



AUCKLAND BRANCH NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2024

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Report from the Chair

In September we held a very successful Branch meeting, our third for the year. There was a good turnout of members and positive feedback from those who attended, continuing a trend that that we have seen over the past year. While the numbers attending were only a small proportion of our total membership of more than 3,500 across the Auckland region, it's nevertheless an encouraging



indication that the Auckland Branch is in good health. It is only four years ago that the GSA Board was concerned that the Branch would cease to exist and have to become a sub-branch or amalgamate with another Branch.

Branch events provide an opportunity for our members to socialise and enjoy an interesting talk from a guest speaker. Our last event, with guest speakers from Audika, focused on the link between hearing loss and dementia. Our next Branch meeting is our annual Christmas get together. This year, after feedback from our focus group, we are holding a meeting at our usual venue, the Western Springs Community Hall, with Christmas refreshments and guest speaker Rod Jackson. Rod is a Professor in Epidemiology from the University of Auckland who you might have come across during the Covid Pandemic. Although he publicly got behind the national covid vaccination programme his work has mainly been in predicting the risk of heart disease. He is providing a light-hearted talk on 'You Are What You Eat'. We are asking that you encourage others that you knew through your days of employment in Government Ministries to join you, as well as your spouse or a friend, and we hope to make up tables such as Police, Education, Parliament, NZ Post, Defence, DSIR and Railways.

Auckland is the only Branch in the country that still has events held by sub branches. North Shore sub-branch holds three events a year, a March meeting with a speaker, their mid-year AGM and a Christmas function and the Railways Group hold a mid-year and Christmas function. See over for details.

At the recent GSA Council meeting, committee member Murray McElwain, who is responsible for organising events for the Railways Group and 80+ birthday cards, was made a life member. He is the first person from the Railways Group to be made a life member since the group re-joined the GSA in 2013.

Wishing you a joyous Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year. We hope to see you at our Christmas function on Wednesday, 4 December.

Your committee work hard to make every branch meeting a success. They are:

Chair Sandie Gusscott – Education

Vice Chair Craig Jensen – Science

Committee Members

Andrea Beechey – Secretary/Treasurer

Rosemary Bell – Defence

Eric Bowater – Education & North Shore Sub Branch

Neil Carey - Railways

Murray McElwain – Railways and 80 Plus

Claire Couch – Education

Denise Greenwood – University

Keith Rawlings – Army

Max Thomson – Post Office

Philippa Stevens – Science



Sandie Gusscott
Chairperson

Talk from Audika Audiologists on Hearing Loss and Dementia

We had an enthusiastic turn out at our September branch meeting despite the very cold and windy weather on the day. In their presentation entitled "The relationship between hearing loss and dementia - can hearing aids help? Audika audiologists Jinny Kin and Angel Canyonong gave an interesting overview of recent research on age related hearing loss.

They explained that hearing loss is an invisible disability that impacts on quality of life and is linked to risk of falls and cognitive decline. Of note, risk factors including changes in brain structure, depletion of cognitive reserve, social isolation and loneliness support the link with hearing loss and dementia. Restoring audibility through use of hearing aids may help in slowing the progression of cognitive decline. Jinny provided an overview of how they undertake hearing tests as well as information on the range and features of available hearing aids. The presentation closed with a Q&A session prompting lively discussion and the sharing of hearing loss experiences. Thank you to all who participated.

Congratulations to Murray McElwain - Awarded a Life Membership

At the recent Council meeting Murray was awarded Life Membership of the GSA. The award was presented by Sandie at the September branch meeting. This was the citation she read out to fellow members and supporters:

Murray McElwain worked in the Railways for 43 years. He worked his way up through the ranks to fireman and engine driver, driving goods trains, express trains and later - railcars. In 1981 he was transferred to the locomotive depot in Westfield, Auckland where he spent the last 10 years of his career working his way up to the position of Manager in the Administration Office. He retired in 1991 after 43 years' service.

Murray joined the Auckland Branch committee when the Railways group amalgamated with the GSA in 2013. Since then, he has been responsible for fostering fellowship among Railways members by organising mid-year and end-of-year functions, ensuring they are included in social activities, and providing support when needed. As a committee member for more than 10 years he has provided constructive suggestions for the well-being of the Auckland Branch and has worked

tirelessly to ensure the continuation of the Railways group in South Auckland.

Murray is supported by his wife, Lynette, in managing the 80-plus program and organising Railways functions.

At 93 years old, he remains an active member of the committee. Over the years his efforts have greatly helped retain members and provided support, particularly for those of our members who are aged 80 years and older.



From left Sandie Gusscott, Murray and Lynette McElwain

2025 Branch Meeting Dates

- Tuesday, 25 March 2025
- Tuesday, 10 June 2025 (AGM)
- Tuesday, 16 September 2025

Our branch meetings are free to members and their spouses/guests. They are held in the morning at the Western Springs Garden Community Hall 2. All final arrangements will be emailed prior to the meetings. They will also be published on [our website](#) or call our secretary on 0800 888 472.

Please note that we have secured an expert speaker on Wills, POA's and Trusts for our AGM.

Auckland Retired Railways Group End of the Year Function

All members, partners and friends of the GSA are invited to our end of the year function:

- Thursday, 28 November 2024 at the Manurewa Cosmopolitan Club, Manurewa
- Doors open at 11am and lunch will be served at 12.30pm
- Please provide \$15 cash per person in an envelope with names of those attending. No change will be given
- RSVP: By Monday, 18 November to Murray McElwain phone 09 266 9959 or email murraymc2018@gmail.com

Auckland Branch Christmas Celebration – Wednesday 4th December 2024



All members, please join your GSA Committee for a festive morning tea. Bring your spouse or a guest.

Speaker: Professor Rod Jackson – UOA Epidemiologist “You are What You Eat”

Venue: Western Springs Garden Community Hall 2, 956 Great North Road, Western Springs (ample parking)

Time: 10.30pm – 12pm

RSVP: Please pay \$15 per person into our account 38 9010 0813532 00 and use your name as a reference.

Then register your attendance by 27 November by emailing Andrea on auckland@gsa.org.nz or call her on 0800 888 472. Your RSVP is required for catering purposes.

North Shore Sub Group – Christmas Luncheon

Please join us at the Birkenhead RSA, Recreation Drive, Birkenhead on Friday, 22 November 2024

Morning Tea: 10am with report on GSA business

Performer: 11am Christmas themed music by “Robyn the Harper” (Robyn Allen Goude, professional Harpist)

Luncheon: 12pm Full Christmas luncheon

Cost: \$29pp for North Shore members or \$35pp for non-members payable into account number 12-3026 0737928 00

RSVP: Please register by emailing Jack Harris at jack4andmary@gmail.com or phone 09 2145729 by 15 November 2024

Please also note that at the meeting on 28 March 2025 (morning tea only), Professor Peter Lineham is doing a speech entitled “Explaining the Phenomenon of Brian Tamaki and the Destiny Church”.

