

## Epilepsy Waikato Charitable Trust AGM, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017

### Chair's report

I warmly welcome all attendees at the 2017 AGM of EWCT – members, clients, family supporters, trustees, and guests. Now in our 6<sup>th</sup> year, I wish to firstly thank the board of trustees, and advisor Bryce Hopkins, for their commitment to attain the aims of the trust. Trustees Ai-Ee Teo (secretary), Faith Gibbs (funding), Cyril Markham (treasurer), and Jill Davies (deputy chair) are especially thanked for their very significant work. I also acknowledge the work undertaken by former trustee, Wade Limpus, who resigned from EWCT on 31 December 2016. We remain very grateful to our patron, Hon. Tim Macindoe (MP for Hamilton West and government minister), for his longstanding support.



Six trustees of EWCT in 2017 with Bryce Hopkins and Maria Lowe (epilepsy adviser)

I acknowledge and thank all who have donated to EWCT or sponsored our trust's work over the latest financial year. We are supported by donors (private individuals), and numerous funding organisations. The funding organisations and services provide us with significant funds or 'in-kind' support. Some of the main ones include NZ Lotteries Grant Board, Glenice and John Gallagher Foundation, DV Bryant Trust, Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS), Skycity Hamilton Community Trust Grants, WEL Energy Trust, Trust Waikato, ANZ New Zealand Staff Foundation, Len Reynolds Trust, Hamilton City Council Community Funding, and Waikato Print. These and others have together provided the essential funds to run EWCT, and all are acknowledged on our website and on our letterhead documents.

I and board members wish to thank Maria Lowe, our full-time epilepsy advisor, for her hard work in helping many people with epilepsy in our community. Maria reports to the board each month. Her role encompasses aspects of education, advice, and support including:

- (i) providing one-on-one advice to people with epilepsy and their families and supporters, including interaction with neurologists and hospital referrals;
- (ii) preparing client-specific epilepsy action plans for clients and caregivers;
- (iii) advocacy for members in meetings with medical practitioners, government agencies (e.g. WINZ, Housing NZ, Corrections), and in interview situations;
- (iv) educating through talks (including to schools) and in-service training about epilepsy, writing fact sheets for the EWCT website, setting up and running displays at expos, radio talks;
- (v) helping publish our 2nd book "Ariana and Jack" (see below);
- (vi) running Epilepsy Club events such as the bi-monthly Fresca Café get-togethers and annual trip;

- (vii) communicating with members and clients and supporters through Facebook, newsletters, and our website (including 'blogs': EWCT's blogs were **ranked in the top 50 globally** [26<sup>th</sup> place] by Feedspot in Aug 2017) with increase in website 'views' of 67%, 'visitors' of 56% from 2016-2017;
- (viii) developing and facilitating courses such as the 'Cooking Classes';
- (ix) developing new support groups in Hamilton and beyond including the new 'Bloke's Group'; and
- (x) organising activities for the Epilepsy Awareness Month (November).

***Epilepsy Hero Awards***

In 2016, we instituted an “Epilepsy Hero Award” to be made annually to one or two very deserving individuals at the mid-winter dinner. Two awards were made at the dinner this year on 24 June to Sharon Holt (author) and Stu Robinson (Fresca Café) (pictured below).



***New support groups, “Access Alliance”, and audit***

EWCT established new support groups in Tokoroa and Tauranga in 2016. Tokoroa members took part in EWCT’s Taupo trip in November 2016. A new “Bloke’s Group” was established in 2017 and is being run by Thomas Mandeno. EWCT also became a ‘Friend of the Access Alliance’, a national group committed to improving access and accessibility for people with disabilities in New Zealand. Our annual audit, comprising both a financial examination and evaluation of service performance, passed with flying colours again. The reviews were undertaken by Owen McLeod & Co.

***Epilepsy awareness month and annual trip***

EWCT ran an “Epilepsy Awareness Month” that involved activities to help the community be more aware of epilepsy and the EWCT trust through a set of weekly themes. Around 25 members/supporters went to Taupo on 12 November 2016 for our annual trip.

***Second book: “Ariana and Jack”***

EWCT has published a second book, “Ariana and Jack”, to complement “Ben’s Buddies”. The book was funded by the ANZ New Zealand Staff Foundation, who also funded “Ben’s Buddies”. The new book was launched on 16 March 2017 by Hamilton’s Mayor Andrew King (pictured below). It was written by author Sharon Holt (author of “Ben’s Buddies”) with illustrations by Claudia Gadotti, and technical text for the end pages by Maria Lowe. Dr Ray Harlow translated the story into te reo Maori. Producing a second book is a remarkable achievement and together the two children’s books provide many benefits.

In closing, I comment that EWCT is thriving after six years, and all involved can be very pleased and proud of its achievements. I am honoured to chair the trust and I enjoy and appreciate the support of the trustees, members, and clients in carrying out the role.



**David J. Lowe – Chair, EWCT**