

SeniorNet Federation AGM and Symposium, May 2016

AGM, May 4.

Introduction.

The Chairman, Ray McDonald, welcomed us all to the meeting which was held in the very pleasant location of The Boat Shed on Wellington's Wharf. There were 80+ attendees. The Chair held 10 proxy votes and only one representative from each locality was to vote from the floor.

The minutes were taken as true and correct and there were no matters arising from them.

The Chairman then presented his report which all attendees had a copy of in an AGM and Symposium booklet, printed free by Fuji Xerox, showing us what we could get from their printers!

The Chairman commented on EO Grant Sidaway's unique skill set and that his contract was renewed for another year.

Other items covered in his report were; the change in the **TEC funding**; the special **grant from MSD** to engage specialists in writing a new sustainable funding model and Quality Assurance and funding to learning centres. **SNAP** was identified as a significant help in keeping records and although no longer required to keep statistics for TEC the Federation would keep in the place the capture of statistics from its Learning Centres when they invoice the Federation for learner hour funding grants. It is considered the information collected provides valuable data for effectively running SeniorNet at a local, regional and national level.

It was also noted that many centres are having difficulty in maintaining viable committees.

There has been a continuing drop in overall membership with a subsequent drop in the income stream from subscriptions. Off setting that has been a drop in expenses.

Learner Centre Activity

There were 79 (84) Learning Centre and 15,809 (15,821) members in 2015, down from 2014 (bracketed no.)

There were 4,450 skilled based sessions in 2015 (3,712 in 2014) a 20% increase.

The most popular being; Introduction to portable touch screen devices, including iPad, Android and Smartphones. The next most popular were; Computer maintenance, files and folder, cloud facilities, Dropbox, technical q&a sessions.

Of the 29,202 enrolments in courses etc. in 2015, 64% were female and 36% male; 95% Pakeha/NZ European and 96% 60+ age group.

Ray finished with acknowledgements to; the other members of the management committee; to the EO Grant Sidaway and to Jude Mitchener who works along side Grant at the National Office; and to the member Learning Centres for their contribution in supporting local communities come to grips with new technology on a voluntary basis.

Executive Officers Report (Grant's tenth year)

Grant spoke of the need for the SeniorNet brand to be consistent across the centres and asked that they use the standard template for advertising. He spoke of the direct financial and promotional assistance the Federation has from its supporters; Noel Leeming for eight years with a 2% payment from each identified transaction; Vodafone, a grant of \$55,000 annually; Grey Power Electricity (Pulse Energy), marketing and advertising agreement; National Lottery Grants Board \$60,000 + GST for 2015, (some of this funding was used to pay the Symposium costs); an advertising Campaign to target the sons, daughters and grand children of potential parents and grandparents as SeniorNet learners. It worked as at National level the increased number of people emailing(not calling the 0800 number) had been significant.

Gizmoe and Teaching Resources

Grant would like to receive feedback related to the Gizmoe publication. There are over 2000 resources available at the Federation website, www.seniornet.co.nz Please keep them up to date.

Treasure's Report

The 2015 year ended with a surplus of \$96,868.79. However the budget for 2016 shows a projected deficit of \$154,000 at the end of the year. The impact of the withdrawal of TEC funding shows that other means of gaining funds need to be employed.

Plan for 2016/2017

The Federation would like Learning Centres to align their annual plans to that of the Federation. The Federation has an aim to grow the membership to 20,000. Learning Centres need to think beyond the name to attract new members.

In discussion it was recommended that SeniorNet have a QR code; that the Symposium talks could be made available as podcasts; Use of #tag; use more social media in our centres.

SeniorNet Federation Motion

“THAT the capitaion fee be raised to \$3 in 2017”

Points:

- Has not been raised in ten years
- Sponsors think the membership is not supporting the Federation with the current capitation so why should they
- All Government departments agree that SeniorNet is worthy and good to maintain but they don't have any \$ to give to it.

Conclusion of the Federation was that it is time to “Row our own boat”. Experience shows that in trying to embarrass the Government into action can actually work in the negative.

There was a suggestion from the floor that we involve our local MP.

After a small discussion the Motion was put and comfortably carried.

Remits

Remit 1 was dealt with as it was the same as the Federation Motion

Remit 2 “Is it time to rethink the name “SeniorNet”? Submitted by Turangi

Discussion covered the established reputation and brand and costs involved in rebranding.

Because this topic had been previously debated extensively the Chair decided to put it to the vote.

Overwhelming support for no name change so the remit was lost.

Remit 3 Addition of “Maori By-line” to SeniorNet Logo. Submitted by Turangi

The Turangi member stated that they felt it was important to be inclusive and especially in their locality. Maori is the official second language of New Zealand and had a rightful place in the logo. It could also be helpful in getting funding for Maori and Pacifica learners.

There was little supporting discussion for this remit. When put to the vote it was slightly in favour of those who were against but the proxy vote was only one in favour and eight against so the remit was lost. The delegates from Motueka were pleased to have represented a learning centre that had voted in favour of this remit.

Symposium, 5th May

Introduction. Grant Sidaway welcomed delegates to the Symposium and said that learning centres should now be planning for the future so that we were ready for new technology and the likely change in the age profile of our membership with the scrapping of the minimum age requirement. He said that an interesting range of speakers had been lined up for the day, including from two new partners, Expedia Travel and Fuji-Xerox.

Network for Learning (N4L). The speaker was Carolyn Stuart (niece of Ian Grant). She first gave us a bit of history about N4L, saying it was set up as a Crown owned company to provide fast Internet to schools, since it was uneconomic for private companies to do so. She said that evening classes for adults held at schools used the network without charge so she saw no problem with SeniorNet centres using their local schools network. However, she said this should be done by learning centres approaching their local schools directly rather than through a formal partnership being set up between the Federation and N4L.

Colin mentioned to her the situation in Motueka and the exorbitant cost that would be involved if a wireless connection were to be established with Parklands School. She said a possible solution would be to hold the most affected sessions on the school premises at a time convenient to the school.

Carolyn demonstrated The Pond, a teaching resource similar to Google but with articles on the subject being searched being already loaded in The Pond, rather than it being necessary to click on a link to another website to view the article. She also mentioned the Creative Commons licensing system, which enables content to be shared with and used by third parties while protecting the author from others seeking to use it in a publication offered for sale.

Google. The speaker was Shane Treeves from Google New Zealand. Shane said that initially Google was just a search engine used for finding basic information, but that now it was far more than that, offering searches for images, videos and maps. He said that Google now offers more than just searches, eg YouTube, Google Voice (a copy of Apple's Siri?), Gmail and a translation service - Maori and Samoan have recently been added to the range of languages available.

Shane also mentioned the company's policies - "Open and Free Internet" is the main principle; and company slogans, eg "Think 10x not 10%".

GSLPromotus. This company has recently been engaged by the Federation to report on alternate funding sources now that we have lost government funding from TEC. The speaker, Sigrun Grice, said that the company had previously been employed by the Federation to produce the new logo and to advise on an advertising campaign. A second speaker, Kylie, spoke in more detail about the importance of branding, knowing who our customers were and how best to market ourselves. She emphasised the importance of messages given by the Federation and individual learning centres to be the same. She also gave more detail about the current project, outlining the research that is currently being done prior to offering marketing guidance to the Federation. She mentioned that an online survey is currently being conducted among SeniorNet members and she encouraged everyone to take part. The website for the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/THVNF7P>.

I got the impression that there was little emphasis on the original aim of the project, ie to find alternate sources of funding; instead the emphasis seemed to be on how much more SeniorNet members would be willing to pay.

Expedia. Expedia is an on-line hotel booking service which has recently entered into a partnership with the Federation. The speaker, Michael Service, said that Expedia will pay 2% of the amount of the accommodation value of bookings made by SeniorNet members using Expedia. However, to get this commission, members must make the booking by clicking on the Expedia link on the

Federation website. Currently it is only hotel bookings that are available through Expedia but this may be extended to other travel bookings in the future.

We should alert our members to this new source of funding by a note in our next newsletter.

Fuji-Xerox. This company has also recently become one of our partners. The speaker was Mitch Weaver, and he told us of a case where Fuji-Xerox had helped the 104 branches of Auckland Kindergartens to save over \$1 million over 5 years by centralising printing and stationery requirements. However, it was not suggested that SeniorNet learning centres would operate in the same way! Nevertheless, Fuji-Xerox would be offering a choice of 3 machines to centres at favourable terms. I mentioned Motueka's experience with Fuji-Xerox and asked how the new system would benefit us. Mitch was non-committal and just said that we would be contacted towards the end of our contract and the company would recommend options for us. I don't think we should hold our breath! Grant will be circulating information on the new arrangements and what we will need to do.

Warkworth SeniorNet. This centre gave a very interesting presentation on how they have increased their membership with innovative courses and associated publicity. The centre has deleted the age requirement from their constitution and has been actively encouraging people looking for work to learn new computer skills so that they can re-enter the work force. They have put a lot of emphasis on new technology, eg they have been experimenting with Google Cardboard (a cardboard virtual reality headpiece costing about two dollars) and plan to buy 40 sets so that they can run courses on virtual reality. They have also been running interesting workshops on subjects such as Smart TVs, social networking, Internet radio and using devices overseas.

Every year they send out a 12-page brochure to members with their membership renewal reminders and include information about courses, workshops, requirements for doing advanced courses. Also included is information about the special interest groups - genealogy, graphics, Facebook, website design, digital photography and portable devices.

The speakers also mentioned their help sessions, which they described as being rather like a clinic except you don't have to drop your pants!

Warkworth also holds regular Open Days, to which the general public is invited. Motueka used to do this but dropped Open Days a few years ago. Maybe we should think about reinstating them, as this would be one way of getting new members into the club and doing our courses.

Open Forum The last session included an Open Forum discussion with this title; "If you were to open a SeniorNet Learning Centre today how would it look?" Grant opened the discussion with this question and then added, "Would it have a fixed premises?"

The representative from Linkwater commented that they moved to various locations, most of which they accessed free of charge, which included Linkwater Havelock and Picton, to deliver learning opportunities to their members. Another speaker said they had been able to make use of school facilities which had a High Speed Fibre Optic network.

Discussion ensued as to the pros and cons of a fixed building especially if rent was a factor. More centres were expecting members to bring their own device as that was becoming the preference and were not buying hardware or if they did only one of Windows 10, Samsung and Apple. Some members felt that in having fixed premises there was a sense of community and people came for the social contact.

Core vision remained seniors helping seniors, but we needed to think outside the box if there is no age restriction, such as seniors helping younger people who need upskilling to get into the workforce. The fact that most learning takes place during the day meant that it was less available to younger people.

Mobility was the way forward and the idea of using hotspots and moving into more remote localities going to the people was suggested eg. Suburbs, halls, rural districts.

Records would be electronic to save storing lots of paper records. Lessons can be on line too and learners encouraged to take their own notes. Maybe only the initial basic courses need to be in paper format. It was suggested that more use should be made of special interest groups.

Grant summed up by saying that he felt it was healthy to look forward and to consider how we will be in the future.

Conclusion. The two-day AGM and Symposium was very interesting and worthwhile, and we should continue to send delegates to this event in the future. In addition to the formal presentations there were many opportunities to chat to other delegates about their centres and what they were doing to stimulate interest and attract new members.

The venue was very suitable for the 80+ delegates that attended and the catering was excellent.

Grant will be circulating the presentations as PowerPoint files to all learning centres.

Muriel Moran
Colin Hooker