



## ONEHUNGA DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICES

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

#### AGM MAY 2021

As this is the inaugural Annual General Meeting of this group I will start with a brief history of the group. The Councils of Social services started in the time of Prime Minister Norman Kirk, and were set up in various cities as incorporated societies with some funding and a bank account. Onehunga was a bit different, it was formerly the Onehunga Mayoress's committee and decided to set itself up as a Council of Social Services. They met on a monthly basis in the Onehunga Community House, and in 1989 when there was no longer a Mayoress, the Community House Co-ordinator organised the group. The meetings were informal met over lunch and exchanged news from each group.

As time progressed the group felt that more was needed than the exchange of news, and the Community House felt that if more time was needed to organise meetings then assistance was needed to help with this so meetings would become useful and meaningful. Consequently, the decision was made in 2016 to open a bank account, work towards becoming an incorporated society, and apply to the Lotteries Community fund to employ a part time Co-ordinator. We received our first Lottery grant in 2016 for the Co-ordinator's salary and became an Incorporated Society in April 2018.

#### September 2016 – 31 March 2020

Ana Maria de Vos Sanchez started with us in December 2016 and worked with us till December 2019. During this time we met with members on a three monthly basis, always providing speakers who could be of interest to members of ODCOSS, with time for networking with other members. We provided professional development on such topics as coping with stress experienced by social work providers, and financial funding advice. Ana Maria organised two expos in the Royal Oak shopping mall and also organised the original Rent Smart programme in Onehunga on behalf of the Auckland Council and the Maungakiekie/Tamaki Local Board. We completed this with some money left in the budget, and arranged with the Council and Local Board to finish this by reinforcing the course in the following financial year. Ana Maria left in December 2019 for personal reasons and Jenny Tanner stated with us in January 2020.

#### 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

This period has been greatly affected by the Covid epidemic because of the inability to meet in group situations. Jenny Tanner started with us in January 2020, and in the following March, the Covid lockdowns started. Jenny was extremely resourceful and having updated the contact details of all members and interested groups, instigated during the lockdowns a series of regular newsletters to all on the database. This newsletter kept members informed as to what was happening and what services were available and how to access them so this information could be passed on to their own networks who may be needing this information.

After the lockdowns we moved back to bi monthly meetings. We completed another round of the Rent Smart programme, again with a small amount of money left over which will again be spent on Rent Smart related activities such as assistance in the Oranga area which is undergoing huge changes in the residential areas. We were able to have our professional development between lockdowns, but changed this from Raising Your Profile to coping with the affect Covid has had on your group and its members.

An important aspect of ODCOSS is the ability to advocate on behalf of the community. This year we made two submissions on behalf of the community: -

To Kiwibank, advocating that that the Onehunga Branch not be closed, but to remain in Onehunga serving the community, as many customers would find the closure extremely difficult, as there are no Kiwibank branches within easy reach of Onehunga.

To the Maungakiekie/Tamaki Local Board advocating that a stronger emphasis be placed on the delivery of social services, volunteer services, and that more financial support be offered.

Though this organisation is heavily reliant on sponsorship and donations, the benefits to social service groups, and their networks, is considerable. It offers support, networking, educational opportunities and community knowledge. We will continue while we can.