

THE HUB, MANGAWHAI

five years on



## Garden centre beds down in larger village location

A move from Mangawhai Heads to The Hub, in Mangawhai Village, has provided the owners of the Naja Garden Centre with the opportunity to take the business to the next level.

Terry and Sue Poynter say the new location attracts a lot more foot traffic and there is room for expansion.

“We’ve got about 30 percent more space, which means we’ve been able to put in pathways and garden ornaments that allow customers to move easily around the various ‘islands’ of plants,” Terry says.

Daughter Shannon has been rapidly expanding her nursery and landscaping knowledge through a number of correspondence courses, and long-time employee Jacqui Duffy is still available on weekends to solve most gardening problems.

Terry says the family was overwhelmed by the community support they received during their move. Although moving the shop was relatively straightforward, the nursery shift took two to three weeks to complete. During that time, plants were farmed out to volunteers who kept them watered and cared for.

“Logistically, it was quite a massive task and we were very grateful for the people who came with trailers and offers of help. Zonta Club members, in particular, were fantastic.”

Naja carries a full range of ornamental, native and garden plants, including fruit trees, but specialises in quality coastal plants suited to Mangawhai’s various soil types. Terry says it is probably one of the centre’s strengths.

“We’re not a ‘one size fits all’ sort of centre. We pride ourselves on excellent customer service, which includes local knowledge of the growing conditions in Mangawhai and plants hardened for the local environment.”

Natalie and Jac Spyksma started the business in 1981 with a retail and wholesale nursery and landscaping business run from their home. In 1986, they moved to the site at Molesworth Drive. The Harvest Café, which the Poynters also own in conjunction with their son-in-law Kris Malcolm, is still operating at the old site.

The owners of the Naja Garden Centre, Terry and Sue Poynter, with their daughter Shannon.



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The Hub in Mangawhai.

## Commercial confidence on the rise in Mangawhai

**Business is consolidating at The Hub in Mangawhai Village five years after the first retail and commercial suites opened their doors in 2006.**

Built in two stages, the two-storey landmark now accommodates a range of services, from the health store Kakariki and the newly-located Naja Garden Centre to original tenants Frog & Kiwi and McBreen Jenkins. The commercial offices include a mix of professional services including valuation, survey, planning, legal, photography and construction representatives.

Owner and developer Mark Rowbotham says all that's missing is a bank.

"We've tried for years to convince a bank that Mangawhai needs a branch, but all we're told is 'it's not on the radar for the foreseeable future'," Mark says. "The trouble is they're using Census figures that don't give a true picture of Mangawhai's catchment area."

He pointed out that that catchment was significantly larger than Wellsford, yet Wellsford had three banks.

"It doesn't make sense, but you can't argue with people who just keep saying 'we've done the figures'."

Mark says The Hub would also lend itself well to a flooring specialist, selling carpets and tiles, and a lunch bar. With the expansion of the commercial

strip across the road, including the impending opening of Fresh, the village is increasingly becoming the shopping destination for Mangawhai.

Speaking generally about investment in the area, Mark says that although his \$100 million Estuary Estates development – earmarked for 130-hectares on Molesworth Drive – is on hold until the economy improves, he believes the worst of the recession fallout is over.

"There were a fair amount of mortgagee sales 12 to 18 months ago, but it's definitely not like that now. In the last eight to 10 weeks, real estate agents have been talking about genuine buyers being back in the market. About 95 percent of sales in Mangawhai are to Aucklanders, so when Auckland's economy picks up, Mangawhai's will as well."

He says the 2001 Census showed that 45 percent of Mangawhai's population was permanent, the rest being made up of holidaymakers. By 2006, this had reversed to 55 percent of home owners being permanent residents. Since 1991, the population – now estimated at 4500 within a 12km radius of town – has been growing at 4.2 percent annually, with the hinterland proving to be one of the most popular areas for new development.

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