

Welcome to the new Inner Wheel year 2018-2019.

**“Empower and Evolve”**. This is International Inner Wheel President Chris Kirby’s theme for our year and how inspiring it is!

**Empower** means: give someone the authority or power to do something. Make someone stronger and more confident, authorise, entitle, allow, delegate, set free.

**Evolve** means: develop, make progress, move forward, mature, grow, expand, extend.

Membership within Inner Wheel has declined over the last few years with two more clubs disbanding as at 30 June 2018. Declining membership is not just an Inner Wheel problem but is shared with most service clubs in the western world. All service clubs seem to have the same issues – aging membership, recycling of officers, too much paper work, too many rules, younger people too busy with work and family commitments. This needs to be and will be addressed.

I believe that the future of Inner Wheel is in the younger generation of women – from the ages of 18-30, before they start their families. With its objects of promoting true friendship, fostering international understanding and encouraging the ideals of personal service, Inner Wheel is an ideal organisation for young Millennial women.

These young women could form new clubs of likeminded women within New Zealand. If they have children, their club activities could involve family events so that they do not miss out on valuable family time. Perhaps fundraising activities would be for women and children related causes. This would tie in with the International Inner Wheel social project for the next three years of **Caring for Women and Girls**.

With new clubs opening frequently - in India, Australia, Tunisia, Ukraine, Cyprus, Italy in just the last few months - it would be very easy with modern technology, to network with clubs all over the world.

Inner Wheel has speaking rights at United Nations on committees for rights of children, status of women, the aged, narcotics etc. These are very important issues for many young people.

Young millennials want meaning, service and social experience – Inner Wheel can offer this. We can **empower** a new generation of women to **evolve** into women with vision, compassion for others and international understanding.

We have many, many vibrant clubs throughout New Zealand with most of these catering for women over 50 years old. All club’s monthly newsletters are posted on the Inner Wheel New Zealand website. Please read these as they are a great source of inspiration. With over 43,000 hours of volunteer hours contributed by members from across New Zealand in the past year, it is very evident that Inner Wheel is a vital part of our communities.

Internationally, Inner Wheel is in 106 countries with over 108,000 members in 3,979 clubs. A truly wonderful organisation and one that I am very proud to belong to and lead for the 2018-2019 year.

When I first joined inner wheel 27 years ago I joined to have evening out once a month, listen to an interesting speaker, give service to my community and to make some new friends. Never once in all those years and in all the roles I have taken at club, district and national level, did I ever dream I would be Inner Wheel New Zealand President. Many women join Inner Wheel for the same reasons as I did and some never go any further than just being an active member. I would urge all Inner Wheel members to consider office holder roles in their club and also at District and National level. The benefits are many, you gain confidence, meet some wonderful women and make lifetime friends.

I look forward to meeting as many members as I can in the year ahead when I make my visits to districts in October/November.

In friendship

*Darlene Westrupp*

President/National Representative  
Inner Wheel New Zealand