

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 14 OCTOBER 2014

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

A very warm welcome to all attendees at the 2014 AGM, and especially to our patron, Tim Macindoe. Thank you for supporting EWCT. Our aim is to provide support for people living with epilepsy, and their families and friends, in the Waikato region. The majority of people living with epilepsy have the condition well controlled and may need only minimal or no support. However, there are many people who need and value the support we can provide, and EWCT is here for them.

It has been a busy year for EWCT with some exciting events and strong progress.

1. We rebranded EWCT with a fresh new logo that shows we are Waikato based and focused, and to distinguish us clearly from other epilepsy organisations. We also developed a distinctive new and popular brochure.
2. Further development and ongoing updates to our excellent, professional website with new fact sheets, podcasts, and activities. We run an active Facebook site as well.
3. We developed, commissioned, and published a children's book about epilepsy, "Ben's Buddies". It has been written by award-winning author Sharon Holt, with illustrations by Deborah Hinde, and it was translated into te reo by Ray Harlow. This book was fully funded by grants from the ANZ Staff Foundation and Harcourts Foundation. Our plan is to provide copies to all the primary and intermediate schools in Hamilton. The book is to be launched in early November.
4. EWCT was nominated for the Waikato 'Volunteer Team Excellence Award', for which we were very honoured.
5. Our epilepsy advisor, Maria Lowe, is now working full-time for EWCT (from mid-April 2014), thanks to new funding being received.
6. The board of EWCT was able to send Maria to the 10th Asian and Oceanian Epilepsy Congress in Singapore in August. The board saw this as a great opportunity for her to network and to update her knowledge.

7. The Trust has been encouraged by Maria being invited, by groups (including schools) both in the local and wider community, to share information on epilepsy, and she has given numerous talks and presentations throughout the Waikato region. Maria has also worked closely with individuals with epilepsy (one-on-one) and associated caregivers, and with medical professionals including neurologists
8. We have grown significantly under the enthusiasm and vision of our epilepsy advisor. Maria has developed various courses that are available to members of EWCT, and of other groups, helping them to grow their skills and social contacts. Maria has strengthened EWCT's position in the community by networking with many community and disability providers, including Methodist City Action, Progress to Health, Blind Foundation, and WiLLS, and by inviting members associated with these and other groups to attend the following courses:
 - a. 'Thriving on a shoestring' (7-week course, Oct-Dec 2013)
 - b. 'Living confidentially' (22 weeks, 2014)
 - c. 'Cooking confidentially' (40 weeks, 2014)
 - d. 'Job chat' (monthly, 2014)
9. Maria provided a display and, with helpers, attended the Wellness ('Winter') Show in April, helping to make the wider community aware of EWCT and its services. EWCT is also going to be present at the A & P Show 31 October-2 November 2014.
10. EWCT have planned an "epilepsy awareness week" for the first week of November, during which we are encouraging members of the public to choose one day to go car-free. Our aim is to recognise those in the community who need to use other means of transport. We have developed publicity and activity material for this event, which is to be held annually.
11. Organised social events (Epilepsy Club) are well attended and enjoyed by us all. These have included bi-monthly café get-togethers (Frescas), a trip to Rainbow Springs (Rotorua), and mid-winter and Christmas functions.
12. Funding trusts in the community have generously supported EWCT, allowing us to work in our community and we want to acknowledge their generous support very strongly. Our sponsors are listed on our webpage. We also acknowledge the very significant efforts by trustee Faith Gibbs in leading our funding applications.

Looking into the future, our vision is to continue to provide services, primarily to people living with epilepsy, and their families and supporters, and also to others who can benefit from them. I want to thank the EWCT board of trustees, who have all worked together with passion, believing in the value of EWCT's vision of helping to make a difference for those in our community living with

epilepsy.

JILL DAVIES
CHAIRPERSON

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