



MOMENTUM WAIKATO

Te puaawaitanga o Waikato

Annual Report
2025



*Generosity
that delivers*

Generosity that Delivers - Now and Forever

Grow a culture of generosity, for 'A Better Waikato for Everyone, Forever'



Inspiring and uplifting stories

- Celebrating generosity that delivers
- Raising profile of causes and projects
- Recognising philanthropy in action
- Newsletters and promotions



Great causes and projects

- Backing changemakers
- Supporting frontline community groups



Establishment of place and purpose-based inter-generational funds

- Deeds of Gift
- MOUs and/or Charters
- Donation gateways
- Statement of Investment Policy and Objectives – SIPO



Fund promotion

- Ambassadors and champions
- Donor engagement and database management
- Fund Promotion Calendar
- Public-facing donation platforms
- Online presence and channels
- Volunteer fund advocates
- Giving circles



Smart investment and growth

- Diversified fund consolidation and management
- Professional advisors



Generous people

- Individuals and families
- Businesses
- Trusts and Funding Agencies



Acts of giving

- Bequests
- Donations and Grants
- Trust transfers
- Payroll giving



Investment income distribution

- Distribution committees



Funds stewardship

- Trusted fund governance
- Reporting, accountability, advice
- Future proofing returns



Generosity Now

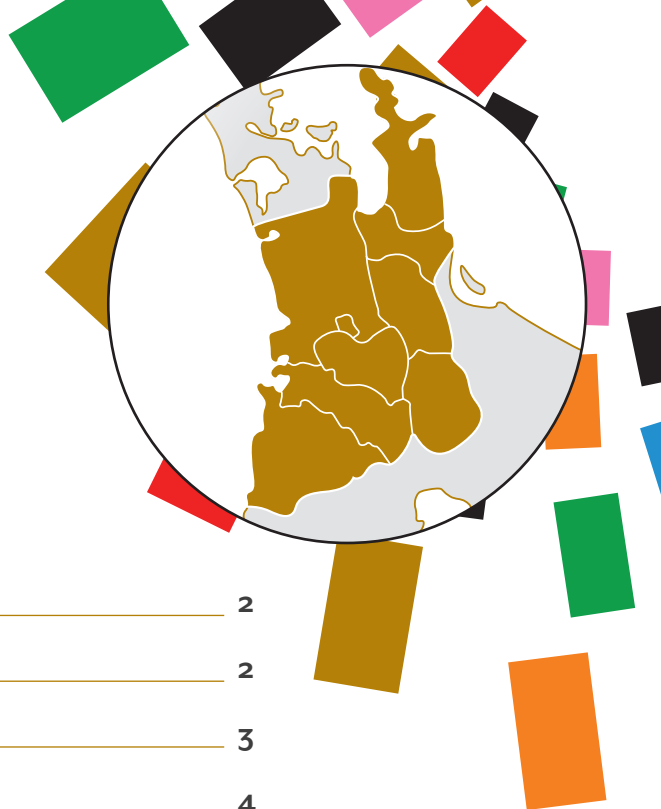
Giving Today



Generosity Forever

Growing Future Giving

He waka eke noa
We're all on this waka together



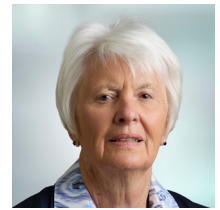
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Chair Report

Margaret Wilson
Chair



It is a privilege to have been asked to chair Momentum Waikato.

As I said after I first joined the Board in 2023, being a Momentum Trustee is a good way to give back to the region that has given me so much over the years, so I appreciate the opportunity to expand my involvement as Chair, as of February 2026.

I thank my predecessor Neil Richardson, for his huge contribution to the development of Momentum Waikato. Neil stepped off in December 2025 after thirteen years on the Board, the last six as Chair, he being the last of the founding trustees from 2013 to retire.

At the same time, Simon Rickman also left the Board, after eight years of service, for which we thank him.

A few months prior to those retirements we welcomed two new trustees, Susan Hassall and Stephen Town, who have since brought much wisdom and expertise to the table. Susan has taken on the role of Deputy Chair, which I previously filled.

The new year 2026 started on a high with the opening of the Waikato Regional Theatre, now known as the BNZ Theatre.

Momentum Waikato is proud to have initiated and driven the project that enabled the Waikato Regional Property Trust and Foster Group to build this significant new regional community asset.

Momentum is now preparing to further develop our contribution to the Waikato and Coromandel. Our fundamental objective remains to promote 'A Better Waikato for Everyone, Forever', through inspiring and enabling generosity, offering personal and organisational endowment funds that amplify and sustain the charitable impact of bequests and savings, building a regional endowment fund, and investing in projects that

generate transformational impact across Waikato communities.

Continuing to develop our 'Professional Advisors Network' (PAN) programme is amongst our current priorities. We are connecting with lawyers, accountants and investment advisors to encourage them to introduce their clients to the various avenues through which they can contribute to the Waikato's future. Momentum is uniquely positioned to provide this service, but it will require resourcing.

Momentum has always undertaken a transformational role through supporting projects that accommodate the needs of a changing and developing community. Work has been done to test whether it is viable to develop a 'Braintree Wellness Centre' to meet the non-clinical needs of people with neurological conditions, based on the Christchurch facility of the same name. A preliminary business case is due by June, so we can decide whether to proceed with the project.

We are also working with The University of Waikato on their New Zealand Graduate School of Medicine, the 'Waikato Medical School', to identify how best Momentum can support the training of doctors in the region.

Although it is at an early stage, it is thought we can assist with scholarships and the placement of students in local medical practices. This strategy is

consistent with our development of place-based funds such as those in Cambridge and the Coromandel. Venturing outside Hamilton and across the region is a priority.

Finally, we want to enable generous people to take advantage of our 'smart giving' model without having to set up their own fund, so we are starting a set of 'purpose based' endowments that each cover an area of public interest or concern. Experience has shown us that if we can accumulate a fund of reasonable size, we can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of the community.

With the assistance of a foundational donor, we started the first such 'focus fund', the 'Momentum Waikato Arts, Culture and Creativity Fund', late last year.

In the coming months we are aiming to provide further opportunity for donors to support each other's values through collective investment in focus fund that share their objectives.

On behalf of the Momentum Waikato Board, I want to thank all of you who support us as your local community foundation. If we can help you, or you know of an organisation or individual who needs to know about what we offer, please let us know.

We are here to support the community.

Continuing Trustees



Joan Forret



Mark Ingle



May Low



Holly Snape

New Faces



Susan Hassall *Deputy Chair*

Susan joined the Momentum Waikato Board in August 2025. She is most well known for her time as Headmaster of Hamilton Boys' High School from 2000 to 2024, following her earlier career as an English teacher there.

An Executive Member of the Association of Boys' Schools since its inception in 2002, Susan has an abiding interest in, and involvement with, gifted education, having contributed to the Minister's Advisory Group for many years.

In 2016 Susan joined the University of Waikato Council, becoming Pro-Chancellor in 2017, and then Chancellor in 2025, and is a member of The University of Waikato Foundation. She is also Chair of the Hospice Waikato Trust, returning to its Board after being its Acting CEO in 2024-2025.

Executive Officer Report

David Christiansen
Executive Officer



While 2025 was a tumultuous time across the world, the Momentum Waikato team had a year of considerable and consistent progress on our core strategic initiatives.

Global markets held up well amidst the economic turbulence, which meant good returns for our endowed funds, 10.1% for the year, and in turn, generous distributions to the many great causes we support across the Waikato and Coromandel region.

It was also a good year for strengthening our own financial resilience, as we continue to steward our reserves with care.

The wider for-purpose sector however continues to be challenged with reduced funding and donations. The demand out there in our communities is unfortunately only growing, and therefore so is the need for more and better designed philanthropy and generosity, to grow support for the social services addressing ever-increasing hardship.

With that in mind, we are now offering more ways for people who are looking to increase the long-term impact of their charitable donations to access our community foundation 'smart giving' model when they don't have the large sum needed to start up their own endowment fund.

Recognising that many want to support their local area, we have started launching 'place based' funds, with the Cambridge Community Fund leading the way, followed by six 'Coromandel Future Funds', all enabled by some superb support from keen local Fund Champions. These are great vehicles for receiving donations and bequests of any size and frequency and, in time, they will really boost community funding in their respective parts of the region.

Then, recognising that people also want to tackle specific issues and opportunities, we are

developing a set of 'purpose based' focus funds, to offer grants to groups and projects in the relevant sectors.

The 'Momentum Waikato Arts, Culture and Creativity Fund' was launched as the first of these new focus funds in late 2025, to coincide with the completion of the Waikato Regional Theatre.

This was thanks to a generous and anonymous founding donor, who wanted to extend our 'Share the Stage' agenda beyond the bricks-and-mortar of the Theatre building itself.

As further such catalysts eventuate, we will launch the rest of these focus funds designed to support the people and organisations that sustain and nourish our communities and help them thrive.

To offer people the opportunity to create their personal and family legacies, we have also launched our Gifts-in-Wills programme, centred around creating a Professional Advisors Network.

Aotearoa has a relatively low level of charitable giving in Wills via bequests. As a society, we need to grow that, especially given the looming inter-generational transfer of wealth over the next 20-25 years, estimated to be around \$1.6 trillion in New Zealand. Increasing the number of Wills

with a charitable element by just a few percentage points would be transformational for the funding of the for-purpose sector.

A key audience for this message is lawyers, accountants and investment advisors. The development of a Professional Advisors Network, 'PAN', has therefore been a priority.

We thank Debbie Stevens, who was our Relationship Manager from mid-2024 through to late 2025, for her sterling work building the foundations for that programme, including an excellent panel seminar called 'An Evening of Connection and Conversation' at the Hamilton Gardens in November 2025.

This has all been a lot of work for the small but mighty team here at Momentum. Atop 'BAU', to have completed the Share the Stage fundraising for the Theatre, established the strategic new funds and a further five 'named funds', and kick-started the 'PAN network', has been massive.

An incredibly successful year, so a big thank you to Janice Lapwood, Andrea Jones, Mark Servian, Michelle Bond and Debbie Stevens for their commitment, energy and professionalism.



The core Momentum team: Mark Servian, Andrea Jones, David Christiansen and Janice Lapwood.



Stephen Town *Trustee*

Stephen also joined the Momentum Waikato Board in August 2025. He has held senior positions in education, transport and local government, having first stepped up to a Chief Executive role at age 34, at the Whanganui Regional Community Polytechnic.

Stephen was Chief Executive of Franklin District Council and Tauranga City Council, then Auckland Regional Director for the NZ Transport Agency for three years, and then Chief Executive of the Auckland Council for six-and-a-half years. He then joined Te Pukenga in 2020, where he spent two years as Chief Executive. Most recently he was the Cyclone Recovery Lead at Thames Coromandel District Council for two years.

Stephen has wide governance experience and awareness, having been involved in appointments to Council Controlled Organisation boards and Special Purpose Entities.

Farewells

Neil Richardson *13 years of Momentum*

Neil Richardson retired as Chair of the Momentum Waikato Board in December 2025, the last of the founding trustees from 2013 to leave the table.

Since arriving from Australia in 1990 Neil has made his mark on the Waikato across the commercial, government, academic and not-for-profit sectors, at the local, national and international level.

A couple of years after joining the inaugural Board in 2013, Neil was elected as its Deputy Chair, and then in 2020 as its Chair.

“My thirteen years have passed in a flash of time,” says Neil, “and being a Trustee, then Deputy Chair, then Chair, were three distinct phases.”

“As a Trustee, I brought a strategic mindset in managing significant project and organisation risk and complex business and legal issues. I hope I added value with those skills and experience.”

Neil stepped up to Deputy Chair when Leonard Gardner became Chair in 2015, and the Board’s decision to commit to the Waikato Regional Theatre project followed soon after.

“We saw a huge gap that needed to be filled for Hamilton and the Waikato. And that we were one of the few organisations who could take a leadership role and work out how to manage the risks in conceiving and actually delivering a solution. We were clear that a part of Momentum’s role was to fill such gaps, so we took on the Theatre project.

“I am proud so many people saw the value in what we were doing, and the new Theatre as something worth backing.”

The key moment was when, during Covid, the Waikato Regional Property Trust wanted to approach Foster Group about building the



Neil Richardson
Photo: Mark Servian.

Theatre, where Momentum Chair Leonard Gardner was Chief Executive.

“I supported Leonard through an extremely complex situation. We ran very robust processes and ensured that potential conflicts of interest, which exist in every business role in a country the size of New Zealand, were well managed.”

Neil then stepped into the role of Chair in early 2020.

“We’ve built an organisational resilience through building a balance sheet that will protect Momentum against the inevitable shocks the world faces.

“We have a reputation of being apolitical and able to work closely with people of all political and cultural persuasions, at both a local and national level, and get things done in a manner that is positive and caring.”

Neil will miss his visits to the Momentum team.

“The human element of Momentum has been great fun. Walking into the office, I always got a bounce, there’s a sense of collegiality and compatibility, and I could always have a joke and a good laugh, and then comfortably move on to being totally serious,” says Neil.

“I’m really chuffed as a departing Trustee and Chair that the values and culture of the organisation are those I think to which we as a community can and should aspire.

“I have every expectation that in the year 2050, Momentum will be bigger and stronger and a more integral part of the community.”



Simon Rickman *Trustee*

We also thank Simon Rickman for his energetic and astute service as a Trustee of Momentum Waikato.

Simon retired from the Board in December 2025, after eight years at the table that saw him involved in many of the organisation’s biggest developmental decisions.

A successful company director, as a Trustee Simon was able to blend his advanced level of commercial acumen with a solid understanding and appreciation of Momentum’s role as a community foundation.

We wish Simon well in all his future endeavours.

Professional Advisors Network

Shaping tomorrow's legacies



Momentum Bequest Patron Ken Williamson speaks at 'An Evening of Connection and Conversation'. Photo Mike Walen, Key Imagery

Attracting Gifts-in-Wills, as a principal way to create and build endowment funds, is a key element of Momentum Waikato's mission to create a better Waikato forever.

Large donations are made by the living of course, but the reality for most people is that the finalisation of their estate after they're gone will be their only opportunity to make a significant contribution towards the charities and or causes they care about.



Debbie Stevens, Momentum Relationship Manager. Photo Mike Walen, Key Imagery.

The message we therefore need to get out to people planning and writing their Wills is that the 'smart giving' endowment model offered by community foundations like Momentum is the best and surest way to turn a charitable gift in a Will into a perpetual local legacy.

Professional advisors – lawyers, accountants and wealth advisors – are well placed to start the conversations with their clients about whether they have considered leaving a charitable gift in their Will, and to then ask whether they are aware they can create or add to an endowment.

They also sometimes advise trustees on their options when they are reviewing compliance challenges and/or considering a wind-up, so can suggest an asset transfer to Momentum as an effective way to continue their trust's charitable purpose.

Momentum Waikato has always had some contact with advisors, but we decided in 2024 that it was time we took such connections to the 'next level'.

So last year we launched a 'Professional Advisors Network' programme to foster our relationships with legal and financial professionals who are keen to introduce their clients to the opportunity to create a meaningful legacy and grasp the need for a strategic approach to building generosity in the Waikato.

Debbie Stevens as our then-Relationship Manager worked through 2025 to set this 'PAN Network' in motion, for which we thank her sincerely.

The culmination of this opening phase driven by Debbie was 'An Evening of Connection and Conversation' in November at the Hamilton Gardens Pavilion, which included a sneak peek at the Medieval Garden under construction nearby.

This was a delightful gathering that put local lawyers, accountants and wealth advisors in the same room as the founders and organisers of some of our activated endowment funds. Lively chat and networking ensued, as such cross pollination between the professional and community sectors doesn't happen that often.

A panel made up of local financial and legal luminaries Margaret Wilson, Ken Williamson, Joan Forret and Ken Stephens laid out how advisors can help their clients make the most of a charitable gift in their Will.

They went on to explain how a collective and regional approach to generosity, with enough people aboard, can sustain the Waikato and its communities for generations to come. And that now is the time to build such a capacity due to the large inter-generational wealth transfer that is looming as the 'baby boomers' reach the end of their lives.

Momentum Waikato is keen to engage with local Professional Advisors of all stripes and will be continuing to seek out and create partnerships in the legal and financial sectors.

If you're a lawyer, accountant or wealth manager reading this and want to know more about igniting your clients' legacies, visit momentumwaikato.nz/professional-advisors to find out more and get in touch.



Momentum Trustee Mark Ingle talks with Heather and Rod Claycomb of All Good Ventures at 'An Evening of Connection and Conversation'. Photo Mike Walen, Key Imagery

Coromandel Future Funds

For Thames, Coromandel & Colville, Mercury Bay, Tairua & Pāuanui, Whangamatā, and all of the Coromandel Peninsula

Place-based endowments for an entire district

A 'place based' endowment fund is defined by the geographical area it seeks to support, with its grants being offered to charitable groups and projects of any kind in that specific community.

Momentum Waikato has for some years been envisioning the creation of a set of such locality funds covering the entire Waikato region, and we took the first step towards this with the start-up of the Cambridge Community Fund in late 2024 (see next page).

The big push into this space then followed as a central goal for the Momentum team in 2025, establishing six 'Future Funds' for the Coromandel district - five based on council wards, Thames, Coromandel & Colville, Mercury Bay, Tairua & Pāuanui, and Whangamatā, and a sixth to cover the entire Peninsula.

With the oldest population of any district in the Waikato region, the Coromandel has a demographic and lifestyle profile that make it an obvious priority for offering place-based

endowments. The specific catalyst however came from finding our agenda was converging with the efforts of several locals.

Stephen Town led the Cyclone Gabrielle recovery programme for the Thames Coromandel District Council, where he could see the need for building local financial capacity as a way to improve local resilience across the board, from infrastructure to social cohesion. In early 2025 he secured seed funding from the TCDC's recovery budget to formally create the new Future Funds at Momentum.

After retiring from that Cyclone role, Stephen became a Momentum trustee in August 2025, placing a Coromandel-based voice at the centre of our Board's deliberations.

Meanwhile Peter Farmer, the co-owner of Farmer Auto Village in Tauranga, had seen the opportunity for a community endowment when he bought a holiday home in Whitianga, and was seeking partners for creating one.

For a place-based fund to succeed there needs to be local 'Fund Champions' willing to volunteer their time to promote it and attract donations and bequest pledges. For Mercury Bay this was straightforward, with Peter stepping into the role and recruiting local accountant Geoff Balme to join him in mid-2025.

The Mercury Bay Future Fund was ready to go, and in October 2025 it was publicly launched at the Coro Club's 'Main Hangar' venue at Whitianga, with eighty-odd local community and business leaders gathered.

The biggest name to speak that evening was Sir Stephen Tindall, founder of The Warehouse and now both a leading philanthropist and a patron of the community foundations movement.

His speech focused on explaining the 'smart giving' model of endowment funds.

"I cannot speak more highly of community foundations, they are the best idea I have ever



Whitianga. Photo: Mike Walen, Key Imagery.



Looking west from Coromandel town.
Photo: Mike Walen, Key Imagery.

come across, and I couldn't be more proud of the work they have done," said Sir Stephen.

As Peter and Geoff outlined when they spoke, the creation of the Coromandel Future Funds provides the Peninsula's residents and visitors with the opportunity to donate and bequest to a local endowment that is, and always will be, focused on the prosperity, wellbeing, sustainability and vibrancy of its community. Once each fund tops the \$50,000 threshold required to start making disbursements, it will significantly empower its community.

The awareness campaign around the Funds has been actively backed by the Coromandel Informer newspaper and CFM radio station, with both giving the initiative a generous amount of coverage.

The Informer ran several articles about the new funds before and since the launch event, including a couple that gave a platform to Mercury Bay Fund Champion Geoff Balme.

Therein Geoff said the Coromandel is an attractive place to live and play, but can feel a bit isolated, which can work both ways.

"Our community, knowing it is 'out on a limb' geographically, responds by pulling together. We've used our local knowledge, skills, energy and resources to build much of what we need

and have here," said Geoff.

"The sobering future is that there won't be enough tax or rates revenue to pay for the community services we rely on. What we don't already receive from local and central government, now comes from community groups, and their membership is getting older, they are not renewing themselves.

"With that economic outlook, I ask myself how are we going to pay for the services we value, that build communities, that attract people to come and live here and invest in a future for those coming after them, that make for a healthy and productive lifestyle?"

Geoff is therefore keenly working as a volunteer to engage with locals potentially interested in donating or bequeathing to the Mercury Bay Future Fund, or indeed to set up their own 'named funds' through their Wills.

"A gift to the Fund will help ensure our community remains resilient. It could mean additional medical services, better support for local elderly care, looking after our beaches and waterways, or developing new walking trails to enjoy our natural environment."

The Coromandel Future Funds have been successfully introduced to the Peninsula's business, civic, media and for-purpose



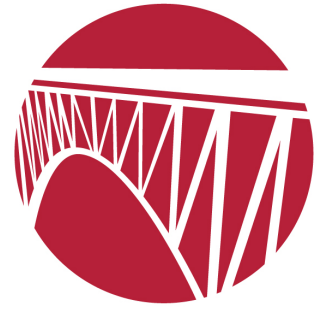
Sir Stephen Tindall speaks at the launch of the Mercury Bay Future Fund, Coro Club in Whitianga, 15 October 2025.

networks. With Fund Champions now actively campaigning to progress them, and more such volunteers to be recruited, the Coromandel looks set to be a major element in the advance of Momentum Waikato's endowment-building mission.

You can find out more about how you can support the Thames, Coromandel & Colville, Mercury Bay, Tairua & Pāuanui, Whangamatā, and/or Coromandel Peninsula Future Fund by getting in touch with Momentum Waikato or by visiting the respective Funds' pages at momentumwaikato.nz/our-funds.

Cambridge Community Fund

By local, for local



David Cooney and Kevin Burgess are the founders and Fund Champions of the Cambridge Community Fund. Photo: Michael Jeans.

Cambridge looking after its own needs is the driving principle for a fund set up in late 2024 to support the town and its people, the first example of Momentum Waikato's 'place based' endowments.

The Cambridge Community Charitable Trust got together with Momentum to establish the Cambridge Community Fund, to generate investment income for charitable activities and projects in the Waipa centre.

The Fund was officially launched with a well-attended function at Te Awa Retirement Village in October 2024, with David Cooney and Kevin Burgess from the Cambridge Trust stepping forward as the inaugural Fund Champions.

They see the new fund as the ideal scenario – a Cambridge-focused charitable fund enabled by a region-wide philanthropic investment entity.

“The Cambridge Community Fund is a cost-effective way for local people to leave a legacy forever to their town,” said Kevin, who is well known locally as a pharmacist, trustee on

various boards, and athletics supporter.

“Money donated will benefit Cambridge forever, with the partnership with Momentum providing credibility, collegial knowledge, and back office and governance support.”

“As a pharmacist here for decades, I know that while Cambridge may be seen as a ‘well off’ place, it has the same issues going on as any town, and they’re often hidden away. It is a crying shame we have people in need in Cambridge.

“I want the Fund to help Cambridge to take care of its own, to build community equity, and benefit our future generations to come.”

David said the Cambridge Community Trust was founded in the early 1990s to raise significant enough capital to make a meaningful difference in the town.

“Over the years we have received many grants and bequests from the community, but as you would expect a similar number of funding requests were also received.

“It has been a hand-to-mouth existence and our long-term goal of creating a meaningful

capital base was difficult. There needed to be a different model and a better way to achieve the goal of establishing a long-term endowment fund for Cambridge. That’s why we looked into the community foundation approach,” said David.

The new Cambridge Fund received an early boost when Lyceum House in Cambridge closed down in late 2024. The ‘Lyceum ladies’ were left with a significant sum of money to grant to charities, and chose to give a fifth of it to the Cambridge Community Fund, with a preference that the resulting investment income generated by their donation be used to support women’s education in Cambridge.

By late 2025 the Fund Champions were making strong progress promoting the opportunity to the locals.

“The Cambridge Community Fund certainly received a very warm and encouraging welcome from the Cambridge community,” said David.

“There is a very high level of interest and support in Cambridge, with many potential donors requesting information.”

You can find out more and donate to the Cambridge Community Fund at momentumwaikato.nz/cambridgecommunityfund.



Photo: Michael Jeans.

Maungatautari Sanctuary Nest Egg Fund

'If you stand still in the forest, you can feel a heartbeat'

Sanctuary Mountain®

MAUNGATAUTARI



Maungatautari Sanctuary Mountain Trustees Don Scarlet and Norma Taute sign the Fund's Deed of Gift. Photo: Mike Walen, Key Imagery.

A nature sanctuary is not a short-term project.

The effort to preserve and enhance Maungatautari, the Waikato's 'Sanctuary Mountain' is, by definition, a very very long-term mission. It is a place that saves species and brings joy to people, and will do for centuries to come.

It is literally a commitment as close to 'forever' as any that can be made by humans.

Such an undertaking requires financial solutions that will provide support far beyond the usual horizons of conservation funding.

Which is why the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust has established the Maungatautari Sanctuary Nest Egg Fund.

This is an endowment that welcomes public donations to support the crucial bio-diversity efforts upon this beautiful forested peak.

For Helen Hughes, the Chief Executive of Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari, it's all about building a "a strong financial exo-skeleton" and realising their vision to "share the mauri and the mana of the maunga".

"The mountain is there forever, we want to ensure that our successors don't have to 'chase the coin', so they're not always going 'cap in hand' to ask for 'more please'," says Helen.

"We've established the Maungatautari Nest Egg Fund at Momentum Waikato to provide a steady reliable income stream for the Sanctuary.

"This move will also give confidence to current and potential supporters of the project that there is real rigour in our financial planning and that the sanctuary really is here for the long term."

The Nest Egg Fund is just one of the ways in

which the Trust is becoming more operationally self-sufficient, it is also increasing visitor numbers, growing its education offerings, progressing and promoting its world-class scientific work, and offering bio-diversity credits.

Aotearoa has many conservation projects, but Maungatautari is unique.

"This is the only place where on a really large scale you can experience what mainland New Zealand looked and felt like before predators arrived," says Helen.

"The goal of 'Predator Free 2050' is to remove five or six predator species from the nation's land - on the maunga a dozen or more predator species are already gone!"

"It is the old growth native forest that we're saving, so it thrives for its own sake, and so future generations can experience and learn from it. You can already see an abundance on the forest floor and hear an amount of bird song that you won't find anywhere else."

Helen says she experiences a "super pure amazing force" on Maungatautari.

"You see people going in for the first time, having an ordinary day up to that point, and then when they come out you can see the transformation in them!"

"Maori talk about the maunga being a life force and it absolutely is. If you stand still enough you can feel a heartbeat."

You can find out more and donate to the Maungatautari Sanctuary Nest Egg Fund, visit momentumwaikato.nz/maungatautarisanctuarynesteggfund.



Photos: Maungatautari Sanctuary Mountain.



Waikato Regional Theatre

(now the BNZ Theatre)

Stage is shared and seats are taken



The Gallagher Auditorium. Photo: Jasmx.

The final year of construction of the Waikato Regional Theatre, 2025, was a steady stream of remarkable achievements.

The Waikato Regional Property Trust (WRPT) and its manager Gus Sharp ably led the Theatre project to its epic conclusion, working with RDT Pacific and Foster Group on delivering the building, and with Live Nation on preparing for its operation.

Their efforts culminated in the opening of the newly re-titled 'BNZ Theatre' in January 2026.

Gus, Chair Ross Hargood, Treasurer Belinda Mulgrew and the rest of the WRPT committee are to be applauded for governing and managing the creation of the Theatre, they have done a remarkable job.

The Theatre project began in 2016 as Momentum Waikato's undertaking, and we drove it through the early planning, consenting, site selection and primary fundraising stages, led by our then-Chief Executive Kelvyn Eglinton from 2018 to 2023.

The WRPT was created in 2018 by Momentum Waikato to commission and own the Theatre building and its eventual business operations.

From when construction began in late 2021 through to the end of 2025, Momentum's roles were fundraising led by Janice Lapwood, and public communications driven by Mark Servian.

The 'Share the Stage' fundraising campaign, and its 'Take a Seat' call-out, officially closed in March 2025, capping off three years of that appeal and eight years overall of fundraising. Janice and colleague Andrea Jones then spent the following months finishing the job, including plotting the donor and sponsor recognition inside the Theatre.

Telling the stories of the Theatre's construction was driven by the Waikato Times' enthusiasm

for the project. The task for Mark was primarily identifying potential tales on site and then organising the journalists' visits. Then came packaging it all up in the 'Share the Stage' website and email newsletter.

In late February 2025 the 'signing the steel' ceremony saw the site's workers and other project people autographing the last girder to be bolted in place atop the fly tower, completing the skeleton of the building.

The impressive restoration of the Hamilton Hotel façade was uncovered as the scaffolding came down in three stages between February and May.

Mid-year, the complexity of the wiring installed by a local team was on display, and later the stage engineering was signed off by a visiting UK technician, showing that the goal of applying local expertise backed up with international best practice, has been achieved.

In November the Ralph Hotere mural from Founders was hung in the Nancy Caiger Landing, and the Hamilton Hotel's restored century-old oak staircase was unveiled in the Atrium. Completion of the street-front commercial premises allowed the new bars there to open a month before Christmas.

Foster Group handed the building over to the Waikato Regional Property Trust on 1 December 2025. Live Nation moved in as the venue operator soon after and then announced the building would be known as the BNZ Theatre.

An official civic opening ceremony, including blessings from mana whenua hapu Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Māhanga, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Korokī Kahukura and Ngāti Hauā, took place on 14 January 2026.

The following week 'To The Stars - Ki ngā Whetū', a showcase of Waikato talent with a huge cast, opened the Theatre for supporters with three nights of performance. Live Nation's inaugural public shows then followed, Teeks and Dave Dobbyn taking the stage on consecutive nights.

Momentum Waikato is proud of its role in creating the Waikato Regional Theatre, and wholeheartedly thanks everyone who played a part in making it happen.

The Theatre is the Kapunipuni, 'the place where we gather', that was envisioned a decade ago, and after a remarkable journey, the dream really is now a reality.

For lots more on the history of the Waikato Regional Theatre project, visit sharethestage.co.nz.



Photo: Jasmx

Momentum Waikato Arts, Culture and Creativity Fund

First 'focus fund' boosts Waikato arts momentum

Momentum Waikato marked the completion of the Waikato Regional Theatre, now the BNZ Theatre, by launching the 'Momentum Waikato Arts, Culture and Creativity Fund'.

It is the first of a planned suite of Momentum-branded 'focus funds', which will offer Waikato and Coromandel people an easy way to access the community foundation's 'smart giving' endowment model for addressing their greatest concerns or backing their favourite causes.

The MW Arts, Culture and Creativity Fund was kick-started with donations from two local arts supporters who, independent of each other, wanted to celebrate Momentum's role with the new Theatre, by setting up a fund to further support the Waikato's artistic and cultural development.

Creative Waikato CEO Dr Jeremy Mayall welcomed the move.

"Creative Waikato is very pleased to support the Momentum Waikato Arts, Culture and Creativity Fund," said Jeremy.

"This Fund will work towards a Waikato region that thrives through diverse and transformative creativity, which directly aligns with our vision."

The new Fund, which is open to donations and bequests from any and all arts-and-culture fans, will in due course offer grants that support:

- creative and cultural practitioners and communities, visual and performance, to showcase their talent,
- emerging artists in their chosen career pathway,
- artistic or cultural events that bring life to the wider Waikato,
- educational institutions' theatre, music and cultural programmes.

Creative and artistic activity facilitates personal health and wellbeing, thriving and cohesive communities, stronger identification with place, greater inter-cultural understanding, intellectual inquiry, and economic activity that builds prosperity.

Local culture is what makes cities, towns and neighbourhoods unique and special places to

be and belong, which can be seen in the quality of cultural life available across the Waikato, Coromandel and King Country.

Ultimately though, art is worthy of support for its own sake, whether it is happening at the community or the professional level.

You can find out more and donate at momentumwaikato.nz/artsandculturecreativityfund.



Arts patron Nancy Caiger with 'The Glow', a painting of the BNZ Theatre by Hong Cumming.

TANZOS Dame Malvina Major Legacy Fund

Helping our opera singers take flight

Te Pae Kōkako The Aotearoa New Zealand Opera Studio launched the 'TANZOS Dame Malvina Major Legacy Fund' at the home of Lady Judi Gallagher on 20 November 2025, ahead of the 83rd birthday of the legendary Waikato soprano.

Housed at the Gallagher Academy of Performing Arts at The University of Waikato, Te Pae Kōkako TANZOS has been led since its founding in 2022 by soprano Madeleine Pierard.

It is already enjoying remarkable early success in vaulting emerging opera singers into international professional careers. A notable example is tenor Emmanuel Fonoti-Fuimaono, a 2023 TANZOS graduate who was the first New Zealander to successfully audition at Covent Garden in London without having first trained overseas.

Dame Malvina has said of TANZOS: "I feel my life's work has culminated in this programme right here in New Zealand. I dreamed of this twenty years ago."

Madeleine said the Fund is a major step towards ensuring Dame Malvina's dream can go on forever and is thanks to a founding donation from The Sir William and Lady Judi Gallagher Foundation, which reflects Lady Judi's long-time support for Dame Malvina's vision.

"The TANZOS graduates are world class, and I believe they will take the opera world by storm. We are honoured to be part of their journey," said Lady Judi.

Te Pae Kōkako means 'the perch of the Kōkako', where it gathers in strength before taking flight. The title was gifted by Professor Tom Roa as Te Mata Ahurangi of The University of Waikato, referencing the Ngāti Apakura tale of their tupuna, Pikirangi, who had a pet kōkako he trained to sing a song full of meaning for his iwi.

You can find out more and donate at momentumwaikato.nz/tanzosdamemalvinamajorlegacyfund.



Dame Malvina Major and Patch. Photo: Dame Malvina Major Foundation.

Financial Report 2024-2025

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

REVENUE

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Donations, Gifts and Grants | \$791,483 | \$425,074 |
| Other | \$211,965 | \$382,399 |
| Finance Income | \$3,123,165 | \$3,343,637 |
| Total | \$4,126,613 | \$4,151,110 |

EXPENSES

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Grants & Donations | \$2,297,959 | \$1,129,702 |
| Expenses relating to public fundraising | \$193,617 | \$405,363 |
| Volunteer & Employee | \$587,479 | \$619,741 |
| Finance Expenses | \$26,966 | \$24,687 |
| Other | \$260,627 | \$268,073 |
| Total | \$3,366,648 | \$2,447,566 |
| Total comprehensive income/(loss) | \$759,965 | \$1,703,544 |

Full audited financial statements available on request.

FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Cash and other current assets | \$269,807 | \$490,619 |
| Investments at Fair Value | \$38,619,468 | \$36,585,125 |
| Investments at Amortised Cost | - | \$1,010,975 |
| Property, Plant and equipment | \$35,777 | \$41,537 |
| Investment Property | \$2,141,440 | \$2,206,124 |
| Total | \$41,066,492 | \$40,334,380 |

LIABILITIES

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Current payables | \$127,583 | \$161,275 |
| WEL Energy Trust loan* | \$384,310 | \$359,168 |
| Other Loans | \$1,704 | \$21,007 |
| Total | \$513,597 | \$541,450 |
| Accumulated funds | \$40,552,895 | \$39,792,930 |

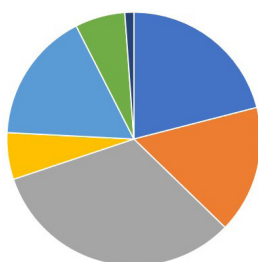
* WEL Network Loan is a concessionary loan of \$10m for a term of 60 years. The loan is recognised each year on the balance sheet at its net present value.

The accounting policies applied are in accordance with NZ Generally Accepted Account Practice ('NZ GAAP'), Public Benefit Entity Standards.

INVESTMENT FUNDS

Investment funds held at 30 June 2025

| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| NZ Equities | 20.99% |
| Australian Equities | 16.26% |
| International Equities | 32.61% |
| Cash Investment Funds | 5.95% |
| NZ Bonds | 16.69% |
| International Bonds | 6.36% |
| Property | 1.15% |

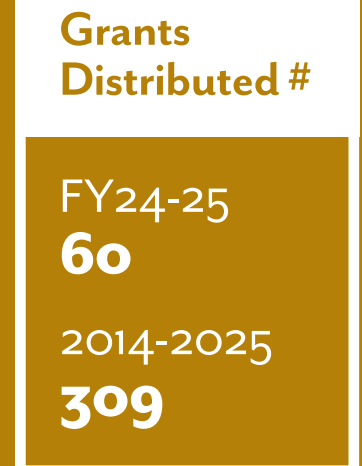
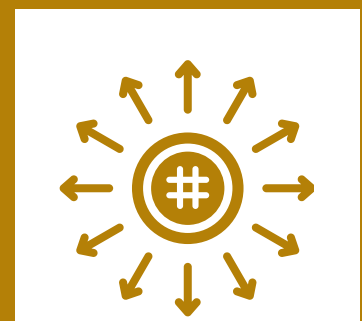
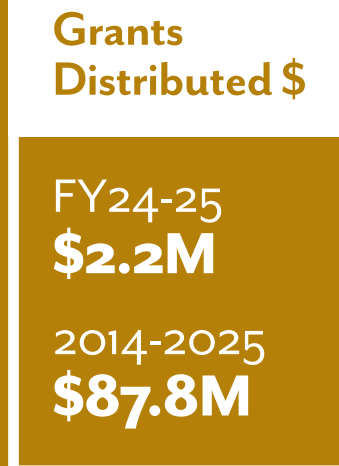


KEY PARTNERS

Services in-kind received to 30 June 2025

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Aspiring Asset Management | Mark Hamilton Photography |
| Blutui & PAN Media | Michael Jeans Photography |
| Craigs Investment Partners | Print House |
| Farmers Auto Village | RDT Pacific |
| Forsyth Barr Cambridge | Tompkins Wake |
| H3 | WEL Energy Trust |
| JBWere | Zealong |
| Key Imagery | |

Metrics 2024-25



Full and Part-Time Staff **6**
Volunteer Fund Champions **5**
30 June 2025

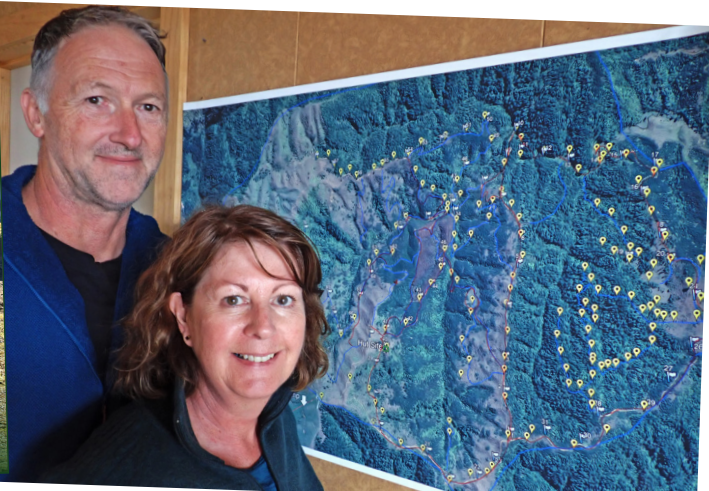


Growing Future Farmers, which has been backed by the Donny Fund for some years, trains school leavers for agri careers. See momentumwaikato.nz/donnyfund. Photo: Wendy Paul, Growing Future Farmers.

Hillcrest High School's The Scarlet Pimpernel - the Hillcrest High School Future Fund was launched in March 2025 by their Alumni Society. See momentumwaikato.nz/hillcresthighschoolfuturefund.



Hon. Nanaia Mahuta with the Waikato Intercultural Fund team and University of Waikato representatives, after she spoke at the WIF event 'Honouring Te Tiriti: Pathways to Social Cohesion in Aotearoa' in July 2025. See momentumwaikato.nz/waikatointerculturalfund.



Dr Peter Sergel, the visionary behind Hamilton Gardens, with a concept picture of the planned Baroque Garden there. See momentumwaikato.nz/hamiltongardens. Photo: Lucy Ryan, Hamilton Gardens.

Rick and Moira Haddrell, shown with their trap-line map, are establishing a home for kiwi near Otorohanga, supported by a 2025 grant from the Waikato Conservation Fund. See momentumwaikato.nz/waikatoaurakiconservationfund. Photo: Chris Gardner, Good Local Media.

A BETTER WAIKATO FOR EVERYONE, FOREVER



To start a conversation about how you can create the greatest impact with your generosity, contact us on 07 834 0404 or info@momentumwaikato.nz.

momentumwaikato.nz

Front cover photo: Thames Coromandel District Council.

This publication was designed by PAN Media.

