

Media Release

Taranaki Garden Festival and Taranaki Arts Trail 2021

“Garden and Arts, A Fine Fit.”

Basking in the success of the 2020 Taranaki Garden Festival and Taranaki Arts Trail, festival organisers for both events are delighted to announce the two will combine again in 2021 to present a dual programme.

From the 29 October to 7 November 2021, Taranaki will showcase internationally recognised artists and gardens, throughout the 10-day festival spectacular. The Taranaki Garden Festival has been attracting visitors for over three decades. Next year will see it celebrate its 34th year - one of the longest-running festivals in New Zealand - and the Taranaki Arts Trail, considered as pioneering the development of art tourism in the region will enjoy its eighth year of open artist studios.

The symbiotic relationship between both festivals and the widely popular 2020 event will now see the Taranaki Arts Trail, adopting the Spring dates and increasing the event from one weekend to two in 2021.

Heidi Griffin, Chair of Taranaki Arts Trail said the whole team behind the event were pleased with the collaboration.

"The mutually beneficial partnership is the natural marriage between art and gardens within Taranaki, and our artists are behind this decision after a successful collaboration in 2020."

"Shared dates can only make both events stronger. We are looking forward to the impact these joint events have on the region in the future." Griffin says.

With international borders being closed for most of 2020, many New Zealanders took the opportunity to discover something new. Combining the festivals presented a gateway opportunity for the domestic visitor to enjoy the attractions of the region and promoted an increased awareness of all that Taranaki has to offer.

Tetsu Garnett, Taranaki Garden Festival Manager, believes that the alliance will play a significant role in economically benefiting the region by drawing more people to Taranaki.

"People travelling to the region stay in our accommodation, shop in our retail stores, eat in our hospitality establishments, and spend money on transport. The combining of these two events will draw people to visit, learn and support not only businesses but also to widen the cultural awareness lenses of locals and visitors."

Niki Jenkinson, Taranaki Arts Trail Coordinator agrees; "Combining events broadens appeal and tourist experience to the region. It's very much a situation of a total being created that is greater than the sum of its parts and one that shall, with further fine-tuning of the events, only reinforce the positive sentiment we have received from artists, and gardeners this year."

Many of the 40 gardeners and 86 artists agree that 2020 was significantly busier than usual and that the collaboration brought an astonishing number of new visitors to the region for the 10-day event. While official numbers are still being tallied, it is looking like the event attracted close to 80,000 garden festival visits during the festival, with 75% of visitors coming from outside of the region.

"It was so cool meeting such a fantastic mix of people. It's such a nice feeling being appreciated for all the hours spent getting our garden prepared for viewing. We got lovely feedback from visitors

who were able to visit the Arts Trail as well. I think it's such a bonus running both festivals together." says Maria van der Poel, whose garden had artworks from internationally renowned sculptures Terry Stringer and Rick Swain on display.

Planning is already underway for 2021, both the garden festival and the art trail have been meeting new gardeners and artists who have expressed interest in being part of the 2021 programme. Registrations and assessments are generally closed towards the end of March, and those interested are encouraged to get in touch with the festival organisers.

"We look for members of the community with a passion for gardening, happy to open up their gardens to the community and visitors to the region. The festival fosters people's sense of community, trust and connectivity with other people who share the same passion." Garnett says.

The Taranaki Garden Festival and Taranaki Arts Trail dual programme officially launches 15 July 2021. The Taranaki Garden Festival runs from 29 October - 7 November, with the Taranaki Arts Trail open weekends of 29-31 October and 5-7 November, with artist workshops available during the week also.