

23 August 2021

Patron's Message for the 2021 Epilepsy Waikato Charitable Trust AGM

At the time of writing this annual message, New Zealand is again in the grip of a Level 4 lockdown in response to the latest local developments in the Covid-19 pandemic. Arrangements for this year's AGM must be provisional at this point, but I hope to be with you if we are at a Covid level that permits such gatherings.

I am very conscious of the additional stress that such restrictions (and the possible spread of the Delta variant of the virus) cause for people who live with a range of challenging medical conditions, including epilepsy.

My thoughts are with you all as we learn to live with the uncertainty and strain that Covid has unleashed on our community. Perhaps, like me, you are being kept separate from relatives and friends overseas who are being prevented from coming home, or you are worried about elderly family members who you are unable to visit and care for as you would usually do. Let us hope that, by this time next year, the international vaccine rollout and other measures have been successful and case numbers are trending down in countries currently reporting alarming statistics.

This year will also be remembered for the considerable achievement of Maria and David Lowe in producing *Understanding and Managing Epilepsy*, the first significant general guidebook to be published on the topic in decades. I am sure it will be a widely appreciated and referenced work in years to come and I congratulate Maria and David on their success.

I hope that you also benefit from and enjoy the epilepsy articles published regularly on the EWCT website, the frequent and very helpful posts on the trust's Facebook page, and that those of you who are members of the Epilepsy Club are finding peace and companionship from the events and get-togethers that the club offers (when we're not in lockdowns).

As some of you will know, my circumstances changed last October, and I was deeply touched to be invited to remain as your Patron despite no longer being the MP for Hamilton West. At the invitation of the late Paul Manning, I became involved with the wonderful folk who formed the core of Epilepsy Waikato (as it then was) 12 years ago, as they were being bullied and abused by their National Association, and it was my pleasure to continue supporting them through their struggles which culminated in the formation of the Epilepsy Waikato Charitable Trust. I have nothing but admiration for those who fought that fight and launched the Trust and hope to remain as supportive as I can in whatever capacity for many years to come.

I place on record my continuing gratitude for the commitment of our trust board, so capably led by Chair David Lowe, our dedicated epilepsy adviser Maria Lowe, our efficient administrator Margaret Paine, and all who support their efforts. I also warmly acknowledge all the EWCT's sponsors, donors and supporters mentioned in the Chair's Annual Report. Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

Kindest regards to you all,

Tim Macindoe
Patron, EWCT