



**Grey Power New Zealand
Federation Inc
February 2017
Bulletin**

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The reports contained in this Bulletin are abridged versions of those presented at the February 2017 Board Meeting by person named as author at foot of each article.

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Presidents Report

This month we can chalk up two successes for quiet diplomacy. The first was the Government announcement that access to cannabis based pharmaceuticals will be made easier. There has been a long campaign by several groups and individuals seeking a relaxation of the law around cannabis use. Unfortunately the genuine needs of seriously ill people were clouded by a noisy group seeking the right to grow their own cannabis for recreational and so called self-medication. During our last lobby trip to Wellington we spent some time with Health Minister Jonathan Coleman and Associate Health Minister Peter Dunne discussing the issue in some detail and both promised to give careful consideration to our request, particularly making the important difference between clinically tested cannabis based pharmaceuticals and home grown cannabis for self-medication, which we do not support. We also asked that the use of genuine medical cannabis should be under the control of the medical professionals rather than politicians, which is exactly what the Government has now done.

The second success were invitations from both the Green Party and the Labour Party to join with them to assist with their policies which affect older people. In the past there has always been an invitation to “send in your ideas” but this time we will be involved in the formation stages of their policy development. I believe we will be one of the only non-government groups to be involved at this level. Others are consulted but I don’t know of any who will be directly included in the internal discussions. Roy Reid is leading these discussions

These are further demonstrations that quiet, fact based, negotiations, in concert with other like-minded groups are far more valuable than rowdy protests in terms of end results that I hope some of our critics who accuse us of doing nothing will note.

Two other recent political developments may require us to re-think our strategies for the general election later this year. The election of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States and the election of Bill English as New Zealand’s Prime Minister both have the potential to create major shifts in the political landscape as they affect our members.

The first of those shifts has been the withdrawal of the USA from TPPA. While we were strongly opposed to what little we knew of the international trade treaty, it has not gone away. Our concerns were the potential loss of access to affordable medications which would probably have impacted on older people more than most others. There were also issues of the loss of New Zealand’s right to make our own laws without pressure from international corporations seeking easy access to the New Zealand market place.

New Prime Minister Bill English has signalled that New Zealand and the remaining signatories to TPPA could proceed with a revised treaty. If that is the case then we need to insist that the big multinational corporations should be side-lined and that the process should include a more open dialogue with the New Zealand public.

Bill English has indicated a review of national superannuation. This issue has the potential to bring a major impact on our members so we can’t afford to relax and are seeking an early discussion with him.

In the lead up to the general election we also can expect pressure from all manner of political groups for Grey Power to support their particular ideas on these issues. We have already had a few last year but there will no doubt be more in the months ahead. It is essential for us to form our own opinions and policies, not support those of other groups. We may come up with similar ideas but they must be ours, decided by our membership alone. To achieve that it is important for all associations to not allow other groups to foist their ideas on them or make submissions to Government on these matters without letting the Federation office know first. That way we can coordinate our efforts and strength rather than be fragmented, contradictory and easy to ignore.

I have made our submission on the Health (Fluoridation of Drinking Water) Amendment Bill and have asked to be heard by the Select Committee. As directed by the board our submission opposes the loss of the ability of people to decline to have fluoride in their water. Our submission does not address the issue of medical efficiency.

Tom O’Connor President

Advocacy - Lobby Report

Progress on modernisation plan objectives – the aims and goals of the plan underpin most advocacy work, with progress occurring as appropriate. Of particular relevance to this report as in the last report to the Board, is the goal to encourage all political parties to embrace Grey Power policies in their election manifestos.

Key projects:

1 November 1 – 3 2016 lobby visit to Wellington:

► Work completed

- a brief report of visit to the Board and members provided

- a full report detailing the research and results of the lobby visit provided for the Federation web-site

- a report suitable for the Grey Power magazine provided for the March 2017 edition

Proposed lobby visit to Wellington in March – 21 -23rd 2017

► Work to be completed =

2 National Advisory Group chairs to be consulted as required,

appointments to be sought and confirmed
information booklet detailing Grey Power policy, background research etc. to be compiled

3 Correspondence received and action taken:

All relevant correspondence received is tabled as general correspondence at Board meetings and responded to as directed by the Board.

44 Report of meetings attended on behalf of the Advocacy Standing Committee: - none

5 Submissions completed on behalf of the Federation are:

5.1 Submission to the Retirement Commissioner's 2016 Review of Retirement Income Policy
Author Lew Rohloff.

5.2 Submission by the New Zealand Grey Power Federation Inc. on the Health (Fluoridation of Drinking Water) Amendment Bill – author Tom O'Connor

5.3 Submission by the New Zealand Grey Power Federation Inc. on the Rates Rebate (Retirement Village Residents) Amendment Bill – Tom O'Connor

Jan Pentecost

Election Strategy

Desired outcome: To influence political party's 2017 election policies by utilising every opportunity to advance, support and protect the welfare of older people in New Zealand at the appropriate time preceding the central government elections.

One of the election strategy policy goals is to write a detailed work-plan to ensure an efficient election strategy process and to provide a copy to associations

This goal is the easiest way to inform members on what will occur during the final phase of the election strategy for the September 23rd 2017 general election

NB: Many of the tasks, by their very nature, cannot be attended to until nearer the election but all necessary work to date has been completed

The specific tasks and who is responsible for them which are necessary to complete the key project are:

Step 1: Identify resources (financial & other) required to carry out this project - election strategy chair

Step 2: Formulate specific questions for politicians based on the problems/issues decided by the AGM - National Advisory Group chairs and election strategy chair

Step 3: Decide which information is required to prove that each issue actually is a significant problem for older people and to provide background for the questions. This can be accessed through academic articles, media items, personal stories and statistics etc. Request experienced people to provide relevant research / evidence for each issue -National Advisory Group chairs/election strategy chair/research standing committee chair

Step 4: Obtain as much information as possible re the policies of the political parties on each issue chosen and peruse the relevant Grey Power policies to compare with what the political parties are offering- check points of divergence to concentrate on -election strategy chair

Step 5. Examine the previous election promises to compare what was delivered and what was not and decide how to use the information - election strategy chair

Step 6: Decide whether the particular election campaign is an opportunity to work with kindred organisations and if so which of these

offer the most likely fit -National Advisory Group chairs/ election strategy chair etc.

Step 7: Prepare emails/letters outlining the issues and recommending acceptable action for Grey Power and requesting a meeting - send the emails/letters to the relevant politicians and arrange visits -election strategy chair/secretary

Step 8: Analyse the responses from the political party leaders - election strategy chair

Step 9: Request NAG committees' comments on the political responses - election strategy chair

Step 10: Decide how to the pass information to:

- The target group,
- Grey Power members (stakeholders) -
- All types of news media,
- Kindred organisations.

For example, précis the responses and provide the information to the editor of the Grey Power magazine for publication for members' information - election strategy chair & election strategy group members etc.

Step 11. Provide progress reports to the board and assns. at appropriate intervals - election strategy chair

Step 12: Carry out a post project review to identify lessons learnt during the process. Ask the question "what would be an indication that our election strategy was successful?"

Step 13: Produce a final report for circulation to the board and members - election strategy group members etc.

The election strategy National Advisory Group also needs to take cognizance of potential pitfalls such as lack of time, lack of assistance, lack of association support, lack of interest from the news media etc.

Recommendation:

- That the Board receives this report and offers advice on how appropriate the tasks are for the election strategy National Advisory Group>

Jan Pentecost (Chair on behalf of group members T. O'Connor & M. Welch)
February 2017

Treasurers Report

All Federation bank accounts are now held at Kiwibank.

As at 31 January 2017 funds held totalled \$625,152.14.

Income from 1 November 2016 to 31 January 2017 totalled \$129,351.31 with an expenditure of \$106,880.88 for the 3 months.

Income for the 2016 financial year was \$569,204.39. while expenditure was \$430,622.56 giving a surplus for the year of \$138,581.83 subject to audit.

The main income for the 2016 financial year came from

	2016	compared	2015
Capitation	276,858		298,680
Kiwibank Commission	115,729		112,732
Grey Power Electricity	144,520		90,760

This leaves the funds at the end of the financial year in a sound position and meets the Boards target of one year's expenditure in reserve.

Budget 2017

The Board has approved an increase in the budget for advocacy to \$20,000 for the current financial year.

Write off of Equipment.

Four items of worn out equipment with a book value at \$1,657.00 were written off.

R Reid Treasurer

Finance and Investment

Remit 36 /2016

Financial transaction Tax

The committee recommends that the Board is unable to progress this remit at the present time as the political parties do not appear to support having a transaction tax instead of the goods and services tax. As the remit was passed at the 2016 AGM the proposal should now be passed to the advocacy committee to discuss in conjunction with this committee and the political parties if the political view point changes in the future.

R Reid, 10 February 2017

Office Manager

Happy New Year to all Associations. The office staff would like to thank everyone for all the Christmas cards, emails and positive comments received prior to Christmas and they look forward to their continued contact with you to provide the services for our Grey Power members.

Stationery orders: Many Associations have ordered their cards for this year but if

anyone has missed getting their order in, now is the time to do so.

Pulse: It may be advisable for Associations to make it clear to new members that it is an annual subscription they pay (not a one-off payment). We have received many calls from people complaining that they were never told that. I have suggested that the board ask Pulse to send a note with their March Grey Power Electricity invoices reminding customers that they must pay the Grey Power annual subscription to their local Associations to be valid for our scheme.

AIL Special benefit: A reminder to all Associations that AIL provide a Free Accidental Death and Dismemberment Cover to all financial Grey Power members. This is an automatic entitlement for all financial members registered on the Grey Power Federation central database. Please remind members to put this information with their personal papers in case of the unfortunate event that requires someone else to know about this entitlement should they need to make a claim.

Violet McCowatt

Social Services

Pensioner Units: I would be grateful if Associations could speak to their local councils to ask if the bathroom/toilet doors of their pensioner flats could be fitted with new privacy locks or latches (or even better, with outward opening doors where possible, or sliders or concertina as appropriate) so that doors can be opened from the outside. We know of numerous occasions when emergency services have been delayed for elderly that have fallen or taken a turn in their bathrooms.

Gold Card: Pete Matcham has been speaking to Maggie Barry about the Gold Card so any queries should be directed to him. At this stage, I have not heard back about my suggestion of seeking to get discounts for NZ SuperGold Card holders for car parking when visiting a spouse in hospital and for SuperGold Card holder appointments.

Violet McCowatt

Health National Advisory Group

In December I was asked to speak on behalf of the Consumer Groups at the launch of the Healthy Ageing Strategy (formerly known as

Health of Older Persons Strategy). I considered this to be an honour and was even more delighted to know it was because of the interest and involvement of so many Grey Power Associations and members. Thank you all as the Ministry of Health was delighted with your interest and input. What needs to happen now is that there is some form of monitoring put in place to ensure the intent of the document is adhered to.

I have been advised of some problems with home care not being provided in a couple of areas. The provider appears to be the Access Group which is an Australian company who have a head office located in Auckland. The inquiries I have made seem to show that this company has no in-depth knowledge of the locations of the areas nor the terrain or distances. Local complaints bring no result at all. I am aware of problems in Zone 5 and Zone 7. If any other zones have further information I would very much appreciate being advised of the details. This will have to go on the agenda when we speak with the Ministry of Health. I know it is a local District Health Board responsibility but it is essential we know what the Ministry of Health's mandate is.

The Federation Secretary has sent a request for items for the Advocacy/Lobby trip but Elective Surgery is the Health Election Strategy so it is vital that you continue to send in any information you come across even after the trip has taken place. The more information we can put before the political parties the greater the possibility of getting some positive policy from them.

In closing may I extend my sincere thanks to my committee who take a great interest in all health matters and offer some very good advice and suggestion.

Jo Millar

Chair Health National Advisory Group

Retirement Villages Stakeholders Forum

I attended this forum organised by the Commission for Financial Capability on 16 November 2016.

The meeting covered 1. The Code Variations which become effective on 1 April 2017.

Improved written complaint policy and a new procedure for formal complaints. Statutory

Supervisors required to report six monthly to the Commission.

2. Monitoring Project 2016/17 Act requires intending residents are required to receive independent legal advice. There is a concern that some residents do not fully understand the financial commitments to living in a village. Being able to understand the key documents for an occupation rights agreement. Documents to be written in plain English not Legal jargon.

3. Code of Practice-Drafting Review

4. Statutory Supervisors _FMA There are concerns with the adequacy of deeds, the capability of Statutory Supervisors independence and accountability. The new criteria will be in the interests of the village residents.

5. Age Care- Implications for Retirement Villages.

This was a panel discussion but had one major concern for us which is the issue of an occupation rights agreement for a resident to occupy a rest home bed within a retirement village rest home. This means that the resident would purchase the Right to occupy a room while in care. This is already happening on a small scale.

This was a meeting that provided a lot of information and was well worth attending. I can provide a Power point summary to any member interested.

Kaipara Association.

The Association has advised that they are currently working with the Dargaville Community Board and Northland Inc. to do a feasibility study on the provision of a retirement village in Dargaville.

Letter Zone 7

I have received a letter from Zone 7 expressing concern about the cost of purchase of a Retirement village unit and also a problem of those that have rented all their lives and cannot purchase a retirement unit and suggests that Government or Local bodies will need to provide low cost 2 bedroom units.

R Reid

11 February 2017

Aged Care

It was agreed at the time of the last advocacy visit that that the Federation would re visit the report into age care that the Labour and Green

parties in conjunction with Grey Power did in 2010. This report was followed up by the Human Rights Commission "Caring Counts" report written by Dr Judy McGregor. Both reports made recommendations but progress by Government in implementing them has been very slow.

It is planned that 7 meetings will be held at Association level so that Members can provide evidence as to what they see is happening with the provision of age care, both Home Care as well as Residential care.

The proposal was announced last Thursday and raised media interest as well as questions from the Age Care Association and Retirement Villages Association.

The first meeting was held in Golden Bay on 10 February with a very good attendance. The meeting was given a summary of the recommendations and an update on the progress that has been made on them. Those attending then spent 90 minutes giving detail of problems mostly on the provision of home care. One company is very unreliable in providing the care. A lot of comment on payment for travel by the care workers, a payment is being made but is below the public service rate and in some cases is a payment based on time not mileage. In a rural area this is a major concern resulting in some workers leaving their jobs.

Training of the Home care workers also remains a major concern.

The two Members of Parliament did not make any political statements which was pleasing.

The other Associations to host meetings are Horowhenua, Rotorua, Christchurch, Otago and North Shore. North Shore may become Auckland.

Roy Reid Chair

Zone Reports

A note for Zone Directors

Your regular reports to the board should cover the work and initiatives of the associations in your zones.

Your reports may also record issues and frustrations as they occur from time to time but they should not include negative comments or unanswered accusations about other federation members or the board. There are other ways of having these matters heard and

addressed. Ideally these matters should be raised directly with board.

When these negative comments appear in zone reports they will be edited out before publication in the Grey Power Bulletin as it is a public document which cannot contain such material.

Tom O'Connor President

Zone 3

The zone meeting in November 2016 included the re-election of officers for the new year, with the exception of the Zone Representative (incumbent Christina Humphreys) who has another year to run in that position. The current Zone Director and Secretary were returned for another year and Secretary, Rod Gibson, was elected as Deputy Zone Representative.

The February 2017 Zone Meeting enjoyed the attendance of the Federation President, Tom O'Connor, who updated the Zone on Board matters and fielded a raft of questions from delegates. The meeting was heartened to hear that the executive and Board members have an excellent working relationship and a real commitment to favourable outcomes for Grey Power membership. He acknowledged and appreciated the huge amount of time and effort that so many people put into maintaining and expanding on the success of the organisation nationwide.

Tom fielded questions on the possibility of a Chief Executive for GP which has been hotly debated by this Zone at recent meetings, whether there is a policy on Euthanasia, housing for the elderly, the need for Zone endorsement of AGM remits, greater membership involvement in Board lobbying of Government and improvements to both the membership data-base system and the Grey Power website. The meeting was advised that improvements to the website are under action at present, however, the Board would look for constructive suggestions from associations before implementing improvements to the membership system.

Tauranga/Western BOP Association again raised the wide discrepancies that exist among DHBs across the country in prioritising elective surgeries.

Being the first such visit to a Zone 3 meeting for some four years, the membership

was appreciative of the President's presence at the Zone meeting.

Many associations have expressed continued dissatisfaction with the performance of Kiwi Bank where simple administrative functions seem beyond the company to action in a reasonable manner and timeframe. This has forced some associations to change to other banks.

Associations in this zone have again made a plea to the Federation for more involvement in political advocacy issues. All are looking forward to the outcome from the Commercial NAG on possible further discounts with major service suppliers.

The Kawerau Association drew attention to the fact that electricity transmission costs being passed onto consumers are currently being reviewed apparently without consideration of the location of consumers or whether some agencies/companies are generating supply back to the grid. The President suggested the details be supplied directly to the Board for any possible action.

The Rotorua Association noted that it is hosting a collaborative forum on the working conditions for Age Care Workers and the standard of care in some Retirement Villages.

Vice President Mac Welsh expressed his concern that there were not more associations attending this years AGM given that it is in the North Island this year.

At the request of many associations wishing to set their association meetings to avoid clashes with Zone Meetings, the Zone Director indicated that he was keen to set dates for the remaining three zone meetings for the year, however, this was not possible until the Board meeting dates are set for the year which will be determined at the February Board meeting in the next week. The establishment by the Federation office of a diary of key meeting dates and reporting deadlines for Zone Reports would be extremely helpful for Zone Officers.

Merv Lauder Zone 3 Director

Zone 4

Of the nineteen Associations in the zone, five or six are actively working for the objectives of Grey Power and keep me informed. These few have definitely kept the flag flying and the issues they address include:

Local body elections- many held candidates' meetings

Local issues such as a proposed sell-off of pensioner housing
Police numbers
Actual use of DHB funds – is too much spent on administration?
Cost of medications to those on regular prescriptions
Proposed raising of the age of entitlement to NZ superannuation
Regular attendance at local Council meetings
Age-friendly cities projects
Social housing
Health of Older Persons Strategy
Participation in special interest groups: road safety, home care monitoring, etc
Local health services: proposed reductions in services; transport and accommodation issues for patients; GP shortages (Taranaki); alcohol admissions; alcohol abuse among elderly: waiting lists
Bank closures. Proposed taxation by IRD of electricity lines company rebates to customers
Safety after earthquakes
Local body rates: targeted rates preferable?
Complaints about rest homes: en suite surcharges, abuse
Water issues: pollution and contamination, Ruataniwha Dam
Objections to changes to Gold Card
Increasing electricity prices: low user rate a benefit or not?; solar energy viable?
Flagging of Grey Power members' Kiwibank accounts (Wairoa)
Grey Power Electricity difficulties: assignment of members to GPE, not Pulse Energy; refunds for those incorrectly assigned; reassignment to Pulse Energy of those who ease to be GP members for whatever reason; procedures in place to expedite the above.

As for the rest of our Associations, they appear to be silent partners. I get the impression that some consider their priority to be local issues (if they are addressing any at all, and that may be questionable) rather than assisting the Federation in its mission.

Killian De Lacey, Zone 4

Zone 6

Zone Meetings: Our new centrally located venue for meetings in Ashburton seems to be working out well for the associations in Zone 6 and it's good to have cut down on travelling distances. We are meeting every 4 months, February, *June and October in 2017*

Grey Power Federation AGM: The dates of the AGM for 2017 are later than usual and this is causing some association's whose financial year is April 1 to 31 March to take their AGM through to June (April is too early to get financial records audited in time). Zone 6 have requested that the Federation Board consider having future AGM's in late April or first week in May

Minutes of Board Meetings: Some associations are unhappy about not receiving Federation Board Meeting minutes until they have been approved several months after the event. It is helpful for associations to be able to be kept up to date by reading the minutes shortly after the meetings have been held. This concern has been forwarded to the Federation Board.

Pressure on Membership Secretaries: There was an in depth discussion on this issue at our meeting on February 13 particularly in the amount of work that the membership secretaries inherited late last year following a mail out to un financial members from Grey Power Electricity (some GPE customers had been un financial since 2015). Many feared that their power was going to be cut off. Association delegates at our meeting were generally under the impression that this sort of problem was going to be handled between Pulse Energy and the Grey Power Federation employees. It is too much to expect of voluntary committee members in our associations to fulfil the role of paid employees.

Election of Zone Director and Deputy Zone Director: Denise Fitzgerald was re elected as Zone Director for 2017 and Janya Lobb as Deputy Zone Director
Denise Fitzgerald Zone 6

Zone 7

It is with some concern that I write this report having previously had reports from me to the Federation Board edited by the National President without any consultation with me. I have also had the Office Manager request that I rewrite part of my report . This kind of behaviour is totally unacceptable to me and to Zone 7.

Our Zone meeting was held Jan.27th at Balclutha; 33 members in attendance. The following matters were discussed. Board minutes have always been available to Assoc. in an unconfirmed format as they allow

the Assoc. to keep informed and up to date with current events. Zone 7 do not agree with the Boards decision to delay the distribution of the minutes by 3 months until they have AGM in Palmerston North – Three Assoc. will not be attending because of the prohibitive costs.

Superannuation – there was a good discussion. Increase the residency for immigrants to 25yrs before they receive the benefit; have the present age of eligibility retained; increase the rate of superannuation and have the payments set by the Higher Salaries commission or a similar independent authority. It was felt that the Board have been too slow in handling the issue (especially in election year) and that Assoc. should have the right to be making public statements and lobbying MPs ; with the correct information being supplied from the Board. In the next advocacy trip could the following questions be asked - have the Govt. contributed to the fund since 2008 and have they been using the fund to purchase property?

Dunedin Forum - members felt it was worthwhile and some sat in on the Board meeting.

In Nov. last year I was invited to attend a Probus meeting in Roxburgh and talk about the aims of Grey Power and its history.

Health – always issues here. Some Home Care still not what it should be and age becoming a factor if treatment is given or not.

Les Glassie Zone 7

Mobility scooters - people not using them correctly ie riding on roads and not being fully visible.

Several remits were put forward by Assoc. incl politicians perks after they leave office to be stopped and having a National NZ day in place of Waitangi Day.

Retirement homes - too expensive for the average working person with low wages, high rentals plus raising a family making it almost impossible to save for retirement. Govt. need to be looking at building low cost homes for retirees.

Les Glassey Zone 7

Unless stated otherwise the reports printed in this Bulletin are those presented to the Board meeting of the month stated.

Some reports are abridged by the author stated at foot of report.

Bob Thompson

Editors Comment

Thank you to all those that submitted reports. Please note it is writers responsibility for content and timeliness of reports.