

## President's Report AGM 2018

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It has been a very exciting year for Canine Friends Pet Therapy. As our organisation grows, so does our public acknowledgement of the wonderful work that we do. A lot has been written about us and of course a lot has been spoken about us.

Wow just look at this - our first AGM with our precious dogs attending. They are a huge part of our organisation so why shouldn't they come? On that note let's keep our AGM brief, so we can all go out and meet them. Unfortunately as you will have noticed Eileen Curry our founder isn't able to attend today. It must be one of the few she hasn't and she sends her apologies as her son from Australia is staying with her for a couple of days and it coincides with our AGM. Next year Eileen!

Our Patron Dame Patsy Reddy has also sent her apologies as she is such a busy lady. Unfortunately as much as we have tried to arrange a visit for our Patron to see our dogs in action, at this stage it hasn't eventuated but we will keep trying. Vicky and I were very privileged to receive an invitation to the Governor General's Bledisloe Garden Reception to celebrate the 178<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi held at Government gardens in Auckland. We were both very thrilled to attend.

A strategy meeting was held with the committee in February and under the guidance of Margaret Ranum was a great success. After a lot of discussion, the amazing outcome was that after 28 years, we still hold high the core values that were set back in the very beginning by Eileen Curry and her team which is to help people in rest homes, hospices and hospitals. Our new mission statement is that "We share our dogs with people in need". We also set ourselves some challenging goals which include:

- increasing the number of rest homes, hospices and hospitals we visit. At present we visit 9 Hospitals, 6 Hospices and 221 rest homes.
- aiming to have 85% of our members satisfied with the way our organisation is running.

Our membership base has continued to grow, with at times more than one application a day coming through our system. Without our dog therapy teams we cannot achieve anything so we are always very grateful for the time our members and their dogs give to their communities. Some members last many years and some last barely one but they are all very important. Circumstances change and unfortunately our dogs do not have the lifespan of a human so are taken from us far too early. We value whatever time our team members can give.

Our Liaison Officers keep everything together as they are responsible for getting our members started from the first assessment to communicating with them for their visiting lifetime. They go the journey with them. They keep in touch with the facilities that we visit, maintain all the contacts and ensure our dog therapy teams are happy and confident in what they are doing. Without these people we just would not function as well as we do. Most Liaison Officers would tell you that it is a rewarding job. Meeting new members and then accompanying them on their visits and seeing the effect their dogs have on residents is at times quite emotional.

During this year we have appointed several new Liaison Officers and Assessors - some due to vacancies and others due to growth of regions. We thank these people for putting up their hands and know they will enjoy their time here. With this of course comes the resignation of others. We appreciate all the time they have given and thank Judy McRae, Jean Barr, Sarah Moore, Jenny Grant, Kirstin Jolly, Marie Lockie and others who



have stood in to help, for all those years they have given all to our organisation.

I was very lucky along with our 2 Field Officers Chris and Carol to embark on the Road trip to the "Deep South" where we were met by members expressing their gratitude that we would go to this length to meet them. Although all members were invited to share refreshments with us at different venues we met less than 50% of them which was disappointing to us. Queenstown had a full muster and Oamaru were close behind. We seem to struggle to get members in the deep south of the South Island and at this point have only one Liaison Officer from Blenheim right the way down to Oamaru. Distance is a big part of this but we are seeking to appoint more to deal with all areas.

I also have visited Nelson/Blenheim also to meet members and to help in assessments over a weekend which was very successful. As I regularly visit Christchurch, I always try to meet our team down and try to help them as they are having a real resurgence of interest.

We are also exceedingly lucky to have such good supporting sponsors. I know that Vicky will touch on this but I also wish to thank them. Dogs NZ has been there for us for 3 years now, allowing us to hold a Liaison Officers Training Day here in Wellington in 2016, to go on the Road in the South Island to meet Liaison Officers and members in 2017 and with their support we will be holding another educational day later this year. We are also very lucky and excited to have Ziwi as our new sponsor. With the Ziwi sponsorship, Canine Friends can continue to grow so that we can reach more homes, hospitals and hospices. Many thanks go to Lotteries NZ. Their grant has allowed us to implement the membership platform called Wild Apricot. We are also getting more donations from public sources where we find we have touched the heart of someone we have visited.

We are not only growing rapidly in membership but also in public acknowledgement of what we are achieving. We have starred on TV1 News and Seven Sharp. Many articles in newspapers and magazines have been written about us. We are getting more and more invitations to Universities, school libraries and corporate offices which we hope will bring in more donations as well.

Last but in no means the least important - as don't we always keep the best to last?

You have an excellent nationwide committee running your organisation. All have a part to play in the running of Canine Friends. It is very exciting that this year we have embarked on using the technology "Zoom" at all meetings. Sometimes our meetings are held in a Lower Hutt café - whereby Rachel, Vicky and Nina would call in and in other times the entire meeting is held virtually in our own homes. In the future, "Zoom" will also be able to be used by our subcommittees and Liaison Officers to communicate with each other.

During the year we were very sorry to lose Nina who has served on the committee for several years as a member, secretary and the new members' coordinator. A BIG thank you to Nina for the time and commitment she has given. Your present committee are all very enthusiastic in what they do, full of energy and want to make this organisation even better.

Thanks to my fabulous secretary Leanne for all the many hours of extra work she has done. When a job needs doing – Leanne always says "I can do that". The technology she brings to the table is fantastic and we are very lucky to be able to use her skills. Thanks to Vicky my Vice President and of course in her role as our sponsorship spokesperson. She has spent many hours convincing people how great we are and that we would be a great asset to them. In the case of getting Dogs' n' Togs off the ground we are now definitely their charity of choice as she has spread her wings wide throughout the country with great success. Carolyn has pulled her hair out at times with getting all our communication material looking modern and



professional. She has also compiled the monthly articles for the Dogs NZ Dogworld publication which goes all over the country. Victoria our treasurer has overhauled our accounting systems and has made it very simple and easy to understand. Beverley (our editor) never ceases to amaze me. Every edition just gets better and better. We are very proud of the work that Beverley puts in to the newsletter as it is our showpiece to the public and as such is a very important tool for us.

Annette has continued to make her beautiful scarves and both she and Chris has been my sounding boards when I needed advice. I value the conversations I have with Annette (our past president), as they always seem to guide me on the right track. Chris (our North Island Field Officer) has brought many ideas forward, tabled them for discussion and then dealt with the actions. Thank you to Sarah for updating our much overdue Constitution. I know I can always rely on her and she is a great help to me with legal matters. Thanks also to David who has organised this venue for our first ever doggy AGM or really a Canine Friends Pet Therapy Team AGM. David also organised our Lower Hutt café where we can hold meetings. I can ask David to attend functions with Rafa and he says "Absolutely - can do" and I hope he enjoys his newly created position of Wellington Events Coordinator as he will be very busy. Rachel who zooms in to our meetings brings great expertise from her dog training and looks after our biggest area in Auckland. Thanks to Anne who is on our organising committee for the upcoming Liaison Officers Day so thank you Anne and for your experience around the committee table.

They say that the first year in a job is when you find things out and then after that it is smooth running. I must admit the role of president can be time consuming and could easily be mistaken for a full time job!!! I have found my first year to be fabulously rewarding especially when I get to speak about this wonderful volunteer organisation and meet so many people and their canine friends. Wherever I go, I try to meet at least the Liaison Officer in the area as I feel communication is a powerful tool when used correctly and it is always nice to feel appreciated for what you are doing.

I wish you all well in your visiting or supporting roles for Canine Friends Pet Therapy. It is much appreciated. So well done to everyone who is attending this AGM. I thank you. Thank you for listening to my report and wish to have it accepted.

Ann Evans  
**President**