

SAANZ President's Report to the AGM of the Sleep Apnoea Association of NZ October 15th 2020

It is with some sadness that we close the last year in recess, and move to close the organisation and wind up the assets.

SAANZ has done a wonderful job of providing information and support to members of the community with sleep apnoea, both to those yet to be diagnosed and receive treatment, and those who are now on CPAP and perhaps struggling with the somewhat invasive nature of that treatment.

Over the years we have provided support meetings in various regions across the country, with wonderful advisory support from Dr Alex Bartle and Bryn Sparks from Sleep Well Clinic, and from Jonathan Ellis and more recently Sandra Mackay from Fisher & Paykel Healthcare who have not only attended these meetings, but also hosted the committee and several years of AGM meetings in Auckland. We are very grateful to these people.

Newsletters have also been a regular means of communicating with members until this last year when the organisation has been in recess. This was one of my early tasks when I joined the national committee back in 2011, a role which Rachel Lehen took over at the beginning of 2018. There have been a wide range of articles during that time, and recent comments from members facing the closure of the organisation, mention the interest and usefulness of the newsletter content.

The email and telephone availability that has been the main focus of support to members and non-members alike over the more recent years, has provided a more timely and personal support avenue to those suffering with sleep apnoea or their partners. This has also been the most rewarding work for me, and one that I hope to maintain along with other members of the final committee into the future via Facebook and other avenues of contact via the internet. There is no cost in providing these services, but I know that they make a huge difference to people desperate for help both before and after diagnosis and treatment.

Rachel Lehen set up the SAANZ Facebook community during the last few years and we have both worked to provide support and some interesting articles through this portal. This will continue as best we are able after the closure of the organisation, with the main change being the removal of the word Association from the community title. Again feedback is very positive from those who engage through this portal. Thank you Rachel for your continuing input into management of this area.

The finances and membership of the Association have been very ably handled by Rod Bryant and Sherry Taylor since respectably 2011. We have seen this become web based during this time, and finally membership made free to everyone to remove the additional burden of the administration that subscriptions create. Thank you Rod and Sherry for your work in these areas and on the committee generally. The closure of the organisation will see the final removal of any administration, while still providing an avenue of support to those in need.

Over the years I have been on the committee we have had several presidents, some of whom have been able to join us today for this final AGM. Our thanks go to Ross Kirkbride, Mike Riley, Elaine Bryant and Mike Matson who preceded me. I guess I have the dubious honour of being the president who finally sank the ship, but hopefully our spirit will live on

for a time yet. It is always our hope that government funding will one day see a much more robust and well funded response to the diagnosis and treatment of sleep apnoea, as this really is the basis of so many health problems that follow in its wake. It is time that the ambulance got moved from the bottom of the cliff, and we hope that the NZ Sleep Health Foundation will increase their pressure and process for this to one day happen.

Finally, thank you to all of the final committee of SAANZ who have tried so hard to keep the boat afloat - Rod, Sherry, Rachel, Alex, Jonathan and Sandra.

We will now move on to the notice of motion that has been tabled on the AGM page of the website for the last few weeks:

"That Sleep Apnoea Association NZ be formally closed and the remaining funds, after payments of AGM and final expenses, be transferred to another organisation supporting sleep apnoea patients." Moved Jill Hammonds

The beneficiary of the said funds will be discussed following approval of the motion.

Jill Hammonds
SAANZ President