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TARANAKI BRANCH GSA NEWSLETTER

Chairman's Report October 2018

What a great turn-out for our AGM in May. Was it the change of venue, or the increased subsidy? Whatever (and we would be pleased to know), it was great to see all of you who made the effort. Our guest speaker, Reverend Murray Elliot, gave a really interesting view of the work of hospital chaplains.

We have welcomed the addition of Dennis and Denyse Salisbury to our committee; it is great to have volunteers taking on the responsibility.

Once more I am writing this well ahead of the publishing deadline as Sue and I head away shortly to the USA and Canada.

On the first weekend of September, Ian McKillop and I attended the annual Council meeting in Wellington. Some of the points covered included:

The Board will be monitoring the reports of the Governments Tax Working Group to try to ensure that any proposed changes do not affect our GSF annuities, or disadvantage us as a group. You can also be proactive on this issue if you wish to take the time. Should you wish to do so, or make a submission, the website is: <https://taxworkinggroup.govt.nz>

The Board is also watching the work currently being done by Statistics NZ to redefine the "basket of goods" that is used to measure the Consumers Price Index. This directly affects us in that it is the basis of our annual adjustments, but the definition of the basket isn't adjusted to reflect the items most relevant to different age groups. Again, the Board will seek to provide input if it is considered appropriate.

The Board had recommended that there be no increase in the Subscription this year. Our Branch submitted that there should be a small increase, but the meeting supported the Board's recommendation.

There has been no significant progress on the future of the organisation. This is a long term project.

Concern was expressed that in some cases, surviving spouses are not continuing membership when the primary annuitant dies. Because the annuity payment to the surviving spouse is made by Datacom to a new account number, a new authority is required for their GSA subscription deduction. It is not automatic. The view was expressed that in many cases, the need to do this slips in priority due to the stress of dealing with all of the detail involved following the bereavement and gets forgotten. If you know of anyone in this situation, and can prompt them to ensure that they complete the paperwork it will help to save us from losing members.

Progress has been seen, after 9 years of being ignored by Government, the State Services Commission has assisted our recruitment efforts by distributing a letter to eligible pre-annuitants via the payroll system. This has increased the number of pre-annuitants joining

The policy that was made last year for the centralisation of financial reserves has been rescinded as the result of a well presented motion by the Auckland Branch. Since last year's meeting, there has been a concession made by Inland Revenue so that the first \$1000.00 of interest earned by branches will not be assessed for Income Tax. Obviously, our earnings, and that of all but the largest branches, is well below that figure, so while our investments are not earning as much as a larger investment by Head Office could earn, the tax concession alters the picture substantially.

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Greg O'Connor MP gave an interesting address covering his transition from Police Association President to being a new Member of Parliament. He did make a point that while older people are generally as a group, the most worried about crime, they are also the least likely to be victims. He also advised us that local MP's are a more effective channel into Government than higher level ministers, because the latter have to deal with a much larger workload covering a wider range of issues.

Tony will most likely be the Board member attending our Christmas meeting as he wishes to get around as many branches as he can during his first year. He expressed the intent to keep the same representatives where possible, so it is likely that Mike Smith will continue as our representative. He advised us that the Board will be looking to measure the health of branches as part of their tasks during the coming year. Other members elected to the Board were: Dallas Elvy, Mike Smith, Bill Robertson, Alan Straker and Marjorie Thomas.

I wish you all good health, a great festive season, and hope we see even more of you for our Christmas gathering, which we intend to keep as informal as possible.

Les Sharp

Christmas Meeting and Lunch

Wednesday 28 November 2018

Venue THE QUALITY HOTEL, NEW PLYMOUTH

Format	10am	Morning Tea or Coffee and welcome
	10.30	Apologies Chairman's Report
	10.50	Tony Hamilton who was elected as the new National President will give us an update from the Board.
	11.05	Peter Galvin will entertain us
	11.40	Mix and Mingle – drinks
	12 noon	Buffet Lunch

Members, spouses and friends are invited to this meeting
The subsidised cost is \$25 per person which includes morning tea and lunch
If you are paying by cheque please make cheque payable to: Taranaki GSA

Please ring Doreen McCaffrey, phone 753 3240 or email taranaki@gsa.org.nz by 21 November if you are able to join us. We look forward to seeing you there.

Membership

Our current membership is 544. Sadly 16 have died since our AGM and we have welcomed 10 new members, some of whom have transferred from other branches.

Change of address

If you have a change of address please let Doreen know in order that we can ensure our records are correct, thank you.