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**CAWTHRON MARLBOROUGH
ENVIRONMENT
AWARDS
2023**

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JUDGES' REPORT

COMMUNITY INNOVATION

PICTON ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

INTERVIEWED

Ailie Suzuki

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JUDGES

Kay Saville-Smith, Kaja Jungersen

INTRODUCTION

The Picton Environment Centre (PEC) is a collaboration between three Picton-based, environmental non-profit charities: Envirohub Marlborough, Picton Dawn Chorus (PDC) and Kaipupu Sanctuary. All three organisations share premises providing the community with a “one-stop shop” for their environmental needs.

They share office space, a meeting and event venue as well as the shop frontage that acts as a social enterprise.

The PEC spreads the word about the three organisations to a wide audience and builds general support for the environmental work they all undertake.



GENERAL INFORMATION

When Port Marlborough offered sponsorship for the premises to Kaipupu Sanctuary, they felt the space was too big for them alone and approached Picton Dawn Chorus and Envirohub Marlborough to share the space.

Recognising that time and effort was required to establish an identity as a central location for the three organisations, funding was pooled together and an independent manager was appointed to recreate the shared site as the "Picton Environment Centre".

This was important to put the PEC on the map and increase the collective presence within the community, without losing the identity of each of the individual organisations.

With all three organisations growing, the shared space and collaborations have proven the value of the Picton Environment Centre. Currently the centre is used by two Kaipupu staff, four from Picton Dawn Chorus, and three Envirohub staff.

The PEC has created a platform representing the three groups collectively, and increasing the reach of all three groups through the sharing of audiences. This has boosted the profile and credibility of environmental activities in the community and provided a space for visitors, volunteers and community to meet and pursue "our mutual goals of protecting and enhancing our natural environment around us".

Central to the PEC is the small shop, which is efficiently run predominantly by volunteers with the support of staff from all three organisations.

Profit from sales helps to raise funds for each organisation. Items sold include earth-friendly, sustainable and reusable goods from Kiwi-owned businesses and many are locally produced – such as Boons Valley honey, artisans' work and cosmetics and creams.



People can also buy affordable predator traps and receive free advice for best trapping practices to assist the predator-free movement.

The PEC also acts as a local collection point for difficult-to-recycle goods, including batteries, Colgate oral products, silicone products and cell phones.

Volunteers typically work two-hour blocks between 9am-3pm to accommodate whānau; a system that generally works well. The volunteers are greatly appreciated as they release paid staff to do their jobs.

With the shop, each organisation is able to track stock inventory through a point-of-sale system, with each item tied to a different organisation. Any expenditure is split evenly between the three groups. The shop manages the total turnover. Currently, there are no online sales as the turnover is small and the cost of selling online is not profitable at this level.

Over the past two years, Covid has affected turnover with a decrease in foot traffic in Picton (a largely tourist town) and a lack of markets to attend. However, with the recent return of tourism and events, the PEC has attended multiple markets and events representing and selling on behalf of the three groups, including the Garden Marlborough Fete and the Marina 2 Marina.

With the return of cruise ships, the PEC has also been granted a stall space at the Picton Lions Cruise Ship Market in the heart of town increasing their presence and fundraising ability. They anticipate more events and markets where all three groups will work collaboratively together under the PEC banner.

While the profits aren't great, there is added value with education, recruitment of volunteers and raising the profile.

THE JUDGES WERE IMPRESSED BY:

- This one-stop shop for all three organisations is an excellent way to make the most of scarce resources, avoiding duplication of effort and assets. It is also a source of additional revenue and the profit goes back to the charities.
- There is a very positive relationship with staff and volunteers across all the groups in sharing and promoting PEC.
- The general ambience of the shop is welcoming and very informative. Staff are energetic and engaged with a clear appreciation of working with like-minded people to achieve shared goals and environmental protection.

PROBLEMS AND HOW THEY HAVE BEEN TACKLED

- An initial challenge was establishing joint premises and fostering an ethos of collaboration with an integrated, cooperative, collective approach to the Kaupapa. Shared office space necessitated hot desking and, with clear ground rules, this generally works well. Existing staff already had full workloads associated with their own organisation.
- It was important that the shop was recognized for quality sustainable, ethical goods to attract a strong and reliable customer base.
- To ensure continuity of the shop and premises, a collective decision was made to secure joint funding for a manager who would take responsibility for the premises and drive the project forward – deciding the name, agreeing the operating principles and managing the volunteers. There were challenges with keeping the premises open regularly so that the shop was reliable and the public had certainty. Volunteer schedules are carefully managed to ensure this happens.
- Communicating the kaupapa of PEC while still retaining the identity of individual groups is being developed. Signage and branding was established, social media and local media opportunities grasped and layout and presentation in the shop reflects the work of the different groups.



SUMMARY

The Picton Environment Centre has come a long way since its official establishment in 2021. The degree of collaboration and cooperation between the three groups is reflected in the organisation of the shop and the efficiency with which PEC manages the three different groups.

The networking between the groups and the generosity and support between them reflects their collective aspirations - "we are all working towards the ultimate same goal of a better future and protection of the natural environment with the help of our community".

Sharing and communication avoids duplication and has paved the way for new and exciting opportunities, collaborations and joint efforts to achieve mutual environmental goals and aspirations.

SUGGESTIONS

- There are some excellent products in the shop. It could be useful to push local products much more, being explicit about Marlborough origins, so the region could be known for things other than wine.
- Foster collaboration with the Artisans' Shop and send potential customers to each other. Develop an Art and Environment Trail for Picton/Waikawa and include some local walks.
- Visiting cruise ships bring a large number of people to Picton. It would be useful to develop a means through which the ships could communicate what PEC does – to raise awareness and educate as well as fundraise with shop items. Increasing the online profile would help with this.
- Consider finding premises that are on the main walking path from the ferry. Being on the foreshore could bring more foot traffic.
- It would be good to spread the word about this way of working rather than competing for scarce resources and duplicating effort. Share knowledge and expertise with the right people and emphasise that collaboration delivers benefits; it's not about loss of identity.
- Part of this collaboration could be with local iwi and Waikawa Marae. In its coordination role, PEC could follow up and deliver on its intent to undertake training in Te Tiriti o Waitangi to all PEC organisations.