

WELLINGTON BRANCH
AGM/ANNUAL REPORT 2009

This last year has seen some challenging times for the Association, but also for Wellington Branch since the Wellington Branch AGM on 6 April 2008. As a direct consequence from the major upset at the National Council AGM on 11 April 2008, we had seven resignations from our committee. We would like to thank those committee members for their time and efforts especially as some had been involved with Wellington Branch for years.

The committee are keen to put the past year behind us. Move forward, focus on our members and strengthen our branch.

In October both our Chairperson and Branch Rep resigned so a meeting was held on 2 November (first face-to-face meeting since April). We replaced our Chairperson and Secretary as well as the Branch Rep for the National Council and some new general committee members too. The committee is..

Chairperson & Branch Rep - Liz Mills

Treasurer - Jackie Dobbs

Secretary - Heather Patel

Committee - Joy Dowsett, Ivan Dowsett, Lyn Hawkins, John Hawkins and Elvin Wright.

We have been working together really well since November 2008. We are a dedicated group and our focus is on making our Branch stronger to benefit our members. We are all quite happy to retain our positions for the next year and continue with what we have started.

The major project the committee are concentrating on at present is the setting up of a Field Worker Service for Wellington Branch. National Council have set aside \$90,000.00 in the 2009 and 2010 budget to initially get this service up and running and the committee had a meeting with Miriam Rodrigues from National Office to find out what we need to do to achieve this. I have also been speaking with Canterbury and Northern Branches - who both have Field Worker Services available to their members - and have been given lots of advice and information. We have an idea now, 'about what to do next' and the process is underway. I think that getting a Field Worker for our branch is an extremely positive step forward, and it will be of huge benefit to all our members.

Working alongside the Field Worker will be a part-time Office Manager, part of whose role will be to prepare and source funding through the various Community Trusts, Pub Charities and Lotteries etc to keep our branch financial. The other MDA branches source their funding through these avenues - it works well for them so it is a procedure we are going to use too.

In February the first Wellington Branch newsletter went out - I plan for this to happen quarterly, so the next one is scheduled for May.

We had two Wellington Branch social events in 2008, a Sunday lunch in Masterton in July and an end of year Christmas lunch in Upper Hutt. On both these occasions we met new members, which was great.

We granted funding to six members over the past year - ranging from a Standing frame for a member in Hawera - which will belong to Wellington Branch, but be on loan to the member; Internet fees to teenage member in Palmerston North so that he could complete his school studies; funding assistance for a young/adult member to attend an Outward Bound course and visits to the Friedreichs Ataxia clinic in Melbourne for two separate members.

In October 2006, Wellington Branch of the Muscular Dystrophy Association of New Zealand was struck off the Incorporated Societies Registrar for failing to file financial statements for years 2005 and 2006. After sending in financial Statements for 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, as at **17 February 2009** Wellington Branch is now back on the register.

A big Thanks to those of our members who participated in Bow Tie fundraising this year. Next year, Wellington Branch will be actively encouraging our members to get involved and fundraise for Wellington Branch, as by then we will have more support to offer our members and we will feel a lot more comfortable about asking for their help in return.

Thanks for all the generous time and efforts put in by the Wellington Branch committee over the last year - a dedicated group of people who find time in their already busy lives for the MDA.

We all can look forward to a busy, positive and exciting 2009 for Wellington Branch.

Liz Mills
Chairperson and Branch Rep