

RNZN COMMUNICATORS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I have pleasure in presenting my President's Report for the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the association. With the AGM being delayed from September 2021 until March 2022 I have extended the period of this report to cover events and developments that have happened in the intervening period. Some of these will be referred to in matters to be discussed during this meeting.

To say that the time since the last AGM has been one of change and upheaval would be an understatement. The Association's 2021 Reunion was one of the casualties of the continuing disruptions to life caused by lockdowns and other restrictions introduced in reaction to the COVID-19 situation in New Zealand. The date for the reunion had already been changed and the continued uncertainty over whether it would be able to go ahead on the new dates led to the committee reluctantly deciding to cancel it. The next reunion will now be in 2024.

The cancellation of the reunion led, in turn, to an increased workload for our Treasurer, Dearne Berry, in having to deal with refunds for those who had paid for reunion events and balancing the books. Similarly, Rod Berry and Chris Bond had to deal with contacting venues and businesses and telling them that the reunion had been cancelled. I would like to thank them for their efforts.

As you are aware, the Government has made some recognition of the service of New Zealand military personnel who served in South East Asia by awarding them the New Zealand Operational Service Medal (NZOSM). This service covers RNZN personnel who served in ships in the Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR) and under the Australia New Zealand Unit Kingdom (ANZUK) Force. Fighting for recognition of service in these two commands has long been an action item of the association, and I would like to acknowledge the efforts of previous committees and members who have taken on the NZDF and other Government departments in this regard.

However, there is still more that could and should be done on behalf of our members. The award of the NZOSM does not include any entitlement to support from Veterans Affairs or recognition as Qualifying Operational Service under the Veterans Support Act 2014. I will be seeking endorsement of the members attending the AGM for the committee to continue with the push for better medallic recognition and veterans' support.

Following advice to the committee regarding the future intentions of two members of the Executive, I sent out a letter to all members asking them to consider filling the gaps. We received a number of volunteers for the committee, and it has been decided that all will be accepted. This will clearly give us a committee that may be viewed as more than required to run an association such as ours. However, I consider that the association is fast approaching a crossroads regarding its future, and we need to make decisions on a number of issues: what sort of association do we want it to be; its aims and objectives; what activities we should be involved with or undertaking, etc. To that end I intend forming sub-committees to look at these issues and prepare reports for consideration at our next AGM in September. These reports should give a firm foundation for the way ahead for the association.

One of the issues about the future is that the membership numbers of the association have not improved since the last AGM; Generation X, Y and Z personnel are, in general, not interested in joining clubs or associations. It can be argued that the association will follow the fate of other similar organisations, where declining numbers eventually result in them being unable to continue. While this may be inevitable for the association, the choice seems to be: do we lash up our hammock, sneak over the brow and slink off into the night; or do we maintain the fight, keep it active as long as possible and then go out with a bang. I know what my choice is and I hope that the reports and decisions of members at the next AGM are the same.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the 2020/21 committee for their support over the period and I welcome the new members to the committee.

Gary Houghton
President

31 March 2022