learnt which will be applied if Eventbrite is used again.

The Workshop Series was well received and raised the profile of tutors and exposure to art forms, as well as the Workspace as a venue for classes. The challenge now is to translate that into more classes being delivered through the year. A big thank you to Shann, Clare and Lynley for making the series a success.

Funding through the **Creative Communities Scheme** enabled six months of free Print Play Workshops, led by Nicola Everett. These were intended to be non-tutored sessions simply providing people with access to the Workspace and printing press. However, as the sessions evolved there ended up being a much higher element of tutoring than anticipated. A big thank you to Nicola for taking this on.

It was pleasing to see an increase in the use of the Workspace in the last year with a doubling of individual hire slots. In addition to artist led classes and workshops, there were a number of private hires by both artists and non-artists to use the space. However, there is capacity for more classes and we look forward to Workspace use continuing to increase.

	2024	2023
Workspace Hire income (part of Gallery/Workspace Hire)	\$3,150	\$1,475
No of ½ day slots	126	59
No of individual hirers	23	14
Workshop fortnight – Number of classes	17	
Workshop fortnight – number of participants	104	

Organisation

Media and promotions

Ensuring MAI is visible to the local community is a constant challenge. A key objective for the year was to develop a **Promotions Plan**. The committee led by Clare has developed a programme to guide the organisation in the coming year, building on the various promotion activities currently in play.

Visibility and awareness of Gallery building. While the rebranding of MAI a couple of years ago increased the profile of the Gallery there is still more to do to increase the visibility of the Gallery. This includes higher profile signage at the Gallery. Some preliminary work has been done on this for the incoming committee to develop and follow through on.

Print media: MAI receives regular fortnightly coverage in the Mangawhai Focus. We are extremely grateful to the profile they give MAI, always publishing the articles we provide. Kaipara Lifestyler, the former Weekend Lifestyler, Mahurangi Matters and The Junction also provide coverage from time to time.

Social media: is one of the most effective ways of increasing awareness of MAI. Wendy Leach generated MAI's social media over the last four years. She has done a sterling job ensuring that members exhibitions are shared on multiple community pages as well as promoting individual artists achievements. Wendy retired from the social media role in March. A big thank you to Wendy for the impact she had on MAI through her social media term. And a big thank you to Nina Gastreich for putting up her hand to take over the social media role.

Website: The website is our 'one source of truth'. Clare Wells is responsible for this. The website is a constant job. As new material is generated Clare ensures it is uploaded onto the website. This includes exhibition posters promoting the fortnightly exhibitions, photos from the openings, promotion of classes and workshop, updating members profiles and other material such as the Annual General Meeting documentation. Clare is one of those people who seems to be able to keep the website updated promptly no matter where in the world she happens to be!

Mailchimp: The other key form of communication is the regular mail-chimp newsletter which I write. This fortnightly communication is the most direct form of communication being delivered into members in-boxes. The challenge is to ensure the messages are relevant and not so frequent that they end up being annoying and deleted!

Photographs: They say a picture paints a thousand words. And the photographs from exhibition openings do exactly that. While several people forward us photographs, special thanks go to Nina Gastreich, her son Aidan and Joel Cayford for their consistently stunning story telling.

Membership

Membership of MAI continues to thrive. Full membership grew to 240 from 210 with the Friends dropping by one to 39. The number of members from outside Mangawhai continues to grow. While it is encouraging that more artists want to join us, it also increases demand on exhibition slots and may create pressures going forward. It is something future committees will need to consider.

Friends of Mangawhai Artists

The Friends of Mangawhai Artists (FOMA) was started several years ago as a way of encouraging those with an interest in art, but not necessarily a practising artist, to support MAI. The aim was to host special functions for Friends on a regular basis. Due to a variety of reasons this has not happened in recent years. But that changed this year with committee member **Angela Machray** putting her hand up to revitalise the Friends programme. Angela is an enthusiastic cheer leader for the Friends and together with Janél Collé hosted a function in March to relaunch the Friends group. A programme of activities, especially meet the artist type events, is planned for the coming year.

Events

The **Mangawhai Art Trail** on the last weekend in February is now a fixed and much anticipated item on both the MAI and creative calendar. Led by **Howard Esler** with administration support from **Chris den Hartogh**, this year's Art Trail included 28 venues and 42 artists including a hub of artists at Langs and Waipu. Howard is continually looking for ways of enhancing and diversifying the Art Trail and it is now in strong heart. Thank you Howard and Chris.

	2024	2023
Locations	28	18
Artists	42	33

Kaipara Art Awards

By mutual agreement between MAI and DAA The **Kaipara Art Awards** were not held in 2023. However, they return in October 2024. As the Dargaville Arts Association is currently without a home both the Awards and exhibition will be held solely in Mangawhai.

Relationships

Over the last year the Creative Northland Kaipara representative has had a regular presence in the Workspace. This is a great collaboration with Creative Northland and provides not only our artists but also the community with good access to creative advice. We look forward to that continuing.

Work in Progress

Following up on ideas arising from last year's strategy session, two committee members have been working on projects that will come to fruition in the next month. While in the new financial year, I mention them as the work started in the reporting year.

Children's exhibition: **Shann Whittaker** has been working on a collaboration with Mangawhai Beach School to feature vibrant and creative works by young artists from MBS. The primary goal has been to celebrate the creativity of our community's youngest artists and to create a platform to showcase their talents. It has involved workshops on printmaking in the Workspace and culminates in an exhibition of students' work opening after school closes on Friday 3 July.

Matariki Exhibition: **Andrea Graham** has been working on a Matariki Exhibition to showcase the work of local Māori artists who have recently joined MAI. The aim is to honour and support them and Te Ao Māori, aligning with MAI's values of inclusion and community representation, building a stronger sense of community cohesion and support for the arts. The exhibition opens on 12 July.

Thank you to Shann and Andrea for the passion and commitment you have brought to these two projects which support the values of MAI.

Finance

A critical part of the MAI organisation is the finance function. This has been ably managed by **Raewyn Vague** since July 2020. Raewyn has ensured the invoicing of membership fees, receipting, payment of invoices, reconciliation and prompt payment of artists sales as well as comprehensive monthly reporting to the committee and the preparation of budgets to ensure the committee has a good understanding of the financial position of the organisation. This has been invaluable. Raewyn's skill with spreadsheets and functions has provided us with extremely useful documents with which to manage the finance activity of the organisation.

In December Raewyn indicated her intention to retire from the Treasury role at the AGM after 4 years in the role. (Joined as member 24/9/2015). **Bart Peters** put his hand up to understudy the role and stepped in as an acting role when Raewyn went overseas for an extended time. He was coopted to the committee in February. The two have worked closely to ensure the finance function continues uninterrupted.

Raewyn thank you for your years of service and attention to detail.

Financial Sustainability

As Raewyn will report in the Treasurer's report, while we incurred a loss for the year, this was solely due to the provision of depreciation on the Workspace extension. Excluding depreciation, income exceeded expenses resulting in a cash surplus.

Increase in membership fees proposed

As any increase in membership fees must be passed by members at the AGM, at its last meeting, the committee considered the issue of membership fees and commission on sales through the Gallery to increase revenue. A majority of the committee agreed to recommend an increase of \$5 to the membership fees and to introduce a 10% commission on sales through the gallery, excluding members exhibitions and subject to a threshold of \$500 of sales. The rationale for the increase in fees was to compensate for inflation. This will be presented in detail later in the meeting.

The introduction of a commission was proposed to generate additional income which could be accumulated into a fund for special projects, rather than general operating costs.

Community Art Centre

MAI continues to be a member of the **Friends of Mangawhai Community Park**, ensuring our claim for a location in the Community Park in the longer term remains on the table. However, with no imminent plan to design and fund a community arts centre we have not pursued identifying a new location. When a site is identified, and Development Agreement negotiated, development must occur within 5 years. With spiralling building costs the commitment to build a structure is a significant one and needs to be carefully considered before entering into an Development Agreement.

New constitution

Recent law changes (October 2023) mean that MAI needs to re-register under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022 before **April 2026**. This means we also need to **amend our constitution** or rules to meet new requirements. These rule changes need to be passed by an AGM or Special General Meeting. Preliminary work was done on rewriting the constitution with the aim of presenting it to this AGM. However, we were not able to complete the work in time so this will be a task for the incoming committee.

Administration and Committee work

On behalf of all members, I want to acknowledge and thank **everyone** who has served on the committee in the last year. Everyone has contributed to ensuring MAI operates as an efficient and effective membership-based incorporated society. While some committee members have particular roles, others help to support the general work of the committee. Each role is important. Without everyone pulling their weight things would grind to a halt.

So a big thank you to:

- Howard Esler, Deputy Chair
- Clare Wells*, Secretary
- Raewyn Vague*, Treasurer
- Andrea Graham*
- Angela Machray
- Chris den Hartogh
- Janel Colle
- Kay Airey
- Lena Nelson*
- Shann Whitaker
- Lynley Bradnam (resigned November 2023)
- Bart Peters (co-opted April 2024)

Together the committee has worked hard to ensure the organisation runs like a well-oiled machine – thank you all.

Five members are stepping down at this AGM: Clare, Raewyn, Andrea, Lena and me. This means there is good continuity going forward into the new year while also providing the opportunity for new perspectives.

I want to acknowledge in particular Clare Wells, secretary and Raewyn Vague treasurer. These are both significant roles in the organisation.

Clare has been secretary since July 2019 and Raewyn treasurer since July 2020. Both have been instrumental in ensuring the organisational aspects of the society have been well run. Clare has not only ensured prompt and accurate minutes of our monthly meetings, but she has undertaken a huge administrative workload, some of which I've covered in my comments above.

I reiterate my earlier comments on Raewyn's contribution as treasurer. The combination of Clare and Raewyn has resulted in a very strong administrative team.

Lena Nelson has also decided to stand down after two years on the committee. Lena has brought an advocacy for 3D, in particular ceramics, to the table. She has also been the liaison with the Museum for coach tours.

Andrea Graham is stepping down, with her legacy being the introduction of the Matariki exhibition and encouraging the committee to take a strategic approach to its planning.

Lynley Bradnam retired during the year when she relocated to Auckland. Lynley made her impact felt with her role in supporting the Creative Workshops.

I too am standing down. It's been an honour for me, as a non-artist, to lead the organisation over the last three years. I have thoroughly enjoyed it. But it is time to pass the baton and I am thrilled that Howard has agreed to be nominated as Chair. Howard has served on the committee for several years and as Deputy Chair in the last year. While he didn't anticipate it would be a stepping stone to the Chair role – he has indicated his willingness to step into the role. He has my wholehearted support.

Conclusion

So that is it for 2024. On behalf of the committee, I move the Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024. We are happy to take questions.

Belinda Vernon

Chair, 2023-2024

On behalf of the Committee 2023/2024:

Belinda Vernon*, Howard Esler, Clare Wells*, Raewyn Vague*, Andrea Graham*, Shann Whitaker, Kay Airey, Lena Nelson*, Angela Machray, Janel Colle, Chris den Hartogh, Bart Peters (from April 2024), Lynley Bradnam (to November 2023)