



General Manager's Report for Annual General Meeting of
Coeliac New Zealand Incorporated 26 June 2021.

As a national not-for-profit or “for purpose” organisation we rely on philanthropy and goodwill to exist. We have a staff of four supported by ≈ 40 volunteers and ambassadors who raise awareness, provide support, information, and resources to people with coeliac disease, their whanau, and the wider community. We support research, education, and initiatives for those working in the health sector. Our vision is that people with coeliac disease live healthy lives every day.

For many people with CD and their whanau, CNZ is one of the only places that understands their condition and helps them to not feel alone in managing this lifelong condition.

We have a strong committed board with lived experience of coeliac disease who provide governance to the organisation. Chair Dawn Folkard, Deputy Chair Brett Thorburn, Treasurer Corinne Cameron, MAP liaison Kirsty Vercoe and Robyn Moore, Rosie Jerram and Max Smitheram who was co-opted during the year.

We are also privileged to have expert health professionals on our Medical Advisory Panel (MAP) chaired by Professor Andrew Day paediatric gastroenterologist, and consisting of Dr Kamran Rostami consultant physician and gastroenterologist, Dr Kristin Kenrick Senior Lecturer in Dept of GP and Rural Health, Sylvia North NZ registered dietitian and integrative nutritionist, NZ registered dietitians: Prof Clare Wall PhD, Anna Richards, Margaret Thorsen and Julie Leeper. New to the panel this year are Dr Jon Bishop paediatric gastroenterologist, Dr Richard Steele immunologist. We were delighted that Dr Robert (Bob) Anderson, MBChB, BMedSc, PhD FRACP accepted the role of patron and Dr Simon Chin agreed to stay on as honorary patron after many years supporting us as part of MAP. Having this group allows us to access a panel of experts on coeliac disease and we value their significant contribution to our organisation, a separate report on MAP's activities is provided in the AGM papers.

The Zoom AGM worked well last year allowing greater access to members around the country and our guest speaker Nigel Latta was incredibly popular, so we made the decision to continue this going forward, the conference will provide an opportunity for members to gather face-to-face as well as various events such as the healthy living shows and volunteer coordinator member gatherings. We look forward to Executive chef within Park Hyatt, Brent Martin's presentation after the formalities of today's AGM. Brent was personally touched by coeliac disease, when his father was diagnosed late in life with the condition. He is passionate about using his rich knowledge of gastronomy to showcase coeliac safe gluten free cuisine across all three eateries within Park Hyatt and to demonstrate to the hospitality industry the need to be flexible in adapting the menu to suit the dietary requests and health requirements of all his customers.

I have been in the role of General Manager since September 2019 working alongside Dana Alexander our Sales and Marketing Manager and Fred Tan our Administration and membership manager who both work incredibly hard throughout the year towards our strategic goals.

Thanks to the Lottery COVID wellbeing fund we were able to appoint Lisa Jury to the role of Health Promotion Manager at the end of January 2021 who has added her talents to the team and is helping us support and engage with our volunteers more as well as provide more services to our members and the wider community.

The disruptions brought about by COVID-19 meant we continued to work throughout the year, predominantly remotely and because this has worked so well we have made the decision to relinquish our premises at 1A Kent Street Newmarket and are using self-storage to store our resources and equipment. We continue to meet face-to-face at least fortnightly and at least weekly via zoom.

Our volunteer base around the country enables us to connect with our members in our communities, but we are always looking for others to join the team. Having someone local representing our organisation provides an additional point of contact for our members. Lisa has taken on the role of first point of contact with our volunteers and as well as developing the health promotion toolkits is working on providing training and staying connected with our volunteers via regular telephone and zoom meetings and also some face-to-face get togethers.

Our dedicated Coeliac Link magazine continues to be very popular with our members and Dana works hard to ensure the content is relevant and diverse. When lack of philanthropic funding for our first edition meant a printed version was not an option we launched a digital version.

Fred is usually the first point of contact for new and existing members, and he manages the databases. He also ensures the account and administration duties are managed, members are sent their welcome packs and information is shared as required.

Our Annual Awareness Week held each year in June was again successful despite the limitations brought about through COVID and we had high engagement with the media. We also added educational webinars on our YouTube channel. Our website received a large number of visitors as did our Facebook page during CAW.

As you are aware we did not host a conference last year, but we are planning one for November 2021 with the theme Living Coeliac Safe – Gluten Free for Life. We hope you will have the opportunity to attend. The venue is impressive, and the agenda should be attractive to you all. We will have a medical seminar and breakfast first and then a youth and adult agenda running side by side throughout the day.

Raising awareness about Coeliac disease is important because it is not exclusively an adult condition. Children with coeliac disease will not 'grow out of it' and they cannot get better unless they receive the proper treatment. All ages are affected, particularly children their parents and whanau and being able to explain coeliac disease to the whole family, is important and the resources we provide helps people to do this.

The focus for YE2021 agreed prior to COVID 19 was to deliver further stability to the organisation and to continue the steady financial recovery that has been achieved over the previous 2 years and we continued to prioritise the goals set out in our 3-year 2019 Strategic Plan whilst recognising the continued limitations of financial and staffing resources. Our priorities remain: Information, Education, Advocacy Awareness, and Engaged Key Stakeholders.

The performance report presented at this AGM includes the statistics for our activities and our financials. As you can see, we could not do the work we do without the support of businesses (mainly gluten free food manufacturers) who partner with us with our Crossed Grain Logo and donate goods for fundraising events and our Annual Awareness Week. We also have been hugely supported by Chapman Tripp to progress the lengthy journey of trademark changes for the Crossed Grain Logo to make it clearer about how the logo can be used. These regulations are in the final stages with IPONZ at the moment.

We have also been progressing clearer standards around our Dining Out Programme working with Auditing Solutions this is because people diagnosed with coeliac disease must follow a strict GF diet for life. This growing community of people are preferentially seeking, safe GF options and they bring their friends with them. The Dining out Programme DoP developed by Coeliac New Zealand responds to this requirement. It is intended to provide an important support and guidance for food service providers to achieve a locally and internationally recognised accreditation standard – that people can trust and have confidence in. We also are encouraging anyone preparing food for others takes advantage of the gluten free catering training we offer under this programme. We plan to progress this in the coming year.

The key highlights for me this year have been the way the team worked through the various challenges, the ongoing support from our key stakeholders, the excellent financial result we achieved and the appointment of our Health Promotion Manager. I asked the team to share their highlights too:

Lisa's highlights were starting the Health Promotion (HP) role & Induction to Coeliac NZ and developing the HP Workplan. Meeting many of the Coeliac partners and members at the Healthy Living Show in Auckland where CNZ had a stand. Developing a Food & Nutrition Policy – to support those with Coeliac Disease in an Early Childhood Setting. This was requested by Mercury Bay Preschool. The policy became one of the first pieces to the Living Coeliac Safe Toolkit.

Fred's highlights are that he can confidently say he has improved our membership records to ensure they are in very good order, and he can provide information on membership matters quickly. He enjoyed participating at the Healthy Living Show in March 21 which generated greater awareness of coeliac disease and an increase in membership numbers. Despite the challenges many faced throughout the year we still managed to sign up 50 new members in March 21 when our average is about 30 each month. Going forward, with support from the team and our new Health Promotion Manager, we can now offer more value to our members.

Dana's highlights include Coeliac NZ enhanced our delivery of member services to improve accessibility and communication via our Coeliac NZ YouTube channel and distribution of the Coeliac Link magazine now available in a digital format. We prepared 6 series of dietitian reviewed seminars to assist understanding of coeliac disease symptoms, diagnosis and follow up care now available on YouTube. We continued to build brand awareness and recognition of the Crossed Grain Logo product endorsement programme; increasing revenue gained by establishing brand partnerships with industry stakeholders to launch and promote new gluten free products to the coeliac community.

We very much value the support you give to us by being a member of Coeliac New Zealand and look forward to continuing to do the work we do to support people with coeliac disease in our communities.

Wendy Bremner
General Manager