

# Expresso



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW NATIONAL BOARD

Our new National Board was confirmed at the AGM in November:

**National President** - Gill Naylor

**National Finance Chair** - Jenny McDonald

**South Island Board Members**

Sharron Davie-Martin and Emma Higgins

**North Island Board Members**

Malvina Dick and Claire Williamson

*From left to right: Emma Higgins, Malvina Dick, Claire Williamson, Jenny McDonald, Sharron Davie-Martin, Gill Naylor.*

## A WORD FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT GILL NAYLOR

I hope those of you who made it to Wellington for the AGM and Business Awards enjoyed your time in the capital. It was a very busy day for the National Board and Office team. There was plenty of emotion around too, saying farewell to our outgoing President, Fiona and National Chair, Penny. These two amazing women have done so much for Rural Women New Zealand during their tenure, much of it behind the scenes. We also said farewell to Zelda, whose contribution has also been truly valuable.

It was an emotional time as I stepped forward to take on the role of President from Fiona and it was exciting to be able to welcome the three new Members to the Board: Claire Williamson, Emma Higgins and Malvina Dick. All six candidates who stood this year were extremely capable and our hearts go out to those who were unsuccessful this time around. We look forward to continuing to work with you for the benefit of Rural Women New Zealand in other ways.

I'm looking forward to leading the whole RWNZ team in continuing our role in strengthening, supporting and connecting people and communities into the 21st century.



It was incredibly inspiring to see and hear from our NZI Rural Women NZ Business Award Winners. Women in rural New Zealand are truly amazing and entrepreneurial, and it's great that we can celebrate this with these Awards. I would like to thank our Award Sponsors for their support.

It's December now and I know it's also a very busy time for our primary producers, so please work safely, don't take the short cuts, take breaks and get as much rest as you can.

I wish you all the very best for the Festive Season and hope you will all receive the best gift of all, which is happy memories spending time with friends and family over the holiday period.



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## 2020



## RWNZ AGM 2020

It was with great pleasure that the National Office team welcomed Members to the RWNZ Annual General Meeting in Wellington on Friday, 20 November. After planning and re-planning the AGM several times over course of the year based on different scenarios and level restrictions, it was just fantastic to be able to finally come together under Level 1. It was an action packed day - there was plenty of laughter and a few tears, cheese scones, award presentations, a speech competition, remits and the introduction of the new National Board.

The AGM was held at the Public Trust Hall. The heritage of this beautifully restored venue was a perfect match for the traditions which are part of our AGM. We were especially pleased to welcome the new Minister for Women, the Hon Jan Tinetti and the Deputy Mayor of Wellington, Sarah Free. The Minister spoke very impressively and described her rural pedigree including membership of RWNZ and her experience as an educator and School Principal. We look forward working closely the Ministry and Minister further.

An important part of the AGM is recognising and celebrating excellence and achievement by our Members. The appropriate awards and warm congratulations were offered to each of the following:

Member of Excellence - Olive Craig Tray

**Raewyn Marwood (Region 6 Greater Waikato)**

National Service Award

**Joan Black (Region 4)**

Talbot Trophy for Best International Officers Report

**Helen Bayliss (Region 6 Taranaki)**

Lady Blundell Tray for Most Innovative Project

**Region 2 Area Committee**

Honora O'Neill Trophy for Best Provincial Report

**Carolyn McLellan (Region 3)**

Best Branch President's Report

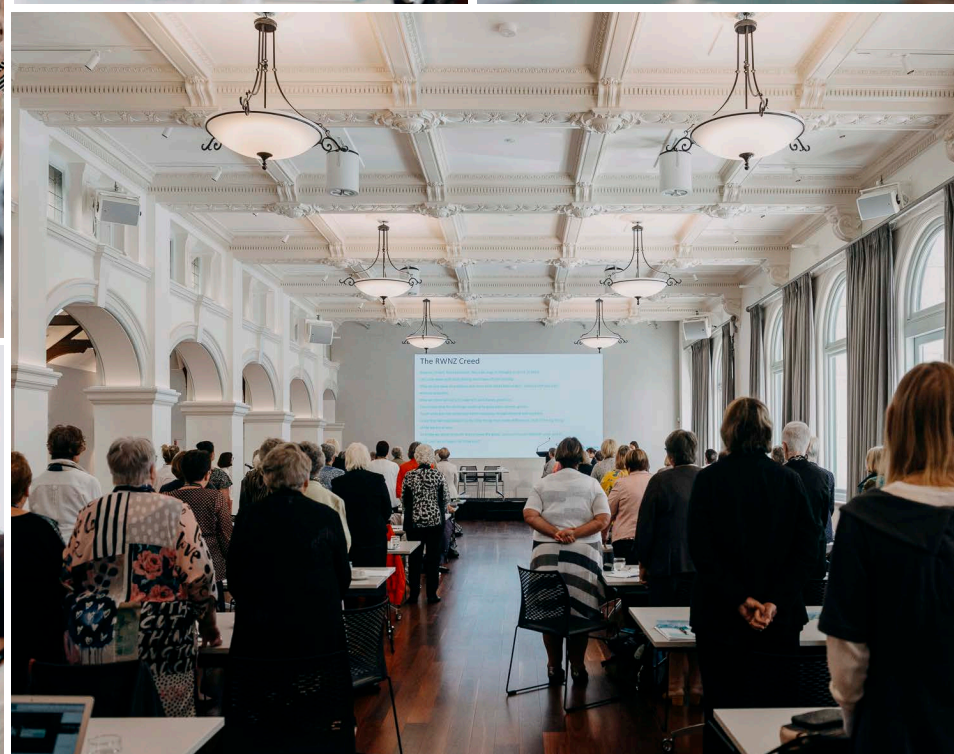
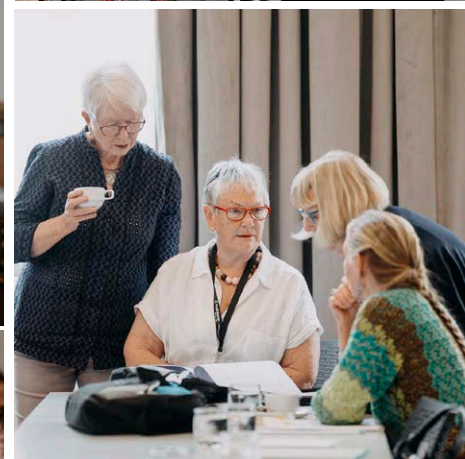
**Tamzin Coull (Region 4)**

Following the departure of our guests, the business of the AGM commenced. The Annual Reports, Financial Reports, Appointment of the Auditor and remits had been made available to Members in October. All Reports were adopted and all remits passed. The Tarrant Bell Speech Competition provided a pleasant interlude from the business session in the afternoon.

The final part of the AGM was thanking our retiring Board Members and welcoming the new Board. This is where there were a few tears. Citations were read and presentations made to retiring North Island Board Members Zelda de Villiers and Penny Mudford (who had also served as National Chair for the past four years) and to retiring National President Fiona Gower. As her last act as National President, Fiona welcomed Gill Naylor as our new National President. Jenny McDonald had been duly elected for a further two-year term as National Finance Chair. They joined sitting South Island Board Member, Sharron Davie Martin in welcoming our new Board Members: Malvina Dick and Claire Williamson for the North Island and Emma Higgins for the South Island.











## NZI RURAL WOMEN NZ BUSINESS AWARDS 2020

The Public Trust Hall was transformed from daytime Annual General Meeting mode to stunning evening venue for the NZI Rural Women NZ Business Awards 2020.

We welcomed 150 guests including Members who had earlier attended the AGM, our Award Winners and Sponsors and plenty of family and friends who had come to celebrate at the Awards Dinner and Ceremony.

It was a truly fabulous evening. The Public Trust Hall's combination of restored heritage and state of the art video and audio facilities was perfect for us and allowed us to add some pretty special touches to the evening. The National Office team had prepared a photo montage which celebrated RWNZ's history which played as our guests arrived and they had also arranged a series of wool installations and made an 'Ode to Wool' video presentation which played during the evening.

This year we were able to include some produce and beverages from previous Awards entrants and winners into our evening menu and it was wonderful to be able to do this. Thank you to The Clareville Bakery, The Baked Dane, Waiheke Herbs, Go Wild Freeze Dried Honey, 3sixty2 Wines and Tannacrieff Wines. A big thank to our caterers for the AGM and the Awards, Nosh Catering & Events, for indulging us and for the fabulous quality of the meals and service throughout the day.

But, in the end, the Awards are about each of seven Category Award Winners who were the finalists for the Supreme Award. In each Award segment we were introduced to each Award Winner and Award Sponsor, watched the Winner's entry video and heard a little of the judges' remarks.

It's really hard to describe how inspiring it is to see these wonderful women who win the Awards. They are truly a testament to the innovation and creative of rural women.

The Category Award Winners and Sponsor of each Category were as follows:

**Creative Arts:**

Farmer's Daughter Design Studio – Becks Tosswill (Wairarapa)  
*Sponsored by the Public Trust Hall*

**Emerging Business:**

Grass Roots Media – Chelsea Millar (Manawatu)  
*Sponsored by the Ministry for Women*

**Innovation:**

Purvis Feeds – Henrietta Purvis (North Otago)  
*Sponsored by Hynds Rural*

**Love of the Land:**

Higgins Shearing Ltd – Sarah Higgins (Marlborough)  
*Sponsored by the Ministry for Primary Industries*

**Rural Champion:**

SMW Design & Events – Sue Wilson (Wairoa)  
*Sponsored by Jarden*

**Bountiful Table:**

The Baked Dane – Lisa Brink (Horowhenua)  
*Sponsored by Havana Coffee Works*

**Rural Health and Wellbeing Excellence:**

Kate Ivey Fitness – Kate Ivey (Twizel)  
*Sponsored by Access Community Health*

In what seemed like a surprisingly short time we arrived at the announcement as to which of these remarkable women would be this year's NZI Supreme Award Winner. Christina Chellew presented the Supreme Award on behalf of NZI to Sarah Higgins of Higgins Shearing Ltd. A fantastic time was had by all – as you can see from the photos.





Lisa Brink, The Baked Dane  
Bountiful Table Award Winner



Becks Tosswill, Farmers Daughter Design Studio  
Creative Arts Award Winner



Kate Ivey, Kate Ivey Fitness  
Rural Health & Wellbeing Excellence



Henrietta Purvis, Purvis Feeds  
Innovation Award Winner



Sue Wilson, SMW Design & Events  
Rural Champion Award Winner



Chelsea Millar, Grass Roots Media  
Emerging Business Award Winner





# The Best and Only Longest Running Fantastic Recyclable Show in the Country

The bride, blushing of course, towered over the diminutive groom. There also seemed to be a disparity in their ages, in the groom's favour, although no Rural Woman member would be crass enough to point that out. Had a closer inspection been available, the ages of the participants, especially the pregnant guest, would have also been questionable, as would have that of the baby who appeared after noises-off suggested an off-stage birth. Furthermore, the baby swaddled in pink baleage plastic wrap bore an uncanny resemblance to the narrator who, nattily suited in a shiny black outfit entirely appropriate to the gravitas of her role, had mysteriously disappeared. Whether or not the pregnancy had anything to do with hanky-panky involving the groom, whose wedding ceremony was in full swing, remained unexplained.

The sudden arrival of the newborn always signaled the climax of the Plastic Fantastic Show and always got the loudest laugh from the audience and the cast. Even after a "run" of 18 years from 1994 to the last show in June 2012 at the Age Concern rooms in Tauranga the appearance of Rural Women stalwart Eve Koopman waddling on-stage as the pregnant guest and the reappearance of Mary Brooker, moments before narrator, as the baby caused the cast mirth just as much as it did the audience.

Although a light hearted romp the Plastic Fantastic show was conceived as a serious attempt to highlight the possible use of waste plastic as a recyclable material. It was not lost to the members of the Oropi Branch that this might be a way to raise much more money for charity than the traditional ways more familiar to Rural Women ladies. Maybe it would prove to be a lot more fun too. That the branch members did in fact keep up their traditional fundraising efforts throughout the Plastic Fantastic years is testimony to their dedication to the aspirations of Rural Women. It should also be remembered that during these years the Oropi Branch consistently won the Johnson Cup presented annually for best attendance at Tauranga Provincial meetings.

The show was first aired at a Country Women's Institute and Women's Division Federated Farmers Coordinating day at Paengaroa in May 1994. Over 400 ladies from all over the Bay of Plenty, Rotorua, North King Country, Thames Valley and Waikato appreciated a small group of Oropi members showing what could be done with plastic to make fantastic costumes and accessories. They chose, somewhat tongue in cheek, a wedding ceremony as the best way to show off as many different outfits as possible.

Introduced one at a time, the narrator explained how each costume was made. The cast grew over time but settled down to broadly include a full wedding party. First up was the chimney sweep for good luck followed by the vicar, flower girl, up to three bridesmaids (depending how many turned up), bride and groom, mother of the bride, mother of the groom, numerous invited guests (depending on who fitted costumes and who turned up). And, of course, a very pregnant guest who had obviously over-indulged in the good life dressed in Watties Good Life frozen vegetable wrappers and finally after a suitable pause, no narration necessary, her newborn.

The costumes were made to be size flexible with Velcro fixings. The branch could never be entirely sure who would turn up for a gig so they made the costumes adjustable. This had the added advantage of allowing with relative ease cast members to reappear in more than one role. "Relative ease" is subjective as there were many hilarious mix-ups, costume malfunctions and near disasters as, for example, the bride departed on honeymoon to hastily reappear as a "flapper" guest or the narrator as a baby or a flower girl as a racy guest vamping it up. By such sleight of hand, should they be shorthanded as a result of short notice, the cast filled seamlessly all of the roles of entourage and guests.

For some unfathomable reason the only room at the venues provided for the cast to change into their costumes seemed to be broom cupboards, toilets or similar awkward spaces. It has to be said that country life tends to attract large, robust women and many Oropi Rural Women members were no exception. Their senses of humour may have been tested changing into costumes hot and sweaty in summer or cold and clammy in winter (a downside of plastic) but they never failed to appreciate the funny side to burst on stage smiling.

During the last years of the twentieth and first decade of the twenty-first centuries, when the show was at its height of popularity, the branch could call on about twenty-two members of which at least twelve were needed for any one show. During this period the average number of shows per year remained at almost one per month. But naturally most organisations wanted their entertainment at pre-Christmas functions so many times the ladies were called upon weekly and on some occasions twice in one week. This demanding schedule took its toll on both the cast and the costumes. Extra working bees had to be held to make good the damage resulting from hasty and frequent costume changes. Sometimes some of the ladies were too exhausted to attend which resulted, for those who could, in even more costume changes, sometimes four or more.

Spread largely by word of mouth the popularity of Plastic Fantastic meant that many clubs and institutions in Tauranga and the Bay of Plenty clamored for a show. Lyceum, RSA, Women's Institute, Foundation for the Blind, Alzheimers, Probus, garden clubs, retirement villages and old folks' homes all wanted a piece of the Plastic Fantastic action and all showed their appreciation by donation. The branch found themselves hiring mini-buses to put on the show, sometimes in the evening, as far away as Papakura, Whakatane and Horsham Downs.

Eventually by 2009 it became apparent the show was becoming a victim of its own success. There was hardly a club or institution in the greater Bay of Plenty that hadn't seen the show; some more than once. Demand eased to a saner five for the 2009 year, mostly just before Christmas. The ladies in the cast were becoming worn out, just like their costumes. For the final show of 2009 only eight members could make it.

Members rose to the occasion as things picked up again in 2010 with eight performances, albeit all in the second half of the year, only to continue the downward path in 2011 and 2012 with the last show that year in June at the Age Concern rooms where a full cast of Oropi Branch ladies not only put on their show but also catered for the 100 guests marking Elder Abuse Day. Although the ladies perhaps didn't realise it at the time this turned out to be the last time the Plastic Fantastic show was performed.

Time had finally caught up on the show. Every club and institution in the Bay of Plenty had seen it. The cast, all Oropi Rural Women Branch members, some no spring chickens even when the show first aired in 1994, were feeling the strain of what at times was a demanding schedule. Behind the scenes the show was a rigorous routine of organisation, costume changes, repairs and maintenance.

Sadly too, the ever expanding Tauranga City was rolling over the Oropi district. Traditional farms fell to developers. Oropi became an outer suburb of lifestyle blocks, the owners of which had little interest in the camaraderie and aspirations of Rural Women. The diminishing branch membership made it harder on those that remained to maintain the high standard of the show.

The show lives on in the newspaper cuttings and dry entries in the branch minutes. Fading now, the newspaper cuttings and accompanying photographs make clear the joy and pleasure participating in Plastic Fantastic gave cast and audience alike. But for those branch members who remain, especially those who were regular cast members, the shows remain in their memory as one eighteen year long fantastic wedding celebration full of laughter and love and not a little regret that it couldn't go on forever.

## Marlborough Short Story Competition

### Fundraising: Putting the FUN in fundraising

"Of course you can do it. Just say yes and I will put your name on the list. Come on, it's easy, you can do it." Who am I to argue with such a persuasive friend? After some lengthy self-talk, I decided that yes, I could do it and put my hand up for the job. My friend was so happy and promised me great things ahead.

So, what was 'it'?

'It' was me being a model at a fundraising fashion parade for a local charity. Me, being a fashion model!! Aren't fashion models about size 10? Aren't fashion models young? Aren't fashion models glamorous? My answer to all those questions is YES. Am I about size 10, young and glamorous? NO, definitely no to each of those questions!!

What had I done? I had said yes to 'it' and now I was committed to 'it' but at the same time there was some feeling of excited anticipation. I was about to step off my usual path and potentially have some fun while doing something for a very worthy not for profit organisation in my community.

I soon discovered that there were five others who had also been persuaded to say yes to doing 'it' when we all met up to be given our clothes to model and have a practise on the catwalk. Never before had I considered how much fun this could be. I had to put aside my apprehensions re my size, shape and age as this wonderful woman who knows all about colours, styles and fashion led us all through the racks of clothes in the organisation's second hand clothing store. As she handed me a selection of very colourful items and accessories I was thinking that I would never wear any of these items and the others were saying the same about the selections that they had been handed. So, there we were, six women with a wide age, size and shape range looking wide eyed at each other as we were instructed to start trying on our chosen outfits.

Who knew that six women who had never met before could have so much fun in the small back room of a local café trying on second hand clothes in preparation for showcasing them to a crowd of others who were paying good money for an evening of fashion, food and fun? Thank goodness for the wonderful co-ordinator who was able to show us that we could look great in ensembles that we would never have chosen for ourselves. A practise up and

down the cat walk that had been set up in the café and then we were ready for the real deal the following week.

The actual day dawned and I was still wondering if I had done the right thing by agreeing to do 'it'. I reminded myself of how much fun we had all had at the rehearsal and that I was part of a team having fun to help raise funds for a worthy organisation. Deep breath, and then I was on my way to the venue ready for hair and make-up. Wow, that makes me sound like a real model – hair and make-up. That is far from my normal daily routine however it seems to be an essential part of this 'it' that I had agreed to do so I am thinking I should make the most of this aspect as well.

There we were, hair done, make-up done and all dressed in our first outfits and reassuring each other that we looked fantastic and that we could do this thing. The crowd, with their drinks in hand, found their way to their seats and then the compere introduced the event. It was time for us all to do 'it'. Yes, we all went out and strutted our stuff in front of an audience who showed great interest and appreciation for the fashion parade which was a demonstration of the wonderful garments and accessories that are available through a charity op shop. I had never dreamt that I would be a model walking down a catwalk in a teal and burnt orange outfit bringing oos and ahhs from the audience – yes, I was doing 'it'!!

Before I knew it, the fundraising, pre-loved fashion parade evening came to an end. I needed to thank my friend for twisting my arm a month or so ago. It seems that she knew then that I could do 'it' but at that point I really didn't believe I could. At that time I just wanted to help out a friend and a charity that she is so passionate about.

Wow, I had just been part of a team that put the fun into fundraising while, at the same time, funds were raised for a really important cause in our community. I learned so much from this experience and went on a fabulous journey of laughter, increased self confidence and new knowledge about how I can make colour and style work for me. I am not just a frumpy, old lady, I am a fun, fundraising fashion model.

So pleased I said yes to doing 'it'.



# NATIONAL OFFICE UPDATE



The National Office team are very much looking forward to a break as the year draws to an end. We could never have imagined back in February when we were calling for donations in response to the Australian Bush Fires what lay ahead.

While major events were postponed and cancelled, the vacuum created was quickly filled with the incredible amount of information we received during lockdown about all manner of subjects and in distilling that information and ensuring that it got out to Members. Thank you to everyone who got in touch with us to offer encouraging words and to share information on your local circumstances so that we could work with government to address them.

Once normal working conditions returned, we have been making up the lost ground and we are very proud that we were able to work with you to ensure that our end of year reporting was completed on time, that the NZI Rural Women NZ Business Awards were held

without compromising their quality, that the National Elections were successfully conducted and ultimately, that we were able to hold an Annual General Meeting and Business Awards.

As we come to the end of the year, the National Office team will be saying farewell to Linda who is retiring after 15 and a half years at RWNZ. She will be sorely missed by us and we are currently negotiating her continued availability to assist us with the morning quiz under the proposed 'phone a friend' provision.

So, the Office will close on Tuesday, 22 December and re-open on Monday, 11 January 2021. During the break, many of the team will take the opportunity to visit friends and family out of Wellington. In cases of emergencies only, you can reach Liz on her mobile phone: 027 902 3218.

Meri Kirihimete from Liz, Angela, Felicity, Linda, Lisa, Lucy, Mia and Jesse.

## Out & About



▲ Colville Branch celebrate their 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday

▼ One of the beautiful teapots at the Greater Waikato Area Committee High Tea at The Olde Creamery, Kaipaki, Ohaupo



▲ North Otago members visited Maheno School as part of the ACWW Women Walk the World Event, photographed with the replica bell from the hospital ship 'Maheno', on International Day of Rural Women.

▼ Southland Women Walk the World event on International Day of Rural Women

