

# Social Equity and Wellbeing Network Inc

## 2017 Annual Report

Kia ora tatou and welcome to our 2017 AGM.

As we look back on our year of working to identify and address issues of marginalisation in our community, we warmly welcome you and thank you for coming along to share this with us. At the same time, we acknowledge all of the work you are doing in your own organisations, in what seems to be an ever-more challenging environment.

We were greatly saddened by the death of our board member Peter Allen at the end of August - an enormous loss to the greater Christchurch community, as well as SEWN. Peter had a great influence on our work. The way in which he applied his rich intelligence and knowledge to the challenges our communities face, with humour, generosity and kindness was the epitome of all that SEWN stands for. Many other groups working in this field were also enriched by his skills and talents. We will miss him immensely.

In June we reviewed our Mission and updated our Strategy and Plans for the next five years. Our new mission is *To work together to identify, understand, advocate on and address barriers to social equity, justice and wellbeing.*

What remains central to us is actively building strong and sustainable relationships within the non-profit sector, and thereby helping to develop the strength and effectiveness of all of our organisations.

Over the past year we've all worked hard to address issues of marginalisation and support the non-profit sector to build social equity and wellbeing. The Strategic Plan is what guides our mahi and that contains five strategic pathways.

Our first was Reducing Marginalisation. We aimed to raise awareness of issues of marginalisation, and to support initiatives to address marginalisation. Much of our awareness raising was through lots of articles in our newsletter and on our Facebook page. These have reached a wide audience.

Initiatives that we have supported include the recent Living Economies hui, and we made a submission to Council's Annual Plan supporting their plans to remove barriers to participation.

Nationally, we are involved in the Deep South Science Challenge's project to look at how to address the impact of sea level rise and inundation on vulnerable communities and people. The learnings from this will be valuable for the sector as we support local communities to deal with this looming issue.

Our next pathway was Strengthening the NGO sector. This is important to us because we believe that the sector has a unique role in building social wellbeing and equity. Once again, our newsletter, Facebook page and the numerous emails we forward are an important part of ensuring that the sector remains informed and able to access resources.

We are leading a collaborative project to create the NFP Toolkit, an on-line directory of non-profit organisations that provide capability support to other non-profits. This is close to completion – please look out for news of its launch soon!

We are also leading work to ensure that the Action Points in CERA's sector recovery report are addressed. A recent forum heard from funders and central and local government about actions that they were undertaking. We will soon send out a survey to find out what other things are happening that support sector recovery and wellbeing. This information will help the sector to decide 'where to next'.

SEWN is the custodian of supervisioninfo, an online resource and directory of supervisors. The website had become very outdated (to the point of near collapse) and we have almost finished resurrecting that. The next step will be to review and update the information and resources on the website.

Our third pathway was Maintaining Strong Sector Relationships. This year we have had the opportunity to get out from behind the computer screen a little more and staff have been attending the network meetings convened by the Council's Community Development Advisors in the various service centres. This has been invaluable in introducing ourselves to some of the smaller and more local groups that don't always have the opportunity to come along to the events we get to.

Other activities include being an "All Right" campaign champion and supporting One Voice Te Reo Kotahi (this year we were one of the speakers at their Matariki hui). We offered support to the non-profit sector in Hurunui and Kaikoura after the November earthquake by setting up a 'buddy' system, although nobody took this up.

Alongside our sector relationships, Engaging Effectively with Decision-Makers has been an important strategic pathway. Local MPs, City and District Councillors, funders and staff in central and local government all receive our newsletters and many of our emails.

We were invited by the Urban Development Strategy to have input to the development of a proposed Stakeholders Forum. So far we haven't heard whether this is going ahead.

We're also involved in work to consider widening the membership of the South Island Public Health Alliance, which to date has been mainly DHBs. It will be a challenge to work out how the non-profit sector South-Island-wide could effectively participate in this. At a more local level, we're part of a review of Healthy Christchurch and a proposal it widen it to the greater Christchurch area.

An area of keen interest is promoting more involvement by the non-profit sector in civil defence and emergency management, especially in strategy and planning. As the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management's focus is currently on risk reduction and building resilience (when it doesn't find itself up to its neck in emergency response) there is much to gain from engaging with the non-profit sector. Our sector brings to the table a unique capacity for building strong resilient communities, as well as connections to those who typically bear a disproportionate impact in times of disaster.

Our final strategic pathway was to ensure SEWN is strong and sustainable. This pathway has seen a lot of work this year. Firstly, with support from Rata Foundation we were able to stabilise our office administration role and employ Carmel Driver in the position. I would like to pay testament to Carmel and how remarkably well she has taken to the role. Much of the flurry of development in the SEWN office has been down to her.

Our increasingly dated IT was upgraded after an assessment from Infoxchange outlined our challenges and provided a pathway for us. We have new computers, Carmel has updated and modernised our website, and amongst all the changes of equipment and software Gwen has managed to remain focused on making sure the bills were paid and keeping our accounts in order. University consultancy 180 Degrees is now helping us assess the best tool for

improving our newsletter and email distribution and we look forward to making some changes there.

As a result of the planning I referred to earlier we now have new strategic pathways, which retain the essence of our work. This year our mahi will sit under Ensuring SEWN is Strong and Sustainable; Reducing Barriers to a More Inclusive Society; Strengthening and Promoting the Non-profit Sector; and Engaging Effectively with Decision-Makers.

In bringing this busy and productive year to a close, I would like to acknowledge and thank our staff. Sharon and Carmel have been great fun to work with and together with our longstanding office volunteer Gwen they form a wonderfully effective team. My thanks also to all of our board members, who have contributed so much by the giving of their time, their passion, their energy, and their never-ending ideas. It is a privilege for me to be one of them and to act as board Chair.

I also wish to record our ongoing appreciation of the warm support of Te Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu.

With the election now almost upon us, whatever the result, may we see policy change for the good of the marginalised and disenfranchised in our communities and proper recognition of all individuals and groups in our sector working on their behalf.

Ian Lothian, Chair

Sharon Torstonson, Kaitiiora