

## **Friends of Galápagos New Zealand.**

### Chairman's report 2011/12

The last 12 months have seen significant changes at FOGNZ and increased activity which bodes well for the society, and indicates that we should be able to play a more meaningful role in the conservation of Galapagos.

Following the sad death of our first Patron, Don Merton, we were very pleased when noted wildlife photographer and author Tui De Roy, accepted our invitation to become our new Patron, since her appointment, Tui has been a strong advocate for our greater involvement in Galapagos.

After the last AGM our Administrator, Anne Parkinson resigned and after a short selection process we appointed Margie Luby from Auckland to the new post of Executive Secretary. I would like to thank Anne for her contribution to the Society, it is not an easy task and she contributed significant amount of time and energy to keeping us going.

Margie Luby was appointed to her post by the committee on December 19<sup>th</sup> 2011, and took over the running of the society in January this year. She has spent much of the last 8 month reviewing and improving our operating systems and sorting our membership records. We have recruited two new volunteers to help Margie with the administration: Susan Shand is based in Wellington and helps with membership invitations, mail pick up and banking. She will also assist Paula Warren with the newsletter that is produced periodically. Vanessa Green who previously worked with the Galapagos Conservation Trust in the UK, is based in Christchurch and has set up a FOGNZ Facebook page, as well as producing an E-Bulletin and managing the website. Very many thanks to all three members of the team who have made a big difference in the running of the society.

Our main project, which was agreed in 2011, is working to bring a conservation professional from the Galapagos over to New Zealand for professional training. New Zealand is a world leader in conservation strategies, particularly in developing techniques and methodologies for combating alien pest species. We share many of the same problems as the Galapagos Islands, and we feel this is by far in a way the most effective way for FOGNZ to contribute to the conservation of Galápagos. If funds permit we also plan to send a New Zealander back to Galapagos on an exchange basis.

Preliminary discussions have taken place, and we have also approached Volunteer Service Abroad who have expressed interest in being involved. It is early days but we are optimistic of being able to put together a package which will be of significant benefit to Galapagos.

Thanks are due to all the members of the committee for their continued support and involvement.