

**The Federation of New Zealand SeniorNet Societies Inc.
2023 Annual General Meeting**

Chair's Report

This has been a challenging year for The Federation of New Zealand SeniorNet Societies Inc. (the Federation). Along with the departure of our Executive Officer, Heather Newell, the Federation Committee (the Committee) has been working with the Learning Centres to reassess the role of the Federation. This identified several areas where changes are needed to refocus and realign Federation activities with its core purpose.

A greater emphasis is being placed on Federation consultation and engagement with Learning Centres. This has been well received and led to increased engagement between centres and the Federation, as well as between centres.

The Federation has reaffirmed that Learning Centres are, and wish to remain, volunteer driven organisations reliant on the participation of their seniors at a local level. Feedback from Learning Centres is clear, delivery of structured, national courses based on 'outcomes' is not desired. Helping seniors get the best from their technology and to keep up with the changes taking place around them is the priority.

Many potential sources of external funding come with significant strings attached, e.g., the provision of free membership/courses or other reporting requirements that are impractical for Learning Centres to deliver and/or are not in their best interests. As the Federation renegotiates or enters into agreements with sponsors/funders, a broader view is being taken of the overall value (cost vs. benefit) to be gained from these arrangements and realistic/reasonable expectations are being set for all parties.

While this has the potential to reduce the income from these sources, the reduction in income will be offset by a reduction in the Federation's operational costs. For example, there is no immediate plan to fill the vacant Exec Officer and Project Manager positions. The Committee also considers the current level of reserves (\$350K) is excessive for the organisation and provides significant scope to compensate for reduced income levels and to support the activities of the Federation into the near future, including the continuation of Learner Hour payments.

Several Learning Centres have closed in recent times, leaving seniors in these areas disconnected from the support and social connection SeniorNet provides. One of the key challenges for the future is to stem the tide of closures and offer support to seniors in ways which are consistent with SeniorNet's culture. The Committee is actively working to address these challenges, starting with the relaunch of SeniorHangouts v2.0, providing greater support for Learning Centres to market and recruit new members and

tutors, and the upcoming introduction of a 'Hosts and Hubs' membership model to support seniors in areas without a local Learning Centre.

The Committee has recognised that the lower number of Learning Centres, a reduced focus on external fund raising, coupled with the changes referred to above, needs to be reflected in the size, structure, and role of the Committee. This has led to the proposed changes to the Constitution put forward for consideration at this year's AGM, a move away from formal meetings focused on procedure to weekly catchups focused on the needs of our Learning Centres. The Committee is taking a greater role in the day-to-day management of the Federation. While at times this may overlap with its governance role, the Committee believes the organisation is not of a sufficient size or complexity to warrant or sustain separation of these roles.

I would like to make special mention of some of the contributions members of Learning Centres are making to the Federation. Kevin Fletcher and John Gibsone, along with the other members of the SeniorHangouts Advisory Group, have worked tirelessly to redevelop SeniorHangouts into a sustainable Learning Centre centric service. Ross Taylor continues to run the successful Saturday Morning User Group (SMUG) that brings members from across the country together, to share ideas and support each other. Peter Bunkall is doing an excellent job as the Federation Systems Administrator, most notably supporting the move to standard email addresses.

It has been pleasing to see the number of people engaging in the various working groups established to contribute to major decisions facing the Federation, including the future of Learner Hour payments, the role of the Federation, and working with Westpac.

I am confident, that with greater engagement between the Committee and the Member Societies, the Federation can continue to remain relevant and provide service to Learning Centres and the seniors they support. It is important to remember that the Federation only exists to support its members and can only do this when Learning Centres take an active interest in the Federation.

Lastly, I would like to thank the members of Committee for their support and contribution over the past 12 months.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Peter Campbell
Chair
Federation NZ SeniorNet Society's