



The Hibernian Catholic Benefit Society

Dear Members

From time to time our newsletters have reminded members that the benevolent fund can be used by branches to assist members in financial difficulties. We share a recent example with you.

A member contacted national office seeking a temporary suspension of his personal loan repayments for three months due to health problems resulting in teeth having to be extracted and dentures fitted at substantial cost. The Society's trustees willingly agreed to the member's request, but national office also discretely contacted the branch secretary on the basis it appeared a benevolent grant may be appropriate in the circumstances, and that the branch may be prepared to assist the member. The branch readily responded with its cheque for one-third of the cost of the dental work, and the trustees matched the branch contribution by making a grant from the national benevolent fund.

Members who are facing financial difficulties should contact their branch secretary in the first instance.

Timeshare Holiday Accommodation

Successful members in the ballots for timeshare holiday accommodation for 2010, drawn by two Society board members in February, were:

T M Blockley (Wanaka)
A M Goodwin (Auckland)
K Hurley (Tauranga)
P C Kendrick (New Plymouth)
F N O'Brien (Wellington).

Four members declined publication and eight did not indicate a preference.

Winner of the separate ballot of all new members who joined the Society within 2008 calendar year, for one week of timeshare at Taupo with the usual rental charge being met by the Society, was W G Millar (Wellington).

Congratulations to all the successful members.



Increased Limit for Life Assurance

The maximum amount of life assurance cover that can be offered by the Society to its members has been increased to \$100,000 following representation to Government by the friendly societies. The limit was previously \$60,000.

Remember the Society offers five types of contract - Whole of Life, and Endowment policies maturing at age 60 or 65 or payable at the end of 5 years, 10 years, 20 years from inception or on prior death.

Members wishing to increase the amount of their existing cover, or perhaps take out a new policy for a member of the family, please contact national office on its freephone 0800 658 282 in the first instance.



Southern Cross Healthcare

Health Group Scheme

Southern Cross Healthcare will have recently advised Society members of their premiums for the year commencing 1 April.

Generally premium adjustments reflect trends in the healthcare environment and the circumstances of members on your policy.

Please contact Southern Cross on 0800 800 181 if you need assistance with anything related to your policy renewal.

We also remind Society members over the age of 70 years they can claim on our Medical Assistance Fund to a maximum of \$150 for premium assistance where hardship may be a factor. For more information, and how to claim, please contact our national office on freephone 0800 658 282.

Special joining offer from Southern Cross

Join Southern Cross before 30 April 2009 and get Healthy Rewards*

If eligible, you will receive two vouchers from which you can choose to redeem a variety of healthy rewards, including pampering, fun outings, fitness sessions and more.

Call Southern Cross on 0800 438 268 or visit www.southerncross.co.nz for a quote.

*Terms, conditions and exclusions apply. For these and more details on Healthy Rewards Sales Promotion please visit www.southerncross.co.nz

Society's Strategic Plan

In our last newsletter we mentioned that the Board was preparing a Strategic Plan to give the Society a sense of purpose and direction for the future. After two workshop sessions with an external facilitator we have accepted a Vision Statement outlining what the Society will look like in 2015.

In the workshop discussions we were assisted by Past President Phil O'Brien, past board member and trustee Frank Fox, and Hastings branch member Phil Horan who provided valuable input from the recent Review Committee.

The Board has also appointed three sub-committees to do the groundwork and develop detailed action plans that will allow us to progress towards the achievement of our vision. These sub-committees, that will work within the guidelines of the Vision Statement, are:

- **Marketing and Communications** responsible for marketing and branding, membership, communication, and branch development. Members of this sub-committee are Sr Jane McKee (chair), Br Ian Bailey and Br Jim Sweeney, together with the Secretary/Manager;
- **Planning and Reporting** responsible for business planning, performance standards, financial and non-financial reporting (much of which already exists), systems, and personnel. Sub-committee members are Br Robin Adair (chair), Sr Colleen Petricevich and Secretary/Manager, together with the President;
- **Products and Services** responsible for product/service definition and development, and third party provider negotiations and liaison. Members are Br Gordon Stewart (chair), Br Mike McBride and Br Leo Neal, together with the President and Secretary/Manager.

2008 Review 'The Future of the Society'

The action plans that will form part of the Society's strategic plan will include input from the review 'The Future of the Society' that was carried out during 2008 by Br Bill Hardiman, Br Philip Horan and Br Ray Morris with overview by Br Ian Bailey.

That review also included a membership survey to which 538 members responded.

As has been advised in a previous newsletter the results of the survey have been analysed by the review committee and formed the basis of an interim presentation to the Society's 2008 annual meeting.

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Vision Statement

The Society will be widely recognised as providing high quality, relevant and timely financial, social support, and companionship to Catholics and their families.

Assumptions

New Zealand will be in a period of low growth. Economic circumstances will be difficult with significant unemployment and wages not keeping pace with inflation. Credit will be more difficult to obtain and families will face new challenges in their economic and personal lives. As a friendly society the Society will continue to enjoy income tax exemption.

Membership

Membership will be open to all Catholics and their spouses regardless of whether they are active members of the church. Members will be drawn from all age groups and ethnicities with a significant number of members from young families. The Society will have specific targets for recruitment, including new parishioners and Catholic school communities.

Benefits

The Society, at both branch and national level, will provide a range of financial, benevolent and social benefits. These will be tailored to the needs of members at key stages of their lives and those of their families. The Society will where appropriate have contracts in place with third party providers.

Just as importantly, the Society will through its Branches provide for members to meet, socialise and support each other.

External Relationships

Relationships will be actively managed at branch and national level. The benefits that the Society provides will be widely recognised externally. Close relationships will be maintained with the Catholic Church and its decision makers, allied organisations, contracted providers, other friendly societies and their associations. Relationships will also be maintained with relevant central and local government agencies and with the media.

Marketing and Communications

The Society, at both branch and national level, will be working in line with a national communication plan covering branding, marketing, internal and external communications.

Organisational Structures

Membership will be organised through Branches which will work closely with local parish communities, clergy and other parish organisations. Branches will work within a clearly understood annual plan developed by the Board and presented to the annual meeting of the Society.

Branch officials will play a pivotal role in the success of the Society and will be provided with all necessary training and assistance.

The Board will be elected by the annual meeting of the Society. Board members will not represent any particular area but will act in the interests of the Society as a whole.

2008 Review 'The Future of the Society'

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Copies of the review and its recommendations have been sent to branches, meantime we include a summary of the conclusions of the membership survey:

The questions in the membership survey were designed to provide specific information regarding member's knowledge and opinions on recruitment, the aim of the Society, branch activity, benefit funds (existing and suggestions for new ones) and the future.

As most of us will have expected, the membership figures show the Society has an aging membership and this was reflected in the survey responses provided.

There is some confusion about whether the Society is an assurance company or a benevolent society. The review committee considers this needs to be addressed by broadening any promotional activity to show the Society has other benefits apart from assurance.

Our best recruiters are our members and we must ensure that they have all the information they need to convince prospective members to join. They can be backed up at a local level by a secretary who is able to fill in the blanks.

A lack of knowledge was also a concern when dealing with branches. 11% of members did not understand that they were part of a branch, even though their branch details are stated on their quarterly dues notice. It was pleasing though to see that most branches were working effectively and communicating on a regular basis with members. The review committee considers this is an area we may need to look at revitalising and perhaps by working closer with parish organisations we may be able to create a sustainable situation.

Members' knowledge of the funds and their ability to access them was an area of concern. The review committee reported that, while the figure was not large, the fact that 2.5% did not know what funds they belonged to shows that the Society is not communicating effectively. *(From National Office's perspective it does raise questions over the usefulness of the member benefit statement that is produced from time to time - Secretary/Manager).*

Members' comments expressed in the survey about areas of concern and new benefits reflect the discussion that occurred at the 2008 annual meeting. The review committee considered suggestions do

need to be considered as some have merit and it went on to report there were insufficient responses to consider closing the funds suggested, however, those that attracted a significant response need to be reviewed to establish if members understand them and are they meeting the members' needs.

There were insufficient responses from Society members who are also members of the Credit Union to give a good idea of members' views. Again, however, there were a significant number of members who lacked knowledge of the Credit Union.

Those members of the Society who wish to study the full report, please contact your local branch secretary - Secretary/Manager.

Pat Curran Memorial Hibernian Centennial Trust

As members of our Society, we may have taken for granted that we would always have a Priest available whenever required to attend to our spiritual needs such as daily Mass, Confession, Funerals, Weddings, etc. However, we can help our young, and not so young, who may wish to become a priest but due to a lack of funds find that to enter the seminary would place an extra burden on their parents or family. To overcome this situation, in 1992 St Joseph's Branch in Dunedin established the Pat Curran Hibernian Memorial Centennial Fund. This fund has been welcomed by the Bursar of Holy Cross Seminary as a means of helping support students in their training. The fund now has a capital base of \$17,500 and the interest earned on this sum is given to the bursar to help with student expenses that may occur from time to time. We do not know to whom the funds are given, but the recipient is advised that the grant is from the Trust.

As a means of increasing the capital sum, one of St Joseph Branch members has made 10 stands/tables, individually designed and turned so that each one is unique to the owner. There is an opportunity to win one of these in a raffle to be drawn at the Society's annual meeting in Christchurch this year. Tickets cost \$5 and each ticket will be in each draw. All donations are tax deductible.

Tickets are available from:

E S Friel, 10B Ascot Street, Dunedin or

K G Hurring, 15 Nolan Street, Dunedin or

you can send your raffle money to national office with your dues payment. Please specify the number of tickets you require and if a receipt is required.

**K G Hurring
Secretary, St Josephs Branch No 73, Dunedin**

Holiday Accommodation - New Zealand Railways Staff Welfare Trust homes

Since 2004 Hibernian Society members have enjoyed the benefit of access to holiday homes owned by the New Zealand Railways Staff Welfare Trust.

Regrettably the Trust has had to withdraw that access due to a large increase in its own membership resulting from growth in the rail industry, coupled with greater usage by its own members following upgrades of the homes.

The 30 Hibernian Society members who currently pay a separate annual fee for membership of the Trust will be able to maintain that membership so long as they wish to do so, but the Trust will no longer be accepting new members from within the ranks of the Society's membership. Membership of the Trust cannot be transferred or sold.

2009 Annual Meeting

This year the Society's annual meeting will be held in Christchurch on Saturday, 25 July, followed by dinner attended by delegates and partners.

There will also be an informal social gathering on the Friday evening, and Annual Mass will be held on Sunday morning.

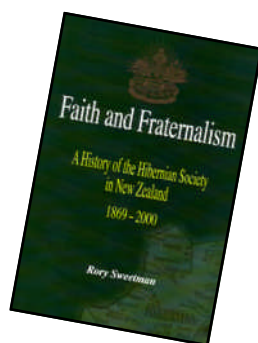
After Mass will be an optional bus trip to Ferry-mead Heritage Lodge Hall, being arranged by this year's host branch, St Patrick's Branch No 82, Christchurch. The hall has been a combined project of the friendly societies in the area and contains Hibernian paraphernalia.

Full details of the programme for the weekend, and of the on-site accommodation, will be advised to all branch secretaries next month.

Hibernian History

National Office still has copies of the Society's history 'Faith and Fraternalism - A History of the Hibernian Society in New Zealand 1869-2000' at the reduced price of \$39.95 (from \$50).

If not for yourself, what about purchasing a copy as a gift for someone? Just contact national office.



Yours fraternally

Ian Bailey, President

The Society's Board of Management for 2008/09, shown in the latest annual board photograph taken last December, is:

(back row - left to right)

Br Mike McBride (Nelson)

Br Robin Adair, trustee (Wellington)

Br Gordon Stewart, trustee (Wellington)

Br Jim Sweeney, trustee (Wellington)

(front row - left to right)

Sr Jane McKee (Blenheim)

Mr Peter Gibson, secretary/manager (Wellington)

Br Ian Bailey, president (Woodville)

Br Leo Neal (Auckland)

Sr Colleen Petricevich, vice-president (Auckland)



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