

**CHAIRPERSON REPORT**  
**WELLINGTON BRANCH**  
**MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY ASSOCIATION**  
**15 MAY 2011**

We have had the branch Field Worker Service up and running now for 18 months, it continues to flourish and is proving much needed and wanted by our members and is to-date a huge success. We can now say Wellington Branch offers the support and help to our members that had been lacking in the past and everyone who has been involved in achieving this should be very proud.

My thanks, especially go to Marty our Field Worker for the fantastic job he does to support MDA Wellington members. The passion and dedication he shows in his work is very much respected and appreciated; and to Margaret our Office Manager for the work she undertakes on behalf of the branch. Your willing, generous and obliging nature has helped us out and taken the pressure off me, on many occasions.

Both Marty and Margaret are enormous assets to our branch they ensure that we are a professionally run organisation that offers the services that our members need.

Our branch newsletter, which comes out to you four times a year is working well with lots of favorable feedback. This will continue to be a team effort by Margaret, Marty and myself with contributions from our members.

Wellington branch is managed by a small, dedicated group of people who find time in their already busy lives to volunteer and support MDA Wellington branch; John and Lyn Hawkins, Elvin Wright, Heather Patel, Jo Baldwin, Jackie Dobbs, Viv Klaassen, Joy and Ivan Dowsett and myself. We attend to branch matters by meeting face to face four times a year but a lot of our business matters/discussions takes place via email. We can also use teleconferencing to include in meetings our out-of-town committee members.

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of all the committee. Those who have expressed their intent to remain on the committee, but especially to Jackie Dobbs and Elvin Wright who have tendered their resignations. Thank-you both for your time, input and generous support to MDA Wellington, over the past years. You will be missed.

Our thanks to the MDA National Council for their financial support over the past two years. The additional funding that we have received from the National Organisation has assisted us greatly too. Our main focus now is to

ensure that we are financially able to maintain our Field Worker Service at the level that our members require. Financially it will be challenging for us but Wellington branch committee and National Office are committed to keeping the FWS. The committee made a decision at the November 2010 committee meeting that all funds coming into our branch will go directly to pay for our much needed Field Worker Service. This has to be the priority. The money enables us to hold onto our Field Worker and enables the good work in supporting and caring for our members across the branch area and maintaining the branch office to continue. Our branch's operating costs are about \$100,000.00 per year and as we don't receive government funding for this service, we depend on our donors and members who need to help us out financially in any way they can.

The Branch and National Office continue to have a strong relationship and regular contact and support through In-service Meetings for Field Workers and Office Managers, support and communication to the branch Chairperson, committee and staff, also to individual members is welcomed.

I would like to thank the staff at MDA National Office; specifically Chris Higgins, Miriam Rodrigues, Hilary Rayner, Raema Inglis and Deb Baker for their assistance. Each one has supported our branch in a different way and helped us to ensure that we continue to improve the services we offer our members. With the branch agreement, the almost finalized fieldworker practice framework, and the MDA governance, personnel and operating policies coming up, this relationship will continue to strengthen.

National Council has again had a busy year. I have been the branch rep now since November 2008 and it is such a positive, active council to be part of - I really enjoy it and am pleased to be part of it. A few weeks after each National Council meeting, *MDA CATCH-UP* is emailed or posted out to all MDA members. This is regular newsletter that keeps our members informed about key themes and decisions made at National Council meetings and happenings at National Office. It keeps members up to date with what is happening in their Association and it gives members the opportunity to have a say as part of the decision making process. Meeting minutes and other documents are posted on the members only page of the MDA website. Information is readily available from National Office and not having access to email or Internet should not exclude members from finding out what is going on.

In the past year the National Council and National Office have set up or are in the process of setting up documents and strategies that make sense and strengthen the MDA as well as making our organisation as a whole run more

efficiently. Today at the branch *AGM* we will adopt our new branch constitution - our old one was over 20 years old, was out-dated and not user friendly - so this will be really good!

As a branch, we offer our condolences to our members who have lost family Members, friends and loved ones during the past year.

I am looking forward to another positive year and I am really keen to continue as Chairperson and Branch Rep and see our branch grow further and become stronger.

Kind regards

Liz Mills

Wellington Chairperson