

Spiritualism New Zealand

Coming together as a community

President's Report – AGM, 27 September 2023

Welcome to our 6th AGM as Spiritualism New Zealand.

The theme of my report for this AGM is “three-fold gratitude” – for our Board members who have all worked tirelessly over the past year, for those who have so generously shared their precious time and expertise to run webinars, groups, meditations and other events, and for the ongoing support from our financial members (individuals and organisations) as well as others who have connected with us in a variety of ways.

Still on that theme of gratitude, one of the neat things an AGM provides is the opportunity to thank people publicly for all that they contribute. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the fact that Barbara Hand is stepping back from the role of Registrar. Barbara has fulfilled that responsibility (along with so much more) since 2017. Collectively and individually we very grateful that although she is relinquishing that role she is remaining on the Board and will continue to offer her expertise in so many different ways. Tonni Pedersen is another to relinquish a national officer role, that of Secretary, and thankfully he too is staying on as a Board member. Thank you Tonni for your work in that role and in particular for responding to the many and varied emails that come in via our website, much of which involves providing help and reassurance for the public when they are experiencing ‘odd’ happenings. I would also like to express our thanks and gratitude to Gail Payne who is resigning from the Board. Over the past four years Gail’s deep knowledge of spiritual matters has been invaluable to us and we will miss her calm, sage advice. It is a source of great relief to me that Gail is staying connected with us via one of our sub-committees.

Although a few people are stepping back, this provides an opportunity for others to step forward. In that regard, Amanda Cartridge, who has been a Board member for the past three years, has allowed herself to be put forward for the Registrar’s role. We will shortly be confirming Amanda and Lyn Herriot’s second 3-year terms as Board members as well as welcoming two new people to the Board – Angela Barrows and Kim Chamberlain. Both Angela and Kim have many years of experience with spiritualism. They also come with a wealth of new ideas, energy and skills that will help us move forward as an organisation.

Turning now to some key highlights, these include:

- The running of a healing workshop in Nelson where we were able to meet up with old friends as well as make new friends, and support Nelson Church to grow their pool of registered healers.
- The establishment of a small online spiritual development/discussion group for individual members who don’t have access to a local church or centre.
- Feedback in response to our members’ survey that confirmed the importance of connection (in person and online), community, support, learning and development.
- Development of a formal strategic plan.
- The fact that our retreat is going ahead at the Vaughan Park Retreat Centre in Auckland in October.

Following on from last year's efforts to refresh our website, this year the Board invested time, energy and money in getting together in person for the first time since 2017 to do some strategic planning. In June we spent an intense weekend with a facilitator taking us through a process that has resulted in a simple strategic plan that sets out in a straightforward way our core focus areas. I say simple but the process by which we arrived at this plan was anything but simple and is not something we could have achieved on our own. We will use this plan to help communicate with our members and other interested parties what we are about. It will also be used to drive all of our activities. Underpinning our journey to producing the strategic plan was the feedback from our members' survey.

Arising from that strategic work, we have established some new sub-committees that relate to:

- communications and marketing
- event planning
- connecting with our organisation members
- celebrating the 100 year anniversary of the Spiritualist Church of New Zealand Act 1924 (22 September 2024)

In relation to our financial position, we have a surplus of income over expenditure of \$15,912.48. This result was largely due to the investments held for seven years on behalf of the late Wellington Spiritualist Church, being passed to Spiritualism New Zealand. We are very grateful to the Church and its retiring Committee for their on-going support and their generous \$18,940.26 contribution.

Our work on progressing content for the Healing Manual continues albeit slower than is ideal. This is also the case with our intent to revitalise an approach to a code of ethics / standards of practice for mediums/platform work.

The subscriber list for our monthly newsletter continues to grow as do our Facebook followers (thank you Lyn for all your work with this and our recently established Instagram account) and individual members.

To wrap up I would like to take us back to the theme of gratitude. As always, it is a joy and privilege to be able to connect with our members in person as well as online, and to have a group of like-minded people to work with who are all volunteers and who do so much to keep our organisation running.

With much love and gratitude to our Vice President who is always supportive whenever I need a listening ear, our Treasurer who ensures we are responsible and accountable for our financial decisions and our ordinary Board members who are in fact extraordinary. If anyone is inspired to take up the role of Secretary, please let me know as we have a vacancy just waiting for the right person – is that you?

Joanne Duncan, President