

Trustees' Report for the Annual General Meeting of the Moths and Butterflies of NZ Trust March, 2026

Vision Our vision is to ensure that New Zealand's ecosystems support thriving moth and butterfly populations.

Mission To engage with New Zealanders to ensure our biodiversity promotes a thriving moth and butterfly population.

Outreach

Jacqui has continued to promote our aims and activities, explaining the importance of our Lepidoptera species. As well as school and garden club visits there have been several events and festivals which we attended, thanks to the support of our willing volunteers.

The presence of the Moths and Butterflies of New Zealand Trust on social media has skyrocketed over the past year. You can find us on over nine channels – and the number of “followers” in all of them has increased. If you don't use social media, ask someone who does to review the content. People are commenting on how professional it is. Thanks to our team of ‘social butterflies’, our creative volunteers and amazing photographers, we receive great feedback as well as inquiries as to how to “do what we're doing”. (Some of our recent social media messages are shown here.)

In Golden Bay we are fortunate to have Devangi Farah who has been representing the MBNZT and selling our online shop items at weekly market stalls. It has certainly helped to build up awareness of our aims and purpose in the region. We would love to see more people doing this, of course! Let us know if you are interested.

We are privileged to have Carol Stensness providing expert management of our accounts and inventory management. She has done a sterling job for many years, and we don't know how we'd manage without her.

The success of our organisation is made possible through the valued contributions of our volunteers. We extend our sincere thanks for your ongoing support.

Publications

“Butterflies” magazine of course goes out four times a year. In full colour they continue to delight and create interest with a wide range of people from those knowing very little to naturalists and those working in natural sciences. Besides the mailed edition, a digital form of the magazine is hosted on our website for people to download and print, or to read online.

Also, we send out an e-news with inspirational content and news each Friday, free to our followers. Please feel free to forward those on to friends and colleagues – they may wish to join us too! A very special thank you to Jacqui and the team for all their hard work and dedication.

MBNZT celebrates 20 years

The MBNZT has grown over the past 20 years, since its inception as the Monarch Butterfly NZ Trust in 2005, with the intention of protecting one overwintering habitat of the monarch. We've learned and shared so much as we've gone through this metamorphosis. We were honoured to celebrate at a very special occasion at Government House, Wellington, recognising their beautiful gardens as a certified Butterfly-Friendly Habitat, and marking 20 years since the Moths and Butterflies of New Zealand Trust (MBNZT) was founded.

Certification

Our Certification Project formally recognises and promotes gardens and habitats that meet high standards for butterfly and moth conservation, inspiring others to create pollinator-friendly spaces. To date we have 24 certificated habitats up and down the country.

Lake District Lepidoptera

Thanks to a grant from the Jean Malpas Environmental Fund, three people visited the Queenstown and Wānaka area in the Spring, to give presentations in schools, libraries, to the local garden club and other community groups. The aspiration was to encourage the creation of more butterfly habitat, and more butterflies and moths being encouraged. We would very much like to repeat this event in another district this year, and it is totally dependent on funding.

Public Spaces Project

Thanks to volunteers Jeannette Aldridge and Lynda Emery, and latterly Kiran Thodiyil Kanakambujan, the MBNZT is reaching out to local councils to ensure they understand what butterflies and moths need: more habitat, host plants and nectar-providing flowers, plus less pesticides and mowing. We seek to collaborate, not criticize. A survey is being sent out to councils to see what they are already doing, what they need to know and how we can help them. Our Biodiversity Advisor, Brian Patrick, has written a basic 1-2-3 on creating habitat (check out the Blog) and as well our Online Create Habitat Course is available to everyone interested.

The Butterfly Discovery Project

The purpose here is to clarify the various species of copper butterflies through DNA testing and morphology. The research is ongoing and as the scientists painstakingly investigate, we continue to look for funding for this ongoing project.

We acknowledge and thank Canon for the Grant of \$2,500 which will help to cover some of the DNA testing costs, plus their gift of Canon equipment.

Red Admiral Project

What started in Auckland as a major project to reintroduce the red admiral butterfly to the city has now become a nationwide alliance. Experts, researchers and citizen scientists joined forces to protect this taonga by sharing information through a network. It is a delight to hear of red admiral

sightings all over the country. Neville Wright is doing an awesome job of raising both nettle plants and butterflies, and then they are distributed via our network.

I Love Butterflies Week and the Big Butterfly Count

This collaborative movement is shaping new conservation projects and public-engagement initiatives. It's a fresh, hopeful step toward safeguarding our most vulnerable species. It is excellent to see how many people are now talking about other host and nectar plants, having expanded their interest and knowledge from just monarchs and swan plants.

Pest Wasps Survey

We leveraged community engagement to collect crucial data on wasp impacts, empowering the trust to advocate for informed pest-control policies that protect native butterflies and other invertebrates.

A nationwide survey conducted by the MBNZT found Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Tasman and Marlborough were the regions worst affected by pest wasp problems with many respondents saying their presence made outdoor life unpleasant or unsafe while others reported wasps preying on birds, invertebrates and reptiles leading to ecological imbalances.

Blockhouse Bay Recreational Reserve Butterfly Habitat

This ongoing project at a small area in this central city park in Auckland, remains a very colourful addition to the park - a real delight. A community group, dependant on volunteers, keeps the habitat filled with healthy plants on which butterflies and moths depend. Monarchs and red admirals continue to thrive there.

National Butterfly Centre

This project has been on our minds, but it is not without its complexities. As Jacqui will tell you, setting up the National Butterfly Centre/Te Matauranga o nga Pūrerehua o Aotearoa would make things so much easier: at present we have our "office" in a Blockhouse Bay home, we have a habitat in a park nearby, and then raising cuttings, plants and butterflies at Neville Wright's home in New Lynn not far away.

As well, earlier this month Jacqui hosted the Faculty Director of the Center for Community and Citizen Science from the University of California, Davis, demonstrating tagging and explaining how the NZ version of monarch butterfly habitat, or the "outdoor classroom" in the park has evolved. How much easier it would be, and how much more effective we would be, if these could all be accomplished on one site.

We find ourselves in a Catch-22 situation. Several corporate sponsors had previously expressed interest, but they require details about the location before progressing further. The site would need to provide strong visibility and brand recognition. At the same time, local boards have limited funding and are reluctant to commit to a site without confirmed financial support, such as a corporate partner. This leaves the project currently at an impasse.

Tagging Monarchs

This project combines citizen science with long-term data collection to better understand monarch butterfly movement and overwintering sites in Aotearoa. Schools and teachers, as well as monarch lovers in their own gardens, are excited about their involvement. We want to acknowledge our two overseeing scientists Emeritus Professor Myron Zalucki, at The University of Queensland in Australia, and Dr David James from the University of Washington, for always giving insights and guidance as we go along. Then there's also our IT professional Travis, and Kiran who compiled all the data into such an excellent report. We're looking forward to an even more refined project this year.

There are also many other smaller activities, events and occasions where we undertake over the course of the year which help us engage with New Zealanders to ensure our biodiversity promotes a thriving moth and butterfly population – too many to mention here.

Funding

We are thankful to funders such as Foundation North and the Lion Foundation for their generous grants over the past year which have boosted our projects, as well as our other heroes mentioned below. And of course, our financial members who not only get to enjoy our magazine but also buy our products from the website and online shop.

Our plant and cuttings sales have been very successful to date, and we will continue to do these so long as they prove to be popular. We would always be interested to hear from others who would like to do something similar in their own neighbourhood to raise funds for our projects. Please contact Jacqui if you are interested.

We always appreciate donations and please encourage friends and family to join us as well. Subscriptions contribute so much to the day-to-day work of the Trust and of course help awareness.

Sponsors

We are very fortunate to have the support of sponsors such as Storage King, Yates NZ and Yealands Wines as well as Daltons, Fiskars, Kings Plant Barn, Kiwi Gardener, Settlers Lifestyle Village and our magazine sponsors. As well, we would like to mention our calendar sponsors: DM Gibson and Zealandia Horticulture for making this fundraiser a success.

We refer to them all as our heroes because they certainly do make a difference to the trust. Without their backing we simply could not function, and we do appreciate their support. We hope our members can return the compliment by patronising their stores or choosing their products.

Trustees

We have an excellent group of trustees who have met throughout the year online, and face-to-face in May for planning the year ahead. We are always keen to attract people from other NZ locations

and with different life experiences, lifestyles, and outlooks to maintain our diversity while we plan for the future. Do contact Jacqui if you have an interest in joining us as a trustee.

Volunteers

We wish to place on record all those people who help in so many ways with the administration of the MBNZT. We have great support from others with repetitive tasks such as collecting the mail, sending out products, helping with social media, research, editing videos, saving, collecting and packaging seeds... Thank you so much to you, one and all.

To those of you who attend the AGM thank you for taking an hour to show your interest in the work we are doing.

To make it more enjoyable, of course, we will be joined by Kiran Thodiyil Kanakambujan who will be sharing with us how our NZ butterfly population is being helped by the statistics we collect.

The agenda for the AGM is in this magazine and also on our website. If you intend to attend/not attend, please email us, trust@nzbutterflies.org.nz and we will send you the link to the meeting room. All welcome, but we must have a quorum of financial members present.

Thank you again one last time.