



**HOWICK**  
HISTORICAL VILLAGE



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

***That the future  
may learn from  
the past***

---

To enlighten and stimulate awareness of our local heritage and culture by presenting village life during the period 1840 - 1880

The Museum faced unprecedented challenges in 2019/2020. Although New Zealand was fortunate enough to weather the covid-19 storm better than most, the effects of the global pandemic on our economy were far reaching and long term. Like many similar institutions, we were forced to close the Museum from March to June. We made the incredibly hard decision to move into semi hibernation and to downsize our team to preserve our assets for future generations. Unsurprisingly, being closed for five months heavily impacted our revenue for the financial year and our annual visitation numbers. We took this time to pivot the organisation and re-focus our energies to a shared vision. It is testament to the determination and hard work of our staff, board and volunteers that we start the new financial year with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to take Howick Historical Village from strength to strength.

Pre-covid, the year began with the election of a new President for the H & D Historical Society, Marin Burgess, a previous president and member for over 40 years. We also recruited a new manager Krissy Perrett who has worked in the Museums and galleries sector for the past 16 years.

We carried out some large building and infrastructure work. The Museum was awarded a grant from Lotteries New Zealand to carry out work on our heritage building, Pakuranga School. This has ensured the building is watertight and we have painted the exterior in the original colours of the former schoolhouse. This space is key for the visitor experience, education, and public programmes. We began work on a long-term security project to protect our assets which will see more CCTV installed, sensor lights and extension of our existing alarm system.

Before lockdown, the Museum continued to deliver rich and diverse public programmes engaging with all Aucklanders. We hosted eight Meet the Villagers days with themes ranging from sustainable gardening to fete days. We had record attendance to our family friendly Halloween night and hosted two Christmas nights including carols and markets. We were part of the Heritage Festival in collaboration with Auckland Council and we created a sailing cabin from the 1850's to celebrate the theme All at Sea.

We engaged with 5,570 school children giving them an authentic and immersive experience. Our education team developed some exciting new programmes such as a Migrant Women performance and we delivered outreach and school holiday programmes.

During the lockdown and semi hibernation we implemented a new fresh, modern brand which tells the story of who we are. We launched a new user-friendly website and re-deployed a staff member to focus on social media. The extra investment in that communication channel is already paying dividends, with increased reach and engagement online.

We launched a new Point of Sale (POS) system which will enable us to better report on visitor numbers and capture trends in retail. We have grown our commercial venue hire business and look forward to hosting more weddings and corporate events in 2020/2021. In addition, the team came together to work on a strategic plan with help and assistance from Cornwall Strategic. This sees the Museum commit to new objectives:

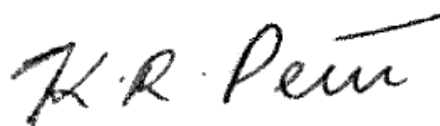
- To achieve financial stability through a balance of self-generating revenue and sustainable funding.
- Preserve the assets of the village and improve our collection.
- Deliver historical integrity and diverse storytelling through increased delivery of a Māori perspective.

2019-2020 has been a challenge in so many ways but it has made us receptive to change. It has built resilience and strengthened the team. We look forward to 2020/2021 to share our stories with our community and to bring the Museum alive with people.

We would like to thank the hard-working volunteers who are integral to our story, the team for being so positive during this change and the board for their unwavering support.



Marin Burgess, President



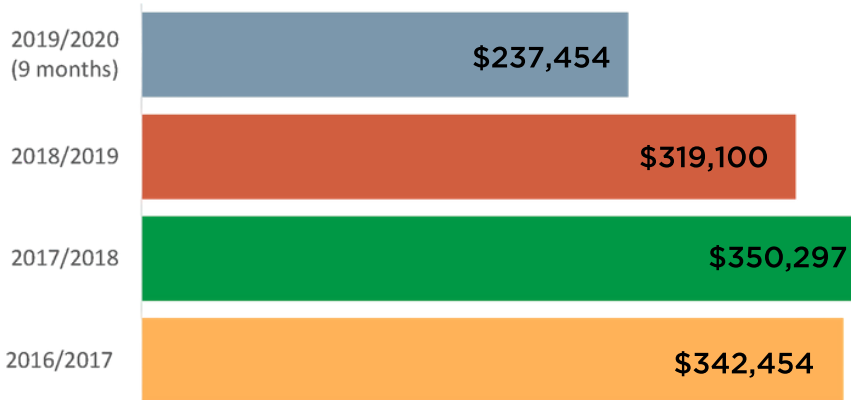
Krissy Perrett, Manager

# Sharing our highlights

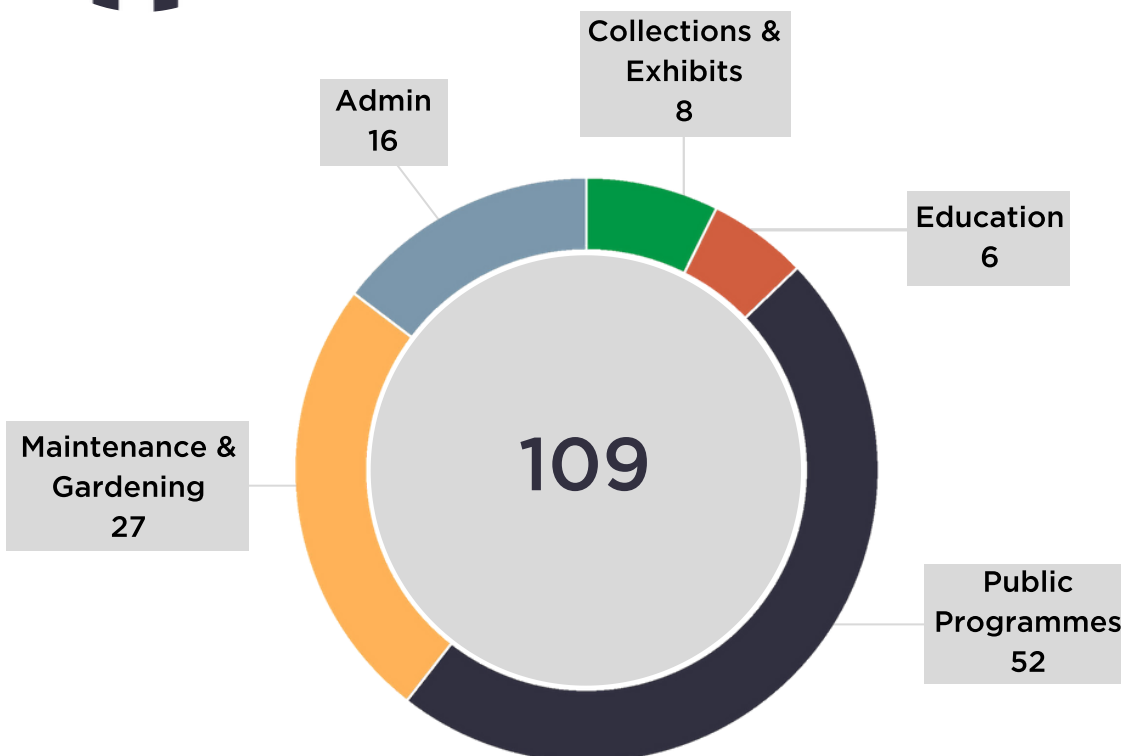




## Commercial Revenue



## Volunteers



## An immersive educational experience

Education is at the heart of the village. We take students outside of the classroom and provide them with a new world to investigate, ideas to explore and questions to ask with a hands on programme that supports the NZ curriculum and can be tailored to the specific needs and requirements of each school. The programme is delivered by a passionate team of educators who love to bring history to life and engage with students.

The Historical Village is a unique venue that has the potential to be “The Venue” to explore and learn about New Zealand history. We had 5,500 students through the education programme this year from 80 schools. We were on track for 8,000 students this financial year but due to covid-19 several bookings had to be cancelled, with many schools booking for later in the year.

We have created staff training documents, streamlined all systems, processes, and have developed a database of school contacts which also includes holiday providers, retirement homes and community groups. This is essential to increasing our education bookings as we can market directly to school groups.

Big strides have been made in developing new educational support documents and activities which will create an online resource for schools that can be accessed before and after their visit.

### OUTREACH

Over the last year we have created a preschool programme which was due to be launch in April but has been postponed due to covid-19. We have also successfully delivered an outreach programme to schools over the period of semi hibernation and this has provided us with a structure and process moving forward. This option saw us work with 515 students.

### SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The education team run school holiday programmes specifically for holiday providers. Each programme is themed, incorporating a range of relevant hands-on activities. The programme is adapted for the front of house team to deliver with visitors.



*“The staff were engaging and gave lots of information. They were very experienced and helped with managing the groups effectively. Our students really enjoyed the day and it brought their learning from school to life.”*

School Feedback

## Protect our assets

With the support of various grants we have been fortunate to complete several restoration projects.

A \$100,000 grant from the Lotteries Commission allowed us to restore the exterior of Pakuranga school. The windows were removed and repaired, window frames and weatherboards repaired. With the generous support of our volunteers the exterior of the building has been repainted.

Eckfords and DeQuincey cottages have both had their foundations repaired with the support of the Howick Local Board. With tireless work from volunteers, our printing press has been restored and is now able to be housed in Eckfords cottage.

Several other grants have supported us to complete other essential works, including repairs to the Parsonage and a generous private trust that enabled us to employ a volunteer coordinator to support our wonderful volunteer team.

### Our Supporters





## Diverse & engaging public programmes

We are always looking for new and innovative ways to improve our public programmes and engage our audiences. Each year we develop and deliver a number of events that showcase the unique experiences we provide to the diverse range of visitors we welcome to the Village each day.

We delivered eight Meet the Villagers (MTV) days. The remaining scheduled MTV days (April – June) were cancelled due to covid-19. Each MTV day is based around a theme that is relevant to the time of year – this included a ‘Locals Day’ in August to thank the local community for their ongoing support which attracted over 300 visitors; an ‘All at Sea’ themed event in October to coincide and complement the Auckland Heritage Festival, and in January, a summer’s day picnic during which we welcomed over 400 visitors. All Meet the Villagers days allow the visitor to participate in traditional past times, witness historically accurate demonstrations and learn stories from the past.

Our annual Halloween event sees the Village transformed into a family friendly fright night experience, catering to all ages. The event is aimed at welcoming a wider audience to the Village who would otherwise not normally visit. It is ultimately a unique experience that is a safe and fun environment for all, and is our most successful event in terms of profit and revenue.

The Village’s annual Christmas carol event celebrates Christmas, while also giving our visitors a chance to experience and learn what a ‘traditional’ Christmas would have been like during the Victorian era. The combination of old and new traditions allows us to provide a truly unique Christmas experience for young and old alike.

In March we celebrated the Village’s 40th anniversary, with an event attended by invited guests. They participated in a tour, various presentations and reminisced about the past in Pakuranga School. Guests enjoyed afternoon tea followed by the cutting of the 40th anniversary cake in Bell House. The festivities continued the next Sunday with a Meet the Villagers day fete day, during which members of the public enjoyed games, food stalls, pony rides for the kids, and various activities and demonstrations throughout the day.



## Making our collections accessible

A donation from one of the members of the Howick & Districts Historical Society allowed us to merge a number of databases, making it easier to keep track of the items we have and where they are stored.

We have now migrated all our collection to the eHive database, a web-based system designed to cater for museums. This means our entire collection is online and viewable by anyone in the world. We also have access to the forerunner Vernon system for reference to earlier accessions.

Hand in hand with this merger, we have worked tirelessly on reorganising our storage spaces, a mammoth task. In recent years, all this work has been done by volunteers – Pam Taylor and Janette Claridge with textiles, Joan Gill and Irene McCutcheon with photos, and Judy Wilson and Marin Burgess with objects and exhibitions.

Because many of our objects are donated by families with connections to the Howick and Pakuranga area, it is always a great delight when we receive items which add to a specific family story. As an example - recently we were donated a washbasin set which had belonged to the granddaughter of Fencible Patrick and Ann Fitzpatrick, whose cottage is the first one we see upon entering the Howick Historical Village. The set is late Victorian, with gilt overpainting and ornate relief moulding.



## Engage with our community

This past year we have engaged with our communities through our popular and enriching school visits and our monthly 'Meet the Villagers' event. These events on the third Sunday of each month are well-loved by our visitors as they give a full immersive experience into what fencible life would have been like. We have volunteers dressed in historical costume, activities and crafts, traditional butter making and cooking on a coal range, as well as other Victorian daily activities.

Our individual volunteers and community groups that give their time to the Village are an essential part of our museum. It was volunteers that envisioned and built the Village as we have it today, and these volunteers are still involved in the maintaining and passing down of the history that has been built.

We have gardening volunteers who come weekly to support our resident gardener with garden maintenance. The local Brownie group come in to work in the garden, use the grounds for their guide training, and take part in events like our 2019 Christmas event where they sang alongside the Pakuranga Choral Society. Sommerville Special School has been involved with gardening, as well as the Howick Lions Rotary club and Menzshed with maintenance needs.

Several projects within the Village have been carried out by volunteers, such as the repairs and painting of Pakuranga school; the building of the replica "Minevra" ship's cabin; and exhibition displays to list a few. Skilled volunteers manage our archives and collections, with tasks such as handling our fragile textiles and uploading our collection to eHive.

If not in costume greeting our visitors our volunteers are working hard behind the scenes preparing materials for our education team, assisting with administration and historical building maintenance



*"My favourite thing has to be seeing the look of wonder on children's and adults' faces when they see the cream turn to butter and buttermilk."*  
Kate, volunteer

## Reach new audiences

In line with our goal to attract more visitors to the museum, we took an in depth look at our messaging, platforms and branding to assess how we were communicating to our current and potential audiences. The challenge of being a Living History Museum is communicating to modern audiences, but in an authentic way that aligns with the vision, values and story of the Village.

At the beginning of 2020, we commenced a rebranding project. This involved creating a new logo, brand colours, fonts and website. This project was completed during lockdown and was well received.

The new website enables us to continue to build and develop our online resources and will be able to fully integrate with online bookings, online shop, donations and a volunteer portal. Seamless integration of our various technologies has been seen as essential to improving the visitor experience and streamlining processes for staff.

The next challenge is to ensure all our materials, signage, brochures and so on are in line with our new branding. This will be a staged project as funds become available to implement each element.

Over the last year, we made the decision to move away from traditional media (newspapers/magazines) and focus more on social media and online platforms. This was to give us a greater reach with our messaging and target a newer audience outside our traditional visitor demographic.

