



## Muscular Dystrophy New Zealand

### MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

Held 9.15am Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017

At the offices of Muscular Dystrophy Association, 419 Church St East, Penrose, Auckland

#### WELCOME, APOLOGIES & WHAKAWHANAUNGATANGA

**Present:** Ken Green (Chairperson), Trevor Jenkin (Vice Chairperson), Ronelle Baker (Chief Executive), Tristram Ingham, Jan Daly, Brent Walker, Olivia Shivas (Rangatahi Rep), Michael Schnieder (Northern Branch Representative), Warren Hall (Canterbury Branch Representative), Robbie Verhoef (Southern Branch Representative)

**In attendance:** Andrew Munro (Canterbury Branch Chairperson)

**Apologies:** Kerry Stephenson, Andrea McMillan, Annelize Steyn (Wellington Branch Representative)

**Minutes:** Ruth Church

Ken welcomed all, including Ron Baker. Ron opened the meeting with a prayer ( karakia) and welcomed councillors to the building and meeting. Councillors were invited to introduce themselves and a mountain and river that they identified with, as a way of facilitating whanangatanga (relationship building). Ken concluded the session by highlighting people as our most important asset with members at our centre. Ken acknowledged Ron's attendance at the team in-service on Friday, summarising Ron's advice to pray for courage, work with passion, and remain positive. Ken reminded councillors that in the course of problem solving as a group, challenging issues not people was important.

#### BRANCH AGREEMENT DISCUSSION

*Positions and concerns to date discussed and summarised:*

Wellington – Annelize gave apologies for this meeting and advised that the branch committee had met and discussed.

Canterbury – Andrew advised two meetings held, without a quorum and bereft of feedback. Lack of understanding exists, need to fully understand what the document means, roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to financial implications and employment responsibilities.

Southern – Robbie noted Southern branch committee don't like the agreement as it stands, as it has no reference to *consultation* between National Office and branches. Queried whether one

document is the answer, would separate service and branch agreements better suit? Need to understand the scope and need for this agreement. Also questions one-size-fits-all when regional differences exist.

Northern – Michael noted Northern branch committee has gone through section by section and reached similar position to Southern branch: combining the service and branch agreements is confusing and separation would provide clarity, also questions one-size-fits-all. Lots open to interpretation, need to be tighter around staff changes, boundaries, risks (to both parties). Not enough clarity around specific responsibilities and ownership. Feeling that this agreement doesn't allow for long-term extension of services nationally. Concern around funding moving to regions, which raises questions about paying national body.

Rangatahi – Olivia highlighted clarity as important from a young person's perspective and queried whether this document would be confusing for members. It needs to be easy to understand, including, how it effects members. She queried whether this would be a public document. Ronelle responded that it is an internal document and would not be expected to be shared publically. Ken agreed.

Councillors – Jan described the document as too fractional, needing more clarity to bring it together. Brent noted the importance of the agreement being future focussed, so council are not going through this process again in five years. Tristram liked the framework as a generic agreement, that could have flexibility – e.g. updating the appendices as necessary (so services can be detailed in schedules). Ken noted a few points and gaps for rewording, but likes the document and believes it captures our intent and actions, with the intention being to always back up the branches.

#### Considerations and actions to progress the agreement:

Tristram asked whether the agreement is documenting status quo, or supporting change or new direction. Ronelle advised the purpose is to document status quo: our custom and practice, so header agreement will be constant and enduring, then schedules can be updated.

All agreed that the word "consultation" needs to be incorporated.

Point taken regarding regional strengths and differences – branches are critical to success so should allow for variance to meet regional needs, but must be overlaid with strong, consistent service standards across whole group. Branch governance and succession planning recognised as critical, but also need to acknowledge that National Office is across all levels not just high level, so we need a system and forums (not individuals) to ensure our success and sustainability.

Ken pointed out that the "branch financial escalation process" is now potentially redundant, given the new structure of the Finance Committee which includes branch chairpersons and enables transparency. This structure can also deliver "good faith" to manage any crossover in expenditure, e.g.: budgeting together to ensure appropriate split between a fieldworker's time attending national AGM.

Ronelle noted the agreement complies with DIAS expectations, and is only one document in a framework supporting our services and practices (e.g.: including HR policies and guidelines).

Warren queried having the agreement in "plain language", Ronelle noted it is an internal, high level document and should not be altered to the point of being non-compliant with contractual expectations as MDA aspires to have more government contracts. Tristram suggested an accessible "annotated version" to clearly and plainly state the intent.

Ken asked Tristram and Michael to form a working party of three with Ronelle, responsible for taking the agreement forward, formulating the next version with schedules attached. Tristram and Michael agreed, with the goal of sharing the revised agreement in advance of the October face-to-face National Council meeting, to allow time for branch committees to consider.

*Action: working party (Ronelle, Tristram, Michael) to revise and circulate next version (6) of draft branch agreement before October 2017.*

## **URGENT BUSINESS**

### **Canterbury branch request for cash advance**

Ken advised that Canterbury branch has found itself in a cashflow situation where it's unable to fund running the office (including rent, phones) over and above wages, so cash advance now sought as situation beyond agreeing to defer wages. Finance Committee received forecasts year-to-date and year-end and long term looks positive, Ken and Brian both believe branch will be able to meet needs by year-end, conservative but realistic. Now seeking agreement for cash advance and to defer wages for next two months, until expected grants and funding requests are due. Situation has arisen from change and lack of visibility, and is not expected to recur. Running costs approximately \$1,500 per month.

*Moved that a cash advance be made to Canterbury branch of \$4,000, to cover office operating costs for approximately two months, and to defer salaries and wages invoices, to enable recovery of cashflow position.*

**Moved: Ken**

**Seconded: Tristram**

**All agreed.**

### **Wellington branch request to defer wage invoices**

Ronelle advised that Wellington branch are currently deferring wage invoices, for the third month. Staff and committee changes, plus grants timing have impacted the financial position. Projection is positive. Ken noted that escalation process should have previously brought this to governance to ratify.

*Moved that Wellington branch be permitted to defer payment of salary and wage invoices until positive cashflow position.*

**Moved: Ken**

**Seconded: Tristram**

**All agreed.**

Tristram highlighted the opportunity to consider centralised purchasing (phones, suppliers, stationery, etc), Ronelle agreed that more could be done to streamline costs and work together as a group, and all branches need to look closely at sustainability.

*(Break for lunch, Andrew left meeting)*

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **Branch reports**

Southern – Robbie highlighted the first face-to-face meeting of the committee held in Gore, plus positive feedback on fieldworker services, moving to a new office, and Seasons for Growth pilot which was very well received.

Canterbury – Warren’s highlights included the mid-year function which was very well attended, coffee group, and the appointment of Gemma Foulds as new office manager. Planning is well underway for camp in October. Yvonne Mason has left the committee following the death of Earle. Finances not in good shape but longer term forecast is positive.

Rangatahi – Northern camp was a highlight for Olivia, meeting and sharing with families. Olivia also interested in attending Canterbury camp. Discussions underway with Trevor regarding a Northern youth event. Duke of Ed program very exciting, Olivia looking forward to mentoring.

Wellington – Finances a low light. One fieldworker has been away on leave, now back. Great planning and preparation underway for appeal. Sustainability issue around car (donated), with the fieldworkers split between Napier and Wellington, need to think about how to best utilise the resource and potentially target a grant. Ronelle added that this highlights a wider long-term issue around vehicles.

Northern – Camp also Michael’s highlight, sharing connections and experiences. New fieldworker doing well. Committee strong and united, keen to get stuck in, focussing on whole region not just Auckland, and exploring best ways to reach out.

### **Pneumonia vaccine**

Brent described his experience – booked in for both vaccines, was advised unfunded. Applied for funding which was granted, then after receiving the vaccines the nurse advised that both were at no cost. Ken pointed out how this highlights the variance in knowledge about funding/eligibility of doctors and medical practices.

Ken paid for his vaccinations and then donated the money back to MDA with the tax rebate credit. Ken’s doctor’s advice is to get both vaccines.

Ronelle noted that more requests coming through and our application has been submitted to Pharmac to cover “progressive neuromuscular conditions”.

### **Chief Executive’s report**

Report tabled. Highlights include the AGM, Brent’s appointment and the inclusion of two young councillors now, speaking at Health Tech week, \$8,000 grant received from Sanofi Genzyme to fund GP e-learning module, and the first five recruits now on board for Duke of Ed.

Staff performance reviews almost concluded. Discussion and resolution about staff salary increases occurred. Refer to Confidential minutes.

Risk register included at back of report – no major movement, added youth camp for Canterbury, and highlighted database reporting functions.

Jan queried functionality of database and how we ensure it’s up to date, e.g.: some members didn’t receive voting information and some emails have been incomplete. Ronelle asked that any

anomalies like this be sent to her as early as possible for action in real time, and stressed the importance of members letting us know if they change addresses. Currently using Mail Chimp for email, will eventually use Vega for email communications, which will deliver better analytics.

### **Financial reports**

Ken summarised best case position of \$15,000 surplus as a consolidated group, National Office holding its own in terms of net assets and equity. Acknowledged team effort in restraining costs. Telemarketing picked up last month – Operations Manager has separated lapsed and current donors with new scripts, has been more effective. Don't have demographic analysis and would need to pay for that, currently approximately 50% crossover between calls and mail out. Ronelle can dedicate and tailor calls around events or campaigns – but this is resource intensive and One4All may charge for it. Our campaigns are therefore not well coordinated.

Tristram queried large portion of investments in cash term deposits, and a smaller amount in managed funds. All up for renewal in 2017, potentially an opportunity for re-investment strategy. Ken agreed and noted that governance has been conservative and focussed elsewhere to date.

*Action: Ronelle to seek advice on best re-investment options and processes.*

### **Ratify decisions**

Social media guidelines – strong support, key areas of feedback around external communications and challenges of personal communications encroaching on MDA affiliated pages. Manifests as code of conduct, which should be enforceable. Agreed to include branch chairpersons as point of contact, and remove specific email addresses.

*Action: Ronelle to revise social media guidelines and seek ratification by email.*

Work related expenses guidelines – Strong support for document, with exception of mileage rate contested on basis of inequality between paid staff and volunteers (so potentially de-valuing volunteers). Ken summarised inaccuracies of historical IRD rate and stepped out reasonable rate at 40c per kilometre. Tristram also expressed concern around wording regarding support persons not being inclusive. Agreed to revise document, reworking support worker provisions, and replacing specific mileage rate with wording to support individual applications, with branch chair authority where applicable.

*Action: Ronelle to revise work related expenses guidelines and seek ratification by email.*

### **Grants resolutions**

Grants applications tabled as below:

- Lions Foundation \$8,800 for operating costs
- Lotteries NZ \$20,000 for operating costs
- Stern Foundation \$17,000 as additional funding to support Miriam Rodrigues' PhD research
- Southern Trust \$2,000 for Seasons for Growth pilot.

*Moved that National Council approve Ronelle to proceed with grant applications as tabled.*

**Moved: Jan**

**Seconded: Trevor**

**All agreed.**

### **ACTIONS**

National Council handbook - to be updated including new councillors.

*Action: Ruth to update handbook.*

Nametags – ready to be distributed, thanks to Trevor for organising and managing process.

*Action: Nametags to be distributed to councillors.*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Paperless boardroom – Ronelle to prepare a paper for circulation, for consideration at a future meeting.

## **CLOSING**

As an Auckland resident, Michael personally thanked everyone for working together today, and encouraged the group to keep looking ahead and doing good work. Ken thanked all for their attendance and contributions.

**Meeting closed at 3.20pm.**