



Grey Power New Zealand Federation Inc

March 2013

Bulletin

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The reports contained in this Bulletin are as presented at the March 2013 Board meeting or an abridged version by the individual named as author at foot of each article.

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Presidents Report

I sincerely hope that all Board Members had some family time over the festive season, and are now back to attending to the Boards work.

Sadly I wish to advise that Christina Cressey has passed away and extend our condolences to Brian and family.. My thanks to Violet McCowatt and Janice Harding for the extra work that they have done over the last few months while Christina has been ill. Some temporary staff has been employed to cover the workload.

I have attended a meeting of the group collecting signatures for the Petition on Asset Sales and it now hoped to present the petition to the Clerk of the House of Parliament in the first week of March. It is hoped that the petition will have 390000 signatures.

We must be very concerned that in recent weeks two electricity Companies have announced very large profits which are made by the exorbitant prices that they are charging especially to the Domestic consumer.

Mr Bill Atkinson and I were invited to attend the farewell function for Dianna Crossan the former Retirement Commissioner at Parliament Buildings. In her speech she extended her thanks to Grey Power for our work that we had been involved with the Commission during the time that she was Commissioner.

I have attended a meeting with Mr Martin Taylor CEO Age care Assn. We discussed the following topics;

Palliative Care in Rest homes.

This type of care requires much more specialised nursing care and many rest homes are not staffed to cover the care needed. We agreed that for a person in need of palliative care the Government should pay a higher fee to cover the cost of the care that should be given in the last 3 to 4 weeks of the resident's life. We are still considering a joint approach to Government. Hospitals receive a much bigger payment than a rest home does to provide this type of nursing care.

Premium Rooms

We cannot reach agreement on this. I have made it very clear that Grey Power is opposed to the Government introducing the right of rest homes to have a percentage of Premium Rooms. The Secretary has submitted

an excellent submission to the Government opposing the idea of premium rooms. A double standard will result which would be detrimental to those that cannot afford to pay for premium rooms.

Enduring Power of Attorney

Age care Assn have concerns about some cases where the person holding the Power of Attorney does not provide any money for the resident even the small Superannuation payment made to a resident is often not given to the resident for spending on day to day needs. Maybe this money should be held in a trust account and be made available to residents when needed.

Gifting

A concern in some rest homes exists where residents make gifts to staff. They want to protect both the resident and staff from this practice. There is a need for the gifts to be of a limited value to be transparent to protect both staff and residents.

A web-site who cares has been prepared and this gives information on rest homes and the number of beds available in rest homes.

During the last two weeks Associations have been asked for any topics that they wish to be attended to on the next advocacy team visit to Wellington. It is very disappointing that such negative and derogatory comments have been received, stating, I Quote;

“To receive an e-mail that the Board is “considering “ a lobby trip in April when they should be preparing for the SGM &AGM and implementing the Modernisation Plan is a nonsense.”

“A last Hoorah, or so they can go to the AGM and tell us about how well they are received by “officialdom” so they get re-elected”

“In my view this is a final fling for those that won't be on the Board next year. We should save our cash. The Government has no money and wont be giving anything away. If anything we should be concerned about the 270,000 kids living in poverty, not reinforcing the “greedy oldies” tag

Do they not understand that many of our Members especially those living on a single rate of Superannuation have great difficulty in meeting their daily cost of living. To cope they put off seeing a Doctor or Dentist and do

not pick up medicines, live in cold homes because they try to save on electricity costs. Surely it is this Boards responsibility to make their plight known.

If this is the attitude of Association Officers then it is no wonder that our membership has fallen. We are all volunteers doing our best for the Membership and the remarks made do not help in any way at all.

Roy Reid, President 23 February 2013

Report of the Implementation

Planning Team

Since the last Board meeting the Implementation Planning Team has held one teleconference meeting.

Considerable work has been done on producing a Governance Manual which provides a detailed manual for all Board and Board Committies, and National Advisory Groups.

A set of Roles and Responsibilities for 2the President, Vice President, National Secretary, National Treasurer, Federation Board, Zone Director and Zone Representative have been prepared and will be added to the THE WAY FORWARD document which is the base document for the Federation Governance Manual.

The Constitution has been looked at and a set of Remits will be presented to the Board for confirmation as Board Remits for both the Special General Meeting and the Annual General Meeting.

The team will meet on the day before the Board meeting to finalise the Remits and Manual for presentation to the Board.

I extend my sincere thanks to Terry King and Jan Pentecost for the many hours of work put into preparing the document THE WAY FORWARD and to Bob Thompson for preparing the Governance Manual.

R Reid

Zone 1 Report

No report Received

Zone 2 Report

No Report Received

Zone 3 Report

Zone three held its first meeting of the year with 15 associations present. The meeting was chaired by Mac Welch, chair of Coromandel Grey Power, in the absence of our Zone Director Bruce Purchase who is in Waikato Hospital.

Issues raised by those present were:

Advocacy Visit Report, while the content was well recorded and appreciated could a summarised version be provided so this could be used in newsletters and reports to members. A Motion was put from Waihi requesting the Zone Secretary write to the Board the following: "In order to convey a sense of ongoing progress to our members, Zone 3 requires from the Board regular e.g. quarterly, summarised reports of current advocacy concerns and other issues detailing the outcomes an results." This was seconded by Paeroa and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Modernisation Plan Bob Thompson gave an update on the implementation team's progress to date. A draft manual is being prepared. The work load of Zone Directors will be shared with a Zone Representative who will be the Zone representative on the Board. The issue of Proxy voting was discussed and the general consensus was that the current system is cumbersome. It was move by Matamata, seconded Kawerau "that the Board be advised that Zone 3 Associations would prefer proxies to be held by a Zone Representative rather than another association." CARRIED

Rest Home Levies: Paeroa raised the issue of Rest homes now building "premium" accommodation at extra cost and with a consequent loss of available bed numbers. DHBs will be required to fund these on the same amount of funding. Suggested Paeroa write to Bill Atkinson, RV Portfolio.

NZ Post- Community Post Applications: It appears that those associations that are creative in their applications are more successful than those who are factual.

Gold Card: Mercury Bay requested once more that consideration be give to photo ID on the card as many elderly no longer drive. Some associations felt that by Federation promoting the card Federation was undermining Associations own Discount books.

Motor Registration ACC Component: Western BOP highlighted an anomaly whereby

a diesel powered 4x4 attracted a levy of \$311, a petrol powered similar vehicle only cost \$196. Suggested contact with Jack Kerr, ACC Portfolio and Motor Registration to query this anomaly.

Third Party Insurance: Western BOP stated this should be compulsory. A Remit on this issue has been put forward to the AGM.

Bicycle Safety: Western BOP highlighted flagrant breaches of the law, especially by High School students e.g. wrong way around traffic islands and no helmets. The meeting felt that there was insufficient policing community wide and this issue should be taken up at a local level with the Police.

Senior Safety: following a vicious assault on an elderly Kawerau resident the Kawerau Association held a public meeting, (attended by over 200) at which strong views were expressed. They are proposing to hold another open meeting at which the Minister of Police, Local MP and Council members will be invited. This issue aroused a great deal of interest in delegates and when the meeting is arranged they will be advised, It was felt that this could be a "grass roots" issue for all Associations to take up.

Federation Database Errors: were highlighted by Rotorua, and endorsed by a number of other associations. There is confusion, which is compounded when membership secretaries change, despite a documented procedure.

National Tsunami Warning System: Mercury Bay requested a progress report from Board and will it be raised at next Board meeting?

Agenda 21: Hamilton unhappy at Board response, they feel that this issue is not being taken seriously by whichever committee is responsible. They have submitted detailed reports to the Federation Board on this issue. It never seems to be discussed.

Energy Report: Barry Cope of Hamilton circulated his regular in depth report to delegates and it is well researched and presented.

Bob Thompson, Deputy Zone Director

Zone 4 Report

With many members on holiday, it has been relatively quiet both locally or nationally since the last zone meeting, but zone

Associations have been working over the last few months to prepare proposals on how the Zone can work together more effectively as a regional voice for our members. These proposals were then discussed in a workshop at the February zone meeting.

I have been made aware that not all associations have in place even the most fundamental Health and Safety or emergency evacuation protocols, nor job descriptions for their staff. Associations have been directed to <http://keepingitlegal.net.nz> to check the legal requirements, and to the parent site, the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector <http://www.ocvs.govt.nz> for its wide and invaluable resources on all things to do with running voluntary organisations.

In my dual capacity as Zone Director and Chair of the Federation Research committee I have also followed up concerns raised by Napier and Districts Association on the removal of pedestrian crossings. A full report on this will be made under the aegis of the Research Committee, but in essence my investigation notes that:

- NZTA has no policy to remove or do away with uncontrolled pedestrian (Zebra) crossings.
- There is international research that indicates uncontrolled pedestrian crossings are becoming increasingly dangerous places to cross the road.
- The existence, type and position of most zebra crossings are determined by the local authority, and that lobbying for retention or creation should be directed at that level.

Two issues have raised concerns with associations in general. These are the proposal to limit constitutional changes for the next three years to those submitted by the Board, and the issue of how the transition from the existing constitution to the proposed new one, assuming it is passed by the SGM, is handled.

For the former, once the rationale behind the proposal is explained, this concern is largely allayed, and I have also emphasised that Associations remain able, and will be encouraged, to make any inconsistencies or errors known to the Board so that they can be corrected.

The second issue remains a concern throughout the zone. The recently obtained ruling that the new structure comes into force

as soon as the changes are registered with the Incorporated societies, has allayed most concerns. However the process of transition remains to be spelt out, as does the further work that will be required to ensure that the structure operates effectively and as intended.

Pete Matcham Zone director

Zone 5 Report

No Report Received

Zone 6 Report

Most Associations just having their first meetings for the year in February, a range of speakers planned on various topics.

The late January Zone meeting in Temuka was well attended and again the local association had provided good hospitality.

Major concerns were around the cost of insurance, in the wake of the major earthquakes that had affected Christchurch, insurance companies are ramping up their premiums, and it was felt that like Health insurance, ordinary household and contents insurance maybe too costly for many elderly people, this could be disastrous in the event of another major event, like floods, or earthquake. Reports that some household insurance has increased up to 38%, along with the increase in rates, this is becoming quite a problem.

A discussion was held on the Treaty based Constitution, the article in the last Grey Power magazine provoked a discussion, no conclusion was reached, with the major opinion being that its not a subject that Grey Power should get involved in.

Another area of concern was the rising cost of prescription charges from \$3 to \$5 per item, and the removal of the DHB subsidy on the blister packs and delivery of same.

A chemist in Timaru advertises in store, that weekend and public holiday prescriptions would incur a surcharge of \$2 per item... so increasing the cost per item to \$7.00. These extra charges are perceived to be very hard for young families and the elderly. Unfortunately Timaru has only one pharmacy that handles all after hour prescriptions hence they have a captured market.

A Zone report would not be complete without advising of the increased power

charges or rates (more on that later) increases, this report is no different to others.

Genesis Energy has imposed a rise of 18% on the day rate charge... and 14% on the night rate--- both increases are calculated before GST is applied, which will further increase the cost. The actual increase on the day rate will be 20% when GST is included. Contact energy

Christchurch rates are expected to increase 6.5% each year for the next three years, while there was expected to be larger increases than inflation to cover infrastructure damaged by earthquake, unfortunately the government are calling on the Christchurch City council to build nice to have, but unaffordable and loss making ventures such as a Convention Centre and Covered Rugby stadium, both expected to cost around \$80 million in total. This expenditure while many people are waiting for their houses to be repaired from earthquakes. The CCC is under pressure from the government to sell some of their assets, such as Lyttelton Port Company, Christchurch International Airport Ltd, and Orian NZ Ltd., these assets produce good profits and help keep rates down, as an example rates in Christchurch average \$1600 annually, as against next door Waimakariri District council's average of \$2600 per annum.

Miles R Jackson Zone 6 Director.

Zone 7 Report

All Zone 7 Assoc. are working well and are getting some new members. Zone meetings have been well attended and it was decided to have Balclutha as our central meeting point.

Signatures have been collected to help with the 'stop the sale of assets campaign'.

A big issue for Otago/Southland is the Southern District Health Board –SDHB – has awarded home support services contracts for Otago and Southland worth over \$15 million to companies managed from the North Island with their parent company being in Australia.

The SDHB has admitted that the move will not save any money – will it improve services? We would like to think so.

The present service has been going for 10 yrs and by a lot of reports doing well. However there are always two sides to a story and as the saying goes' a new broom may

sweep clean' The SDHB has cut the hours for home care help, down to half an hour in some instances and was interviewing the elderly by phone causing untold anxiety and frustration. I also have first hand information that some of the care in the rest homes has not been satisfactory and the wages for the carers was minimum for the work and hours they were having to put in.

We have a Power Co. from Dunedin talking to our Zone about cheaper power for Grey Power members. Central Lakes Power helps their district by providing funding for community projects.

Alexandra have a problem with minerals in their water supply. By installing a magnet around the inlet pipe to each house the water has been able to be improved.

The election for Zone Director resulted in – Zone Director Les Glassey, Deputy Zone Director Jo Millar
Les Glassey Zone Director

NAG 50+ Sub-Committee Report

The 50+ sub-committee is currently working on the following issues:

1. **Ageism in the workforce** and its accompanying problem older people who are made redundant and who are reliant on the unemployment benefit to survive. **Current Action:**
 - Draft almost complete of a real life case study for publication in the Grey Power Quarterly Magazine, along with a request for others to provide details of any similar cases;
 - Partially prepared document to send to the Minister of Social Development. Labour spokespeople and other relevant decision-makers including the Human Rights Commissioner.
2. **Advocacy Visit Issues** – many of these are applicable to people aged between 50 – 65 years old.

Current Action:

Involvement with the advocacy team in lobbying for subsidised oral health care for older people who hold a community services card, for Pharmac to provide full information about the new meters for diabetic patients, for affordable property rates, for assistance for grandparents raising grandchildren and for reasonable insurance premiums.

We welcome comments and personal stories on these issues as well as any other issue of importance to you. Please contact Jan Pentecost at jan.pentecost@gmail.com or Shirley Gilmer at dsgilmer@xtra.co.nz
Jan Pentecost Chair March 2013

Advocacy Report

Issues for the Advocacy Visit (as provided by members/board) to be arranged in Wellington for April 16th, 17th, 18th:

1. TV. Going digital

1.1 WINZ not providing correct info re 'going-digital'

2. ACC: 2.2 Investments overseas and the use of some of these funds to reduce waiting lists

2.3 ACC & hearing loss

2.4 The destruction of ACC files

3. Transport: 3.1 Overseas drivers and their knowledge of NZ road rules

3.2 Discrimination against older people re the cost of ACC, WOF & registration fees because they use of their cars less

4. Superannuation: 4.1 Superannuation fund investment = questions re where this money is invested

4.2 Inadequate superannuation payments

4.3 Superannuation and KiwiSaver

5. Health – 5.1 Increased prescription charges & the removal of the DHB subsidy on blister packs

5.2 Appointees to District Health Boards

5.3 Generic replacement of medication – lack of information

5.4 Glucose meters – problem with newly introduced meters

5.5 Older people and suicide

5.6 The oral health care – lack of affordability for many older people.

5.7 Medical fees associated with renewing drivers' licences =should be MoH responsibility

5.8 The building of dementia units above ground level in new rest homes

5.9 No appeal process for rest home subsidy loan refusals

- 5.10 Fair travel allowance for carers
- 5.11 MoH rest-home audit web-site out of date
- 5.12 Private Health Insurance
- 5.13 The dangers of fluoride
- 5.14 Faulty hip replacements
- 5.15 Total mobility cards-Auckland Age Concern's request for applicants for cards to join Age Concern
- 5.16 The InterRai assessment instrument
- 5.17 Difficulty of accessing rest-home Care forms
- 5.18 Production of the compulsory home & community support standard in plain English

6. Insurance – Its un-affordability

7. Local body rates – their un-affordability

7.1 GST on Rates

7.2 Rates rebate

8. Social Services – 8.1 Grandparents raising grandchildren =MSD Minister's announcement that more money to be provided.

8.2 Trusts- the inability to access community service cards, disability allowance or other targeted govt assistance for those who have their assets in trust

8.3 Problems with person responsible for superannuation in a specific area office

8.4 Cost of passports-a request that superannutants pay less for a passport or for renewals

9. Minister of Senior Citizens to hold a cabinet post

10. Legal – 10.1 Enduring Power of Attorney both personal welfare & property to be held by an independent person alongside a family member

10.2 Trusts- the inability to access community service cards, disability allowance or other targeted govt assistance of those who have their assets in trust

10.3 Wills data-base

11. Education: Re-visit the issue of the cutting of adult education funding and loss of access to student loans by people 55+

12. Ministry of Social Development : 12.1 Senior Services– Information sharing forum-mobile phones and SuperGold card

12.2 Trusts and the inability of older people to access community cards, disability allowance or other support

13. Energy: The failure of electricity prices to fall in an over-supply situation.

The report to the Grey Power Board meeting also contained a description and example of the preparatory work involved before each issue is presented on advocacy visits.

For further information or to provide personal stories please contact the advocacy standing committee chair Jan Pentecost at jan.pentecost@gmail.com or 113 Stringers Road RD 7, Rangiora 7477

Jan Pentecost

Communication & Technology

The Grey Power web-site has been updated, gone are the old photos, and former board members that were attached to portfolios.

All Standing committees and National Advisory committees (NAGS) are listed, Thanks must go to our office that has carried out this task.

Gaps in communications are appearing, and until people are advised who does what this will be an on going problem, as mentioned in the December report, much still had to change subject to the 'Implementation committee' completing its program and various committees knowing there responsibilities.

Earlier this year Grey Power were invited by the Department of Internal Affairs, To complete a consultation paper on web standards, Pete Matcham with his experience on web-sites was the ideal person to do this, Pete under took this willingly; we thank him for this, and look forward to the Internal Affairs response.

Recently our secretary Jan Pentecost, Vice President Terry King and I have been working on suggestions to put before the Comm & Tech committee to make the committee arrive at is functionality and responsibilities. This should result in better communications in all areas; some of the findings could be used in other National Advisory Committees (NAGS).

M.R.Jackson Chair.

Communication & Technology Standing Committee

Retirement Villages

Christchurch Red Zone Petition:-

As nothing has been heard regarding any progress on the petition to the House of Representatives, Winston Peters was emailed early in February asking him for up-date comments on the Finance & Expenditure Select Committee action on the Grey Power petition that has been before the committee for almost 8 months.

On 14 March 2013 a reply was received from the Executive Assistant of New Zealand First advise that "Mr Peters had raised this matter at a meeting of the Finance & Expenditure Select Committee. The response was that the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment is preparing a report on this matter and will be appearing before the Committee. **There was no time frame given.**"

We have again given an indication that we are also prepared to appear before the Select Committee, to speak on our submission to the petition.

Retirement Village Association Conference:- Following the correspondence from John Collyns, executive Director, RVA in reply to the presentation made by the RV Chair to the RVA Conference, I met with John to further discuss points of difference in an amicable manner.

AGM Sponsorship: This year's AGM is likely to have a Retirement Village atmosphere as far as displays are concerned. In reply to a request for assistance in obtaining sponsorship, both the RVA and three larger RV operators have agreed to donate a total of \$10,000 as a result of the RV portfolio Chair requests. We are still looking for more sponsors.

Portfolio Work:- There is a continuing and growing number of enquiries from members considering going into an RV during the past three months, as well as from existing member residents having problems. Considering that each enquiry can take from 30 to 60 minutes to answer, this has also occupied some time for the portfolio.

Off-Board Portfolio Members: The Board has approved of the appointment of the five potential off-Board RV portfolio members, and the names and details of these will be circulated so that all Grey Power members seeking information and assistance

will hopefully become aware of the RV portfolio member in their area.

Bill Atkinson Chairperson
Retirement Villages Portfolio Committee

Health

The MOH National Board are pursuing the suggestion to look at including the provision for social interactivity in their Health of Older Persons Aged Care package. The President and I are meeting Chai Chuah the National Director of MOH on Wednesday 13 March and we will be able to give the meeting a further update.

At the last advocacy meeting I raised the possibility of getting the contents of medications on the packages. This was not well received but I believe we need to follow up on this at the next advocacy meeting. The constant changes to generic medicines and the lack of information being given out is quite concerning. To give you an instant Betaloc is no longer subsidised and has now been replaced with Metoprolol. On checking this medication I find there are various ailments which may need a dose adjustment or special tests. A note saying it is not known whether this would harm an unborn baby and a list of 14 possible side effects. The biggest concern is that the packaging is absolutely devoid of any warning nor is there an explanatory leaflet inside.

There have been a number of concerns raised about the way in which assessments are being conducted for home help and possible rest home care for the Interai programme. I was given to believe that the questionnaire is standard but there seems to be some problems in the way the assessors are approaching the questions and the treatment of those receiving the assessment. I would like to find out how they get their subjects when training assessors and if they use people in the over 65 age bracket. If they are not I feel it is an avenue we need to pursue.

It goes without saying that the advocacy list gets longer and longer each time and if we could only get a definitive answer on some of the ongoing problems perhaps we could make faster progress on others which are surfacing each day.

Jo Millar Chair Health Portfolio

Research Committee

Three projects have been undertaken since the last Board meeting. All have now been completed. An initial contact has been made with the Policy research unit of the Family Centre, whose first report in the 'Enhancing Wellbeing in an Ageing Society' covering 65-84 year olds in New Zealand is recognised as leading research into the lives of our target membership. Further discussions are planned and it is hoped to establish an ongoing working relationship with the unit. In addition I have attended a further seminar for Voluntary and community research hosted by Victoria university, which looked at ways in which voluntary organisations can assess their effectiveness, a key question for Grey power as we move into the new and more accountable structure defined in the Moffat report passed by the last AGM.

The research tasks were:

1. The investigation into the impact of W3C Web Accessibility Initiative on the ability of older people to engage in society as more transactions are undertaken through the Internet. The purpose of the research was to underpin a submission made jointly with the Communications and Technology Standing Committee on proposed changes to the way in which W3C Web accessibility guidelines are applied to NZ Government sites. A copy of the submission is available on request.
2. The impact of changes in Ministry of Health contract requirements for Meals on Wheels on the ability of the service to attract volunteer deliverers, and the effectiveness of the service. This research was led by Jan Pentecost and found that there was no discernible concern in the volunteers consulted and that they were unaware that any other requirements had changed. A Caveat is that the research conducted relied heavily on a small sample from the Canterbury DHB area.
3. The concern raised by Napier and Districts Association that a policy existed to remove and reduce the numbers of uncontrolled pedestrian crossings (Zebra crossings). This

project was led by myself. No evidence to support the concern was found at national level, although there is growing concern over the safety of this form of crossing internationally. The main problem as ever appears to lie in the area of driver education.

A further project requested by the IPT, to investigate option for a means of securely storing Federation documents in a manner that allows and facilitates retrieval will shortly be undertaken in concert with the Communications and Technology Standing Committee.

A draft budget for the 2013 financial year has been prepared and submitted to the Finance and Investment Standing Committee and the Treasurer.

P. Matcham Chair, GPF Research Standing Committee

Remits

At the closing date for the submitting of remits for 2013 AGM and SGM the Committee had received 35 general remits from Associations, 14 remits from the Structure Working party and for the Special General Meeting received 15 remits.

Of the remits received from Associations, after deliberations, the Remit & Rules Committee declined for various reason 16 of these remits and The Chairman notified each Zone Director of this fact by post.

Also there were 4 that required rewording and the Zone Directors were informed of these. Due to time constraints very little time was available for this and to date no re-writes have been returned.

From the varied way members interpreted the 6b form [submitting of remits] it is obvious that further work on the explanation of this form is required and the Committee has decided that this will be done in time for tabling at the first Board meeting following the AGM for endorsement and approval so that it can be rewritten and the By Law booklet be amended.

Along with this will also be some amendments to the By Law 6, the instructions for submitting remits and hopefully this will tidy it all up.

It has been disappointing to see the Secretary of one Zone issue an email to most

Associations for the support of his zone's remits when the final acceptance of remits had not been completed and this would be most misleading to Associations.

Otherwise the work of this portfolio has proceeded along nicely this year and because of the extra workload with the Modernisation Plan the President appointed two more members being Mrs, S Feringa & Mr T King to the committee to assist.

Jack Kerr Chair Remit & Rules Portfolio.

Law and Order

Bruce Purchase is in Hospital so unable to attend Board meeting.

Office Administration

It is with extreme sadness that we mourn the passing of our receptionist, Christina Cressey, a dedicated and efficient worker and an extremely nice, caring lady who we held in high regard. She bravely fought lung cancer for the past year but was adamant that she would return to work. The staff and I attended her funeral service Easter Tuesday and her family expressed their gratitude to Grey Power for the support and condolences offered. We will miss her immensely.

With our busiest period coming up, I am pleased to say that Sharron has kindly consented to helping us out by giving temporary part-time assistance. This is very helpful as it means that we don't have to train someone up which takes a great deal of time during such a busy time.

Most associations have now ordered and received their printed membership card labels together with cards, address labels etc. These card labels are prepared either with or without a membership expiry, depending upon the choice of the Association ordering same. Card labels are printed in anticipation of the member's next payment and, therefore, the expiry reflects this by being one year advanced to the member's current expiry date registered on the database ie in the case of a member paid up to 31/3/13 the label will be printed with a date of 31/3/14 so that the Association have the correct label when that member makes a further payment.

Membership maintenance is flowing in quietly but steadily. There has been large numbers of members registering changes of addresses.

Un-financial and deleted members were purged back at the end of the financial year so we have no un-financial members until the 1st April.

The Auditor has been in attendance in the office and we have been assisting with his queries. We are awaiting his return.

AIL have sadly been required to make further payouts to members' families.

Violet MCCowatt

Social Services

As chair of Social Services it is one of my biggest concerns that people who lose their partners don't always know where to go for help, so I am looking at the viability of relevant WINZ pamphlets outlining available assistance, being made available and distributed through the hospitals. My article regarding the Residential Care Subsidy that was published in the latest Grey Power magazine contains misinformation regarding how Asset threshold levels are set, for which I apologise. Please note the following: From 1 July 2012 the asset threshold that is used in a person's assessment for the Residential Care Subsidy will increase by the consumers price index (CPI) every year, instead of by \$10,000 per year as was the previous method and as stated in the article. What is unchanged, however, is the fact that some residents in care, that fail to meet the threshold initially, may fall below the threshold level and call for reassessment. I therefore continue to urge all previously non-qualifying persons in residential care to review their asset levels to see if they now qualify.

Violet McCowatt

Condolences

It is very unfortunate that one of our office staff, Christine, passed away recently. Our sincere condolences go to her family.

The office staff do a dedicated job. Thanks to Violet, Janice and Sharon who has

helped due to Christine's illness. They enjoy their job and are not afraid to go the extra mile to ensure work is completed on time.

Les Glassey.

Energy

On the 6th of February Molly Melhuish, Terry King, Pete Matcham and I met in Wellington, we had an apology from Peter Rutledge who was unwell and could not attend. The meeting was firstly to hear from Molly as to what has been happening within DEUN, an entity of which Grey Power (GP) is a member and both Molly and Peter Rutledge are GP's representatives.

The group then progressed into reviewing GP's Energy Policy, great progress was made and we came up with good suggestions for a more suitable set of policy points. The draft was then taken to the March Board meeting where another couple of changes were suggested and when the final draft was presented to the board it was agreed to ratify it and place it on the website. Hopefully by the time you read this bulletin the new revamped Energy Policy will be up on the GP website.

On the 7th February Terry King and I along with Molly Melhuish representing DEUN attended the Electricity Authority briefing on their progress to date and directions for the year.

Also on the 7th February we had hoped to meet with the new Energy Minister the Hon. Simon Bridges, but he was unavailable. We were able meet with the Opposition spokesperson for Energy Moana Mackey and discuss various energy policy points with her.

We were very interested in the opposition's position on the installation of Photo Voltaic (PV) cells as part of the construction of new houses; we were able to agree that this should become standard policy and that incentives should be given for people to retrofit PV cells onto older homes. The area that did bother us was that they do not agree that people be paid for the electricity they generate and feed into the national grid. Obviously there is the need for some persuasion to get them to adopt a different view point.

Allen Davies. Energy Portfolio.

Press Release – Electricity Prices

At 2 pm today (Wednesday 3 April) Grey Power is launching a “Prices must fall campaign” at the rooms of Rur2al Women NZ located at level 8 Willbank House 57 Willis Street Wellington.

We are told that there is an electricity surplus and that wholesale prices are dropping, yet retail prices continue to rise why?

The Electricity Authority have been running a campaign to get consumers to check that they are getting the best deal from their retailer, this is part of their strategy to promote competition to control prices, but is it working?

Rio Tinto are talking about closing down the smelter at Bluff, this would leave Meridian with a great surplus of generation to dispose of, yet retail electricity prices continue to rise.

Today Grey Power is saying enough is enough and are launching their own campaign.

R Reid President, 3 April 2013