

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020

NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF NOTARIES INC

Membership

At the date of this report the number of members of the NZ Society of Notaries is 190.

Notarial Applications

The Society is pleased to advise the completion of 4 new Notarial faculties during the past year with many more in the pipeline. Applications have been held up in the UK due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Society currently has in excess of a dozen applicants having received their New Zealand consent certificates and awaiting their Faculty from the Master of Faculties in England.

Council

The Council held meetings in Christchurch (after the AGM on 30 August 2019) and in Wellington on 24 February 2020. Minutes of both meetings have been distributed previously to all members of the Society and are available to view in the *For Notaries* section of the website. Council also now hold monthly Zoom meetings to deal with an increasing number of matters, but primarily to discuss the notarial applications and keep those moving along. The Master has requested the Society set up a complaints register and forward this to him annually and to this extent, Council have a complaints sub-committee to deal with any complaints received from members of the public.

Council will be holding a meeting in Auckland on Monday 7 September 2020 immediately following the AGM.

Annual Accounts

The accounts cover the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. Owen Williams as our honorary auditor has audited the accounts of the Society for the year ended 31 March 2020 and we thank him accordingly. The Administration fees represent the amount paid to our secretary, Tracey Merlini, who does an excellent job for the Society. The surplus for the year was \$36,912.33. It was pleasing to note that our Income comprising subscriptions, application fees and tutorial fees was more than the previous year and the Society is in good heart.

Membership Fees

At its February meeting Council discussed membership fees which were outstanding and unpaid. Council advises there is just \$500 of outstanding fees for 2020, \$250 of which they do not expect to recover due to those notaries being now untraceable. Council continues to pursue unpaid subscriptions regularly and will discuss debtors further at its meeting on 7 September.

A budget was undertaken by Council's Treasurer late last year and you will note from the February 2020 minutes that Council propose an increase in membership fees to \$200 per annum.

Education

Council appointed Tony Herring of Christchurch and Richard Wilson of Auckland to conduct tutorials since the retirement of Bob Eades. I would like to give a sincere vote of thanks to Bob Eades for his sterling work over many years. The Auckland District Law Society is going to honour Bob Eades at a special dinner on 3 September 2020 and I am hoping that many Auckland notaries will attend that dinner in recognition of Bob.

Council are working on a selection of videos to upload to the website which they hope will supersede the need for webinars which proved to be prohibitive and relied upon the support of off-site facilities. Council hope to be in a position to upload some of this educational material, of particular support new notaries very soon.

Website/Forum

The forum facility is available to members within the *For Notaries* secure area of the website and members have all been issued with usernames and passwords to access this area. Members are encouraged to sign in to access the precedents and use the forum to notarial-related discussion. You should also ensure that you have opted to receive notification of postings on the forum. If you have any issues in relation to your log in or opting-in to notifications, please contact the Secretary.

The NZ Notary booklet

You will be aware from last year's report a digital version of a new edition of the Handbook is planned. A sub-committee of Bob Eades, Richard Wilson and Don Thomas has been delegated to this task and remains a work in progress. Any suggestions from members for what could be included in the Handbook should be forwarded through the Secretary.

Precedents have been made available on the website and members are encouraged to send in examples they may have or anything else they deem suitable for the website.

Common Law Association of Notaries

At its March Zoom meeting Stewart Germann was elected President of CLAN (Common Law Association of Notaries) for the ensuing 2 years. Stewart has represented New Zealand on the Board of CLAN for the past 2 years and it is a pleasure to report that Tracey Merlini has been appointed as Secretary of CLAN.

Stewart Germann**President**

10 August 2020