



# IWNZ Inner Link March 2023: GROWTH AND HARVEST

## From the Editor's Desk

It's been a delight to see from the contributions from Clubs around the country that people have been doing wonderful things – there has been a growth in numbers (some via transfers from Clubs that have sadly had to close down but also from the wider community) and a increased interest in taking on new challenges!

And not all growth can be given in numbers – in some cases it is seen in the determination to have a go, reach out to other members, try something new, however small that might be.

Well done ladies!

You'll see in President Aly's contribution *A Much-Needed PEPPY PRESIDENT TALK* and her *Did You Know?* List that our numbers are sliding. However, as she reiterates, don't just concentrate on that, also look at all the positives as we do what we can, with what we have, where we are!

Here's the thing: We all want to report growth, and we all look forward to a harvest as a reward for all our hard work, but neither are a given! Before you stop reading, and write me an email to tell me that you don't appreciate all this negativity, let's unpack this.

Growth and Harvest can be derailed. Badly. In this newsletter there are stories about the devastation caused by Cyclone Gabrielle. It is important to mourn the damage caused. Just because we want a harvest, doesn't mean that we can guarantee one. Nature is powerful.

In our Clubs too, growth is derailed by dwindling numbers and the frailty of ageing members. Every year there are Clubs that can no longer continue functioning and have to make the decision to close.

**But ...** It is in a season of poor growth and a small harvest that we learn things about ourselves. We turn to our store cupboards created in times of plenty; we cope bravely with bad news, we don't give up. We look for new ways of doing things, give in ways that fit our resources and abilities. If there are challenges well, we deal with them! To quote Theodore Roosevelt: *To Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.* There is an addendum to this newsletter – Membership Coordinator Joanne Gaudin's *February Newsletter* on growing membership for some ideas on doing what **YOU** can do, with what you have! Read it – there is good stuff in there!

Happy reading everyone – and I hope to speak to many of you at the Conference in May!

Hannie



## A Much-Needed PEPPY PRESIDENT TALK

Our journey started with magic to **Work Wonders** and a **Packet of Seeds** to plan your year with quotes, monthly charity options, and messages encouraging Inner Wheel Women to be visible and grow Membership. Are we all on the same **TEAM**? I am on your team, and you are on mine – right? Isn't it time we do something, share problems, find solutions, and really be Friends who laugh and eat together – mixing Members with Clubs, Districts and National. Isn't that what Inner Wheel is about? You and Me being inspiring, or maybe just having a great time helping in our communities shaping our life's journey! Let's encourage each other!

**Let's Pack A Picnic!** Inner Wheel has a rich tradition of **Eating Together** – I am reading a lot about restaurants and food in the Clubs' Newsletters. It's part of our culture. In Sweden, they have 'Fika' which means "a break from activity during which people drink coffee, eat cakes or other light snacks, and relax with others". Swedes recognise if everyone working breaks together, it gives employees time to **Start A Conversation** to lean into social support to ask for help. This has been proven more productive with better creative solutions. Creative ideas are our first few picnics, it takes a few outings to know what to bring or never bring, what everyone eats, and pack the chocolate cake in a container so nothing squishes it flat.

An excerpt from **Robert Frost's poem *The Road not Taken*** "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference." An autumnal journey of someone that didn't turn around, quit, nor played repeat day after day. I know it is hard to step out to invite New Members and do something different, but life is too short, so let's give it a go to do something awesome!

How are we going to make the world a better place if we don't participate? Don't we believe in **FRIENDSHIP**? Well, start acting like our Friendship counts and get out there. Don't let your friends down, start helping with the little things, laugh and dance, or work BIG ideas together and ask other Clubs, Districts and National to be on your **TEAM**. Connect your hand in front with someone before you and hold your other hand out to someone new to join behind you. Our friendship can be a human chain that connects us around the world as we uplift women.

I am just one person, but I know we need to get out there in the world and move! Let's make March to May Membership an event where our doors burst open with enthusiasm making lots of noise welcoming new Inner Wheel Women into our **Work Wonders** friendship that is globally legendary for almost a century!

At the end of March – 91 Days to do and be our best – **Our Good Story** tells whether your Club decided to fertilise your most valuable assets – Members – to do new things, help charities, and let Members know that you believe in them to step up into new roles – making it a **Place To Belong**. Simply put, as a team we become outstanding collaborators bringing out the best solutions – **Stars** that **Work Wonders** inspiring the best in all of us – we all really matter. **Our Harvest** showcases the charities Clubs decided to support and growth in Membership!

**So, when does it not work?** Easy, when Members stop caring enough to be helpful, give less, or stop growing new friendships in their Clubs. Frustration can set in with Members not participating. **Fun Activity To Try:** Raise your hand, how high would you extend it. Now, extend your hand a bit higher – I bet it went up more. This is what happens when we get too comfortable – I do it, too. We give, but do we give our best?

Leaders don't solve problems on their own, they work in a team letting each Member shine. They encourage everyone to share their thoughts without criticism. We can't expect only a few to solve the problems or do all the work. So, let's go out there and be awesome together!

## Did You Know?

- **September – October District Meetings 2022**, I advised we have 1,105 paid Members – a heart-breaking-palpitation moment – 166 Members did not renew their Membership. **Growth!** We have 66 New Members and growing from July 2022 to mid-February 2023.

Paid Membership	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
July to September	1,105	1,189	1,201	1,286	1,306	1,431
October to December	+61	+46	+56	+53	+63	+14
January to June		+36	+27	+27	+24	+32
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,166</b>	<b>1,271</b>	<b>1,284</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>1,393</b>	<b>1,477</b>
<b>Membership Decreased   Increased</b>	<b>-105</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-82</b>	<b>-27</b>	<b>-84</b>	
Deaths   Resignations		-90	-173	-107	-171	
Paid New Members		+77	+91	+80	+87	

- **The Inner Wheel Piggy Bank is on a major diet.** Attending the National Governing Body (NGB) August and March Meeting included the 5 members of the-Executive, 4-District Chairmen, 1-Constitutional Chairman, and 1-Membership – **my only invited appointment, Joanne Gaudin**. My apologies for missing any Clubs Historical Birthdays. Warren gifted me a trip to celebrate Tawa's 40th 'birthday' for my March birthday.
- 2019 to 2023 – minimum wage increases \$5 per hour; membership loss of 288 Members (30 June 2019: 1,393 – 1 July 2022 1,105). In August 2022 Community Organisation Grants Scheme(COGS) funding was down \$7,000.
- The National **TEAM** worked 16 hours through the agenda, which expanded knowledge on all Clubs, Districts and National issues, celebrations, conference, and doable solutions. **Carol Haskett**, Publicist (6hours) and **Hannie De Beer**, Editor (12½hours) attending by Zoom participating in our conversations. Honestly, it is a big ask sitting in front of the computer for so long. Their contributions this year has been amazing. Thank You to all those who entered the magazine competition. **Congratulation to those who won a chocolate fish – hope it was enjoyed!**
- Morning and Afternoon Teas are paid by NGB – yep, that's right! Like Club functions – the evening social drinks and meals are paid by individuals, when we had our best friendship time with robust conversations – **the noise!**
- Joanne Gaudin, Membership, has started the **March to May Membership Campaign**. If you would like help with your Membership Campaign, contact your District Membership Coordinator for information. Inner Wheel Club of Ashburton has had numerous new members joining over the past 2-years. **Clare Chapman**, District NZ297 Vice Chairman & Membership, and **Carol Haskett**, Publicist, have lots of local interest for a **Next Generation Club**. Need help with publicity for your Club? Call **Carol Haskett** for help in your area! **Sue Jameson**, District NZ294 Chairman, also has interest for a **New Club** in New Plymouth. **Growth!** Since July 2022, International Membership increased from 104,000 to 120,000 Members, mostly in Europe. **Challenge!** We can do it, too! How many more can we add to the International Inner Wheel Membership numbers?



*A big thank you for all who sent me an email in December – your encouraging and kind words about the end-of-year newsletter were very much appreciated!*

*The following three members all received a delicious Queen Anne chocolate fish in the mail: Suzanne Stevenson, Judy Aitken, and Gaynor Button*

# Growth and Harvest in our Clubs

## New Members

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*I asked the District Chairmen for feedback on Growth and Harvest in their District. Their comments here are followed by the contributions directly from the Clubs.*

**NZ291** Chairman Penelope reported that Clubs are really going the extra mile and working wonders to get new members on board. Orewa & Whangaparoa and Howick now have younger members coming along to meetings. Existing members have been giving advice to new members about Inner Wheel, with great friendships developing and younger members taking on committee roles. Getting to know new members will also benefit National – Penelope suggests that members are encouraged to provide a resume so that Clubs and National have a pool of people that can help on the committees and have the skill set to strengthen the committee. Having a mentor for people stepping up would also be an advantage.

**NZ294** Chairman Sue notes “During my Club visits I have seen that members are encouraged to bring friends along. Not just general meetings but to social and fundraising events as well. It is a lovely way to get to know a few of the members in a less intimidating way and in smaller groups. A fantastic idea and good way to promote your Club and Inner Wheel. I have also seen ladies carry the Inner Wheel brochure and give it to people they meet when they are out and about. Like the staff in the coffee shop, restaurant or where ever you happen to be and talking to lovely ladies. Nothing sells like a personal recommendation from someone in Inner Wheel, plus it helps make other ladies aware of who and what Inner Wheel is all about. No longer the best kept secret!”

**NZ297** Chairman Dianne reports that NZ297 is the second largest District behind NZ294 with 267 active members and with 20 new members since June 2022. Special mention to Ashburton and Christchurch West who are in a tight tussle for top honours for the most new members for this year.

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Quite a few Clubs are reporting new members – both from the community and transfers from other Clubs. These Clubs all report that those new members add “vibrancy and interest” (in the words of **Dunedin South’s** President, Christina King). Attendance at their lunch time meetings sits at 99% !

With a focus on “Growth and Harvest” the Inner Wheel Club of **Ashburton** has continued its growth, with Members introducing their friends and including them in the numerous activities and personal service opportunities. New members are welcomed, made to feel included and encouraged to join in the various activities in the Club. These include monthly supper meetings which are a mix of business and pleasure and often include a speaker. It’s an opportunity to be together to hear relevant Inner Wheel information like Service opportunities, the way their Club connects with the community, up & coming events like Conference, District meetings and their own Club activities (including social coffee mornings, walkers, stitched up craft group, ukulele music group, meals and movies) that are all opportunities to be involved in. As well, an invitation from the membership committee is extended to our newer members to attend a morning tea to gain a better understanding of Inner Wheel both at home and internationally and to foster true friendship.

**Matamata** have added six members to their total this year alone! They place a strong emphasis on the fun and fellowship within the Club, recognising that, to make a friend, you must be a friend. To nurture their members, they have get-togethers three out of four weeks – with a Club meeting, Sundowners at the RSA, and a coffee morning. **Riccarton** has gained seven members – new members report that the best way to get to know existing members is to join in the activities – Walk and Talk on Tuesday mornings, and the once a month movie night are great ways to get to know everyone



**Howick** inducted one new member in February (read Lana's comments in the *New Voices* section) and **Kapiti** has had a visitor who is interested in continuing.

The ladies of **Invercargill East** have welcomed and inducted two new members this year and a third interested person is attending their meetings where they can enjoy a great deal of conversation, laughter, fellowship, and energy to achieve the project at hand. Both meetings and projects focus on the basics – the needs of their community, friendship, fellowship, and the welfare of their members. Projects vary from distributing hampers of non-perishable food to Spirit of Southland and the Food Bank for families in need, to donating Kiwi Christmas Books and making silky pillows for women who have had breast surgery.

**Nelson** too have inducted two new members with a third keen to continue.

**Plimmerton** has seven new members and the President reports that they are "... well connected with each other and with others in the Club". Surely a key thing to put into place.



*Top left: Ashburton New Member's tea  
Top right: Dunedin South – old and new members!  
Bottom left: New members Invercargill East  
Bottom right: New member Matamata*

*In this section you will read what new members of different Clubs around the country have to say about Inner Wheel and why they joined. I am so grateful to all of them for sharing!*

*Do spare a thought to the many “new” members who have transferred from one Club to another – often when their Club has closed down due to dwindling numbers. I have had the privilege of speaking to quite a few of these ladies over the past few weeks, and they all note that they joined another Club because they believe in Inner Wheel’s ethos of service and friendship. But it can be tricky – the “culture” of the new Club may be very different to that of their original Club, and however friendly and welcoming the new Club is, it takes time to become established in the group.*

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Lana, a new member of **Howick** had the following to say:

“I was invited to Inner Wheel by Huibrie and found the ladies to be very warm, inviting and friendly. I decided to join for personal service, to make friends, and am also interested in international understanding. I’m still very new and learning the ropes, but everyone has been very supportive and caring. I look forward to contributing to the Club over the next years.” *(Lana is also stepping up to become Club Editor for 2023/4. Well done you! Editor.)*

Grace, **Motueka’s** newest member *(the photo here shows Club members at a morning tea welcoming her)*, wrote:

“I have been a new Member of the Motueka Inner Wheel for not quite a year, and I have received nothing but friendship and support, from most Members. What I have found in Inner Wheel is wonderful communication, and support, as I have had a serious accident, and am now wearing a “MOON BOOT”! The sense of humour from President Cynthia has kept me going, and I have a sense of humour also. In



fact, a sense of humour, keeps us all going! The secret of any Club is the sense of humour within that Club, and to have a good time, and plenty of laughs! A Club, without fun and laughs, is not a very happy Club to belong to! So, my message is: In Inner Wheel keep having lots of fun, enjoy plenty of laughs, and for sure, new Members will be impressed, and perhaps join and stay. I will always remember the kindness shown to me as a new Member.”

The Impressions of a new member at **New Plymouth North**:

“Firstly I was taken with the friendliness of everyone. Everywhere I go people are so welcoming. I am impressed by the way Inner Wheel seeks out positive organisations in the community that they can work with and help. We work to help those in the community, from baby packs for mothers in need, supporting low decile kindergartens, refugees, foodbanks etc., as well as supporting each other. The help given to the community is wide and varied. The women use their skills and talents to benefit others.

I enjoy the extra activities like walking and meeting for coffee every Saturday. The coffee shop staff comment how lovely it is to hear the ladies chatting and enjoying each other’s company.

Talking to other members you find out about the amazing life stories and experiences they have had. When taking on responsibilities there are good systems of training and you can grow in confidence, learn new skills and do things you never thought you could.”

And Jae, from **Plimmerton**, writes in much the same vein:

“I’m a new member and am glad to be a part of this organisation. I haven’t been involved in a lot

beyond the monthly meetings yet - partially because of other commitments I have, but also because I work full time. A lot of activities take place during the day, which I know suits other members, but I've been thinking about this in light of things that have been said around attracting new members or younger members. Many of the activities and times suit retired Club members, so overall you tend to attract more retired Club members, and so the activities stay that way - it kind of goes around in a circle. I want to be clear that I'm not complaining - I knew this when I joined the Club, and it still felt like something I wanted to be involved in. I'm only mentioning it because of the discussion around growing membership. More evening/weekend activities might help.

That aside, everyone has been very friendly and I feel I can develop friendships even if not as quickly or as strongly as others might. There have been some great speakers at the meetings, and some good discussions and conversations. I'm looking forward to growing my involvement in the months and years ahead."

## New Ventures

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*Over to the District Chairmen to talk about the new ventures in their District:*

In **NZ291**, Chairman Penelope notes some Clubs are looking at different activities – you'll see below everything that Howick is doing, and Auckland East is considering a happy hour which will encourage friendship (maybe great ideas will flow in meeting over a glass of wine!)

**NZ294** Chairman Sue reports: "It was wonderful to see the members of District NZ294 coming together during the recent Empowerment Day in support of our friends in the North Island who have faced tragedy in the storms and floods. Members were generous with their donations and support. I always find the way we all come together during times of hardship, so heart-warming and it really shows the true meaning of Inner Wheel."

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**Dunedin South** had a stall at a Xmas craft fair and generated almost \$300 in charity funds with a teddy bear (made by member Noelene Te-Raki Hill). And in the kindest of gestures, a little girl who spent \$10 on raffle tickets, and didn't win, did receive a bear, very kindly made by Noelene and delivered to her home. Dunedin South is also branching out into Pizza and Craft Sharing afternoons, which sounds a lot of fun!

**Howick** is putting in a lot of effort to make Inner Wheel known in their neck of the woods. They have:

- Interviewed a Club member on EAST FM to showcase Inner Wheel.
- Run stands at the Euro Car Show and the Pakuranga Rotary Carnival (they have a list of eighteen names of ladies who expressed an interest). The stands were fun and interactive, with free Hamper Raffles. Huibrie and Adrienne will be meeting these ladies for coffee and socializing.
- Placed a number of adverts in the local papers.
- Had their Club featured in the *Eastlife* magazine and local Howick paper for their 30th birthday in November last year. The also hosted their local MP, Simeon Brown, at this function.

**Upper Hutt** have also attempted a number of new events to promote Inner Wheel which proved both "enjoyable and successful," to quote the Club President:

- A stall at the Women's Lifestyle Expo
- A stall at the Spring Festival
- A stall at a Night Market where members sold merchandise and ran a raffle. This proved very successful.
- A wonderful 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration.

Not only did they gather a number of names and phone numbers were gathered, but a few of these ladies have attended the monthly morning tea and evening meetings.



**Invercargill** boasts a new hotel, the *Langlands* and Invercargill enjoyed an evening there – first the guided tour, and then a cuppa and a sweet treat. A bit of a change from business and a speaker.

Still down south – this time **Invercargill East** report that they are planning to ensure that members of sister Clubs in Invercargill feel that they can join their Club for an activity or to listen to a speaker. Fabulous idea

Like Howick, **Kapiti** is also putting the word out there, with attendance at the Women's Expo in Wellington, leaving leaflets at suitable outlets, assisting with Street Appeals and partnering with the local Rotary Club for their annual Food Bank Appeal.

**Matamata** reported that over the past 18 months they have worked creatively and diligently to prepare the ground and sow seeds where attracting new members is concerned. To do this, they have attended markets, flying the flag (literally) and engaging as many women as possible – and often their husbands – in conversation about IW's philosophy and aims. And of course, working together on projects and the team work that this promotes is pure gold to encourage new members.

**Nelson's** project, making memory books for retirement villages proved to be a very popular one.

**Plimmerton** reports that they always try new things to pique interest and stimulate personal growth. Our regular outing group we call *Try something different (And what a great name that is! Editor)*. In that out-and-about group we have been to museums, cafes, and searched out local points of interest. They also aim for a variety of speakers covering health, education, welfare, science, local ecology, international awareness and whatever other variety we can find. And not new, but they make an important point – their newsletter is useful for raising awareness of local events and sharing ideas. It connects us. It reminds of the many different smaller groups within our Club which is where the friendships are fostered. It encourages us. It gives us new ideas on books, crafts, and recipes.

**Tawa** follows an interesting approach of providing questions at the dinner table that suit the theme of the evening or are suitable to go with the speaker's address. Such a great idea of fostering more discussion! And that is, of course, alongside their Community services: Sewing emergency toilet bags and silky pillows, providing supper for the Wellington Male Voice Choir and more! In the outreach area, they help out at *Spring into Tawa* and participate in street collections.



Top left: Invercargill members trying something new  
Top right: Kapiti  
Bottom left: Tawa  
Bottom right: Upper Hutt





## New (ish) Challenges and how to face them

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*There are always challenge, however much we all wish that everything goes smoothly!*

*I'm very grateful to our District Chairmen, to the Kapiti Club and Jae, a new member from Plimmerton, for sharing the challenges they see. Maybe one of you reading this has some solutions!*

**NZ291** Chairman Penelope wrote: "The NGB may need to become more visible to the Clubs so that people really understand how the committee works and what they they are paying there subs for. It is sad ... that I do hear Rotary talked about on radio ZB when they support or sponsor an organization, but not Inner Wheel."

**NZ298** Chairman Monica wrote: "I don't see much growth in my District. Overall we are losing members and have been for years. I believe we have done all the encouraging we can do for Clubs to gain new members. Growth and new members will only come through unconventional approaches such as being trailed in Ashburton.....we need a lot more of this entrepreneurial, kick over the traces approach. We need determined, gritty people getting up and having a go at starting in a new direction.....more people being prepared to stand up and say...."I can see where this is probably going...but I am not going to stand by and watch it die.....I am going to do my darndest to turn things around in some way.....I am going to fail my way to success."

**NZ297** Chairman Dianne added: The change from Membership March to the March to May Membership Drive this year is imperative so we can aim to keep ahead of our member losses and grow our Clubs. Our National Governing Body is doing its best to ensure ongoing support of all Clubs and the promotion of Inner Wheel. I cannot stress enough the importance that all Clubs support the Conference motion to increase Capitation Fees by \$7. With member numbers dropping, increased costs and the uncertainty of ongoing funding from COGS, we need to ensure the financial viability of the Executive."

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**Kapiti** raised the following challenges which are preventing new members joining in their area:

- There are a number of Probus Clubs in their area.
- Younger ladies who possibly would be interested need to travel into the city.

And how you cope with those challenges? Well Kapiti, for one, is continuing with a dinner meeting, rather than moving to a daytime meeting, they choose projects that suit the older age group and try and find new ways to show awareness of how they can still assist in their community without cost to members.

I think that Jae, from **Plimmerton** has some very valid thoughts on how to face the membership issues. See her words under the *New Members* heading.

## Inner Wheel Conference, 5-7 May 2023



Registrations for the 2023 Inner Wheel Conference close on 5 April, so you have just a short time left to register! It's going to be a fabulous event in Wellington, with highlights being the Friendship Dinner on Thursday 4 May at The Wellington Club; Dame Kerry Prendergast performing the official opening; comedian Pinky Agnew as a keynote speaker on Saturday; and of course our Gala Dinner at the Beehive Banquet Hall hosted by MP and Deputy Speaker the Hon. Greg O'Connor. Don't miss out, check out all the details and register now!

Go to [www.innerwheel.org.nz/conference-2023](http://www.innerwheel.org.nz/conference-2023).

## Harvest Derailed

*Stories are powerful – thank you to Joanne Gaudin and Wendy Chitty for sharing their experiences of being on the ground when Cyclone Gabrielle hit. The first photos were taken from RNZ coverage of Hawks Bay and the Esk Valley, Wendy kindly provided the images with her story.*

### Joanne Gaudin (Napier)



On Monday 13 February the people of Napier went to sleep with warnings that extreme weather conditions could cause flooding. Many of us have experienced flooding before and were aware that if the pumps fail there would be several urban areas that flood.

We were not prepared for what we awoke to: During the night torrential rain caused a one-in-a-hundred year flood in the Esk Valley on the northern side of the city and the following morning the rain and a king tide caused the rivers between Napier and Hastings to overflow into the Pakowhai plains. The effects of the torrential rain were worsened by debris collected as rivers made their way to the coast – forestry slash, shipping containers, and everything else in its path. The devastation is beyond description.

Six days later when I travelled from Napier to Hastings for my first shower in a week and to wash Jim's heavy clothes, seeing volunteers busy helping home owners shift silt and damaged possessions were similar to my feelings in 2010 standing on the outskirts of the Christchurch CBD.

My family was evacuated and from a high vantage point we watched the water level rise and surround our home. We were lucky that we were able to go home 4 hours later to little

damage other than a week-long power outage. There are no words that will ever make it better for the many who lost their homes, loved ones, treasured items and their livelihoods. Many of us not personally affected are experiencing survivor's guilt.

Four weeks later there is a bubble of normal in both cities, with total devastation outside the bubble. Everyone knows someone affected and there are still whole communities cut off without supplies and only just getting power back on – even they consider themselves lucky as they still have homes and families.

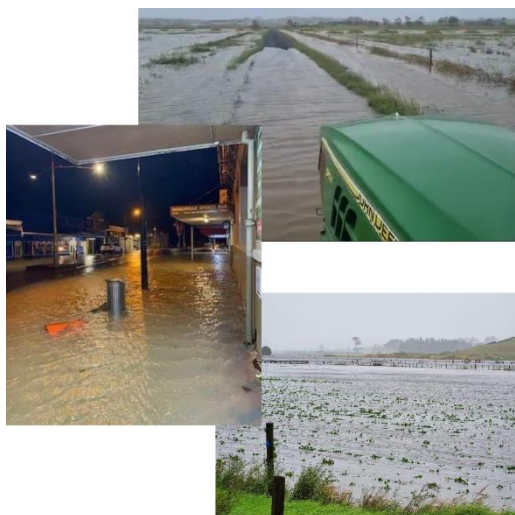
What has been important are the many kindnesses shown by everyone around the country and your offers of support are very much appreciated. I have heard many stories over the last few weeks that have bought tears to my eyes and with your help have been able to bring a ray of sunshine to some and am helping link others into appropriate support services. Here on the ground we know that this support is going to be needed for many months to come – just as it was for the Earthquake victims in Canterbury.

### Wendy Chitty (Dargaville)

Our adventure started when we realised that Cyclone Gabrielle was going to hit our part of the country and suddenly realised that we would potentially have no power. We own a Dairy and Beef farm 20 km north of Dargaville and a power outage for us is a disruption to our business **and** for living as we rely on power for everything, including water.

Monday 13 Feb started with a dash to Auckland to collect a generator (which ended up saving not only our business but 5 other dairy farms in our community).

By the time we arrived home the cyclone had just arrived. – by 10 pm that evening we had no power.



On Tuesday we awoke to a deluge of water, roads flooded, no power, trees down ... We milked our cows, and then contacted our neighbours and told them that if they could get their cows to our shed we could get them milked. We ended up with around 1000 cows on our farm and for a week our shed was milking for 10 hours a day.

As milk tankers could not get to our farm, thousands of litres of milk had to be dumped. We watched silage bales float down the river that was our paddocks, and even some of our neighbours' cows also floated away.

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There were also slips on the hills, fence lines were gone, trees in the river caused dams, and crops were under water. A lot of this ended up at the start of our road and sat there for at least a week.

We had no power for a week and bucketed water out of our tank to heat it on our single gas ring so the kids could get clean after milking.

Once the roads were safe we drove to town – there is so much damage! We found out that the river banks had broken, houses had been evacuated and Kumara growers had lost their crops.

And there was more to come – a day later we received the water from the East Coast which runs into the Northern Wairoa River, and again the same river banks broke, houses were again evacuated and the kumara crops were under water again.

But saying all that: We were lucky, our cows are still milking, we are safe.

Now for the clean up. We were lucky enough to get a small grant to help remove trees from our river, but there are thousands out there that have lost everything and have no help. Our IWNZ Cyclone Gabrielle Appeal has been set up to help those that need it.



This Appeal was created to accept donations to support those affected by the devastation of the unexpected flooding caused by Cyclone Gabrielle on New Zealand's North Island during February 2023.

Donations collected will be distributed to IWNZ Members, whānau/families, and community groups in need of support.

For more information, see

<https://www.innerwheel.org.nz/Cyclone-Gabrielle-Appeal>