



Newsletter Wellington Branch October 2020

Chair

Ian Clunies-Ross

Deputy Chair

Peter Chambers

Wellington Branch Committee

Kevin Duggan, Graham Hill, Kay Monks, Alan Peck, Elizabeth Smaal, Mike Smith, Bryan Whisker, and Ray Woolhouse.

Wellington Life Members

Virginia Breen, Marie Byrne, Janice Campbell, Peter Chambers, Bruce Kelly, Brian McKeown, Alan McMaster, Gray Nelson, Bill Robertson, Elizabeth Smaal, Mike Smith, Leicester Stewart, Peter Stewart, Terence Stock, Ian Swift, David Thorp, Bryan Whisker, Priscilla Williams, Ray Woolhouse .

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A Message from The Wellington Branch Chair 100 Years!

This year the Government Superannuation Association celebrates its centennial. Established in 1920, its aim was to champion government workers' struggle to win fair and reasonable annuities for retired state employees and surviving spouses. Back then the key problem was the lack of protection from inflation which had seriously devalued pensions.

Over the next 70 years the GSA helped to progressively improve the provision of the annuities to the point it was considered a model Defined-Benefit scheme. As population demographics changed and life expectancy improved, it appeared that its long-term provision was unsustainable and in 1990 the scheme was closed to new members.

At the same time the Government Superannuation Fund Authority was established to make provision for payment of benefits to the superannuitants. This fund now manages over \$ 4 billion of investments however its performance has no impact on members' pensions. It exists because those pensions were always unfunded meaning that

members' contributions were not invested separately but were a form of government revenue. Since 1990 the role of the GSA has evolved to serve its members according to their superannuation needs and to liaise with the authority for this purpose.

Neither the GSFA nor the GSA will be around in 100 years and we can only speculate on when it will close. In the meantime, the GSA with the support of its members, will continue to work to protect superannuation entitlements.

Finally, we can note that the Wellington Branch is in very good heart. We have endeavoured to keep you informed throughout the year. Pandemic restrictions have meant we needed to cancel social events but we have conducted all our committee meetings either by Zoom online or at Anvil House.

Ian Clunies-Ross, Chair

Council 2020

The GSA strategic plan for 2020 -23 was ratified at this year's Council held at the West Plaza Hotel on 5/6 September. This may be viewed on the Association's web site at www.gsa.org.nz and members are encouraged to visit this site regularly for information and news.

The launching of the centennial book "Safeguarding Super" marked the occasion this year and although our parliamentary reception and book launch had to be cancelled nevertheless Council was able to celebrate the book launch and its author Roger Openshaw, at the Council dinner on the Saturday evening. (Review of the book appears on page 3 of the newsletter). The National Office staff were staunch in their resolve to proceed with Council and luckily the Covid lockdown restrictions were eased just in time to allow it to go ahead and for the Auckland representatives to attend. Two delegates from each branch were permitted and with the 7 member GSA Board and along with a small number of life members, there were 40 present. Wellington was represented by Ian Clunies-Ross and Peter Chambers.

Two matters to mention are:

1. The analysis of membership trends and the subsequent approval of a remit to increase subscription from \$26 to \$32.50 to ensure the Association remains financially viable beyond 2034. This means a subscription increase from \$2 to \$2.50 per 4 weekly pay.

2. The governance and administration of GSA in the face of possible branch amalgamations in future.

The Board members were all re-elected with Tony Hamilton continuing as President. Wellington branch members on the Board are Dallas Elvy, Alan Peck and Mike Smith. Alan Peck was also appointed to the Government Superannuation Appeals Board in June 2020 thus re-establishing our membership on that important body.

Wellington branch wishes to acknowledge Allen Hair's valuable contribution to GSA both as a member of the Wellington branch committee and as national President from 2008 to 2011. Allen died in February 2020.

Mid-Winter Luncheon at James Cook Grand Chancellor

Unfortunately, due to the restrictions of the Covid-19 alert level 2, the branch committee believed it needed to cancel this function. The venue had been chosen with public transport in mind which, for many of our members, would have been a health risk. A plated meal would have replaced the popular buffet style meal and social distancing rules would have made socialising and conversations more difficult. We hope to reactivate this new venue next year.

Wairarapa Luncheon

The luncheon was held on Thursday 24 September at the Masterton Club. As agreed at the 2019 AGM,

the forty-one members who attended each paid \$10 for the two-course meal. The meal and the service were both excellent. This annual luncheon is an opportunity specifically for GSA members living in the Wairarapa to be brought up to date on GSA matters discussed at the national Council meeting which is held in Wellington in the first weekend of September. It was also a chance for members to ask questions of Wellington Committee members present on any issue relating to their annuities.



Members enjoyed the luncheon at Masterton Club

Ian Clunies-Ross, the branch Chair, advised members about matters arising at the Council including a motion for the GSA to increase the subscription, and that Wellington branch

agreed to assist Horowhenua/Kaptiti branch with their membership administration. A question about progress with the COLA petition prompted an undertaking to follow up and report back (see the item "COLA" on page 3.).

The Annuity News which is circulated with this newsletter, will provide further detail from the Council meeting.

A Combined Annual General Meeting & Centennial Celebratory Luncheon 2020 Thursday 26 November

Annual General Meeting:

It has been agreed nationally that the 2020 branch AGMs, unable to be held in May/June due to Covid-19, should now be held in conjunction with the 2020 end of year luncheon. All members are therefore cordially invited to the Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Branch to be held at **Silverstream Retreat, 3 Reynolds Bach Drive, Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt at 11.00am**. A number of current committee members are standing down this year. All members are asked to give serious consideration to standing for election to the Wellington Branch Committee. The full committee meets every second month either by Zoom or in Anvil House in the city. You will be very welcome.

Nominations for Branch committee positions close 1 week before the AGM. The nomination form can be obtained via the GSA website: <http://www.gsa.org.nz/branch-wellington.html> or contact the Secretary at wellington@gsa.org.nz or call 0800 888472 for the form and return to the Secretary **by Wednesday 18 November 2020.**

Centennial Celebratory Luncheon:

Our centennial celebratory luncheon, marking 100 years of our Association, will be held immediately following the AGM. Your committee is working hard to make this a memorable event so do please make this a 'must' in your November calendar. The Retreat, Silverstream, 3 Reynolds Bach Drive, Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt (our room is called 'Grasslands') is a fantastic venue with plenty of parking, the cost is subsidised so that members pay only \$10 per person, with a drinks voucher, 2 spot prizes and a centennial gift all part of the fun. You will also be able to order your copy of 'Safeguarding Super- A centennial history. 1920 – 2020' at a cost of \$40 GST Inclusive plus postage.

Please note that you are welcome to bring a friend to the luncheon. It is not restricted only to members, but non-members will need to pay the unsubsidised cost of \$40 per person.

A free bus will be provided to the venue from Platform 9 at the Wellington Railway Station leaving at 10am. If required, it will make stops at Waterloo Station bus stop at 10.25am and Silverstream Station at 10.40am. Look out for the Transit bus. The bus will return to the Wellington railway station after the luncheon. Please see the slip at the end of this Newsletter to advise us that you are coming, if you need to catch the bus, the stop at which you will await the bus and for making payment to the Branch. The MacKenzie Trust could assist you further with transport (see page 4).

Booking is essential. Members who wish to attend the AGM and Centennial Luncheon will need to RSVP and pay \$10. Please return the booking form (last page of this newsletter), or telephone or email Jirayu by 19 November 2020. The agenda for this meeting and the minutes from the last meeting will be emailed to those who provide an email address on receipt of your booking to attend the AGM and luncheon.

If we have no email address you will be rung to confirm your booking and the papers will be ready to pick up at the meeting.

"Safeguarding Super- A centennial history 1920 – 2020"

By Roger Openshaw.

Reviewed by Ian Clunies-Ross

This extensively researched publication is an important record of the Government Superannuation Association 100 years of existence. It provides a fascinating insight into the issues and

problems the GSA has had to confront when dealing with governments who were at times unsympathetic to members' rights. In the course of writing the book Openshaw accessed archival material and interviewed a wide range of members. As well as providing a record of the GSA news of the time, Openshaw has set this history within the context of the people who have represented the Association, their personalities and stories. For example when dealing with the radical change to government super under Rogernomics of the 1990s, he quotes a member of the then GSA executive, "Hair (Allen) remembered with a wry smile that he, Thorp and Swallow were regarded at the time as being a trio of 'angry men' in some quarters of the Association." (p147)

Openshaw, dealing with the history chronologically, starts the book with the period from 1920 to 1945 and what he terms the 'years of testing' and then leads into a time of anxiety from 1946 to 1959. From 1960 to the 21st century the history takes each decade and its issues in turn thus revealing themes. He then examines the achievements to the present time and concludes with a look at the way ahead and the challenges and prospects for the future.

Finally, this book is an essential record of the history of the GSA to date and it makes a useful contribution to the study of the relationship between governments as employers and their obligations to their former employees.

COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment)

The Covid 19 pandemic has put back progress towards our elderly GS annuitants from receiving the full cost of living adjustment.

As things stand those who retired prior to 1985 have only received 90% of the annual CPI since then. This means that the income of someone who retired at that time will now have an annuity that is 30% less than it should be.

Recall our GSA petition to the Government Finance and Expenditure committee in July 2018. It was successful and its Chairman Michael Wood stated in his report last year, "*We recommend to the Government that it ...consider options for addressing the resultant lesser payments received by contributors and beneficiaries of the fund.*"

On 20 August this year, the Minister of Finance, Grant Robertson contacted the GSA assuring that although the pandemic has meant the work following the petition had been 'deprioritised', nevertheless he remained committed to resolving the matter. We therefore must wait to see how the political scene develops in the near future.

The MacKenzie Trust – How it may help you

The MacKenzie Trust was established in 2017 as a legacy of Supertours that operated from 1988 for the benefit of Wellington Branch members.

The Trust may provide assistance with travel to enable those who now find it difficult to attend GSA Wellington Branch functions because of lack of support, declining health, reduced mobility or other like reasons.

If you, or someone you know, would like to attend the Centennial Celebratory Luncheon, but need extra help with transport, please complete the reply slip below, paying particular attention to tick the box "MacKenzie Trust extra help request" and someone will contact you. If you have any questions regarding the trust, please contact Virginia Breen, phone 04 385 2188.

2021 Annual General Meeting:

Please note in your diaries that our **2021 AGM will be held on Wednesday 26 May 2021.**

The venue has yet to be confirmed but we can advise that our GSA President, Tony Hamilton has agreed to attend as our guest. Further details will be advised in our May 2021 Branch Newsletter.

Change of Address

Please let the Secretary know if there are any changes to your personal details. You can enter these yourself at www.gsa.org.nz. From the homepage select 'Update Details' and enter your annuity number and last name, then select the "update details" box. Note that while your changes will be recorded, they will **not** be updated immediately as they will be checked for consistency before being implemented.

It is very important to advise Datacom immediately of any changes to your address and/or bank account details. Where mail is returned "gone no address", or bank accounts are closed, Datacom will make reasonable efforts to try to locate you. If you cannot be located, your annuity may be suspended until contact is re-established.

Wellington Branch Railway Social Club End of Year Luncheon

This is an informal group of former employees of Railways and any GSA members wishing to attend our functions will be most welcome.

Our end of year luncheon will be held on **Wednesday 11 November 2020 at Petone Workingmen's Club**. Cost \$25 per person. Cash only payable at the door. Please be seated by 12 noon.

For bookings please contact Leicester Stewart, Wellington (ph. 04 567 2484 or mob 027 245 5030). **A booking is essential and must be made at least two days before the function.**

Late bookings cannot be accepted.

Contacts for Annuity Matters

GSF enquiries

GSF Administrator, Datacom Employer Services Ltd, PO Box 3614, Wellington 6140.

Phones: 04 470 6348
0800 654 731
Email gsf@datacom.co.nz
Website www.datacomgsf.co.nz

NPF enquiries

NPF Administrator, Datacom Employer Services Ltd, PO Box 1036, Wellington 6140.

Phones: 04 381 0650
0800 628 776
Email npfenquiries@datacom.co.nz
Website www.datacomnpf.co.nz

It is a good idea to have your annuity number handy when you make any enquiries. It can be found on any Datacom letter addressed to the annuitant.



**The GSA Wellington Branch Committee
wishes you and your
family a very Happy Christmas and
a wonderful New Year to follow**

BOOKING FORM

Cut here-✂

AGM & Centennial Luncheon – 11am 26 November 2020

I/We shall be attending the AGM and luncheon at the Silverstream Retreat, 3 Reynolds Bach Drive, Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Number attending _____ Cost will be \$10.00 per person (\$40 per 'non-member' guest) Please pay \$ _____ by either:

Direct credit account 38 9014 0085421 00 **by 19 November**. Quote name, annuity number and the reference **CENT**, or:

I will bring \$ _____ to the luncheon in an envelope with name(s), annuity number and **CENT** marked on it.

Please tick for MacKenzie Trust Extra Help Request

A free bus will depart from Platform 9, Wellington Railway Station at 10.am

It will stop at Waterloo Station at approximately 10.25 am and Silverstream Station at approximately 10.40am

Please Tick **ONE** box to indicate the station where you wish to join the bus.

From Wgtn Station Platform 9 - Waterloo Station - Silverstream Station

Please return this completed page to the Secretary, GSA Wellington Branch, PO Box 11993, Manners Street, Wellington 6142 **by 19 November** if:

1. You have paid by direct credit but wish to travel by bus or
2. You are bringing payment in an envelope on the day or
3. You are seeking MacKenzie Trust help