



President's Report – AGM, 26 August 2020

This has certainly been a year to remember and we have all faced the need to adjust to a new reality. With reports like this, the usual pattern is to touch on key points of note and conclude by thanking everyone. However, this year I am changing that approach. Firstly, I want to acknowledge our amazing members in general and our Board members in particular. They not only adjusted to the reality brought about by Covid-19 restrictions but led the way in proving how spirit and spiritual energy works across different media and knows no boundaries in time or space. Mediums from around the country, including many of our Board members, bravely put their hands up to work on a virtual platform and hopefully they are as proud of themselves for what they achieved as I am. Virtual church services, coffee mornings and webinars/workshops helped many of us to stay connected and supportive of each other – and this meeting tonight is another example of what that looks like in practice.

Spiritualism New Zealand continues to grow each year and once again we have ended the year with a small surplus of income over expenditure – a major achievement given the restrictions we have been operating under. We will go into further detail in relation to membership and our financial situation when we get to the Registrar and Treasurer reports.

One matter that has been of great concern to us is our website and the fact that we have not been able to progress development of the member only part of it. However, under the leadership of Kay Howard, who joined our Board at the 2019 AGM, we have been working hard behind the scenes on a new approach and look forward to revealing it to you within the next few months. This is a real labour of love and having fresh input from Kay has been invaluable. Kay is now taking the opportunity to stand down from the Board but I know she will continue to take a keen interest in all that we do.

Over the next few months, Covid willing, we will be out and about running weekend workshops in Nelson in September and Auckland in November. These are wonderful opportunities to meet with our members in person, network and generally engage in discussion about matters of interest to us all. We are also well into planning for next year's AGM combined with a residential retreat at the Vaughan Park Retreat Centre in Auckland.

Other than Kay, all Board members are remaining in place and for most of us we are heading into the third year of our first term. Under our constitution, Board members serve for a three year term before needing to be re-elected and no Board member can serve for more than three terms (nine years) without needing to stand down for at least one year. This year, we are fortunate to be in the position of having two nominations for new Board members (Lyn Herriot and Amanda Cartridge). Lyn is based in Porirua and Amanda in Selwyn. We are always keen to encourage new people onto the national committee as they provide fresh ideas and energy, and future growth.

So, having started this report by acknowledging our members and wonderful Board members, I would like to finish off by noting the contribution from Rod Foster, our financial reviewer. Rod has made the decision to retire from this line of work which goes as far back as 1976 when he was involved with the Upper Hutt Spiritualist Church and then later with Petone Spiritualist Church. In addition to Petone and Upper Hutt, Rod has reviewed the finances for other spiritualist churches, both in the greater Wellington region and elsewhere. We will all miss Rod's input, and wish him and his family well for the future.

Thank you all for attending our third AGM as Spiritualism New Zealand.

Joanne Duncan, President