

Quota's Journey in New Zealand

June 2020

Looking Back to Shape Our Future

For almost 50 years, Quota has had a place in the lives of women in New Zealand (NZ). As we embark on reshaping our clubs, in preparation for the dissolution of Quota's international structure this fall, let us reflect on the November 1977 theme of the newly-formed District 37's first conference in NZ: 'The future of Quota is in our hands'. Just as relevant today as it was then, let us review all that we have accomplished to help us set our sights on the goals for the future.

Early Days

The start of 1973 brought with it discussions regarding the charter of Quota clubs in NZ. By April of that year Dorothy Milligan, International President at the time, awarded a charter to our first club – Quota Club of Auckland. Wendy Pye (now Dame Wendy Pye) was installed as the charter president. While no longer a Quotarian, Dame Wendy currently sponsors an annual award in the name of Quota called the 'NZ Educational Scholarship', which provides support to young women in their first year of tertiary study. Additionally, in 2009 Dame Wendy's business organisation, Sunshine Books, helped set up and fund the Quota NZ website www.quotanz.org that continues to be utilized to this day.

From 1973 to 1977 the growth of Quota in NZ was significant as five more clubs were chartered. These newly-chartered clubs were located in: Hamilton (1974), North Shore (1975), South Auckland (later renamed Papakura, 1975), Manukau (1977) and Rotorua (1977). In subsequent years, a few of these clubs dissolved, but others were chartered to continue growing Quota service in New Zealand's other communities.

Prior to the charter of any clubs in NZ, in 1971, Quota International began grouping clubs within the same geographic areas into "Districts". By 1977, the rapid growth and chartering of clubs in NZ made it apparent that a new district would be needed. Subsequently, Carol Somervell (then Ibbotson), who had served as the Charter President for the South Auckland Quota Club, was installed as the first District Governor, and headed up the first district conference in 1977.



Carol Somervell is presented with the charter for South Auckland by Wendy Pye.



Attendees at the first District 37 Conference in 1977.

District 37

In line with Quota's Mission of "empowering women, children, the deaf and hard-of-hearing, and people with speech difficulties in local communities around the world", District 37 completed many notable service projects and events, including:

- 1978: Quota members, assisted by some hearing organisations, instigated a national Deaf Awareness Week. This continues to the present day.
- 1980: Members presented a petition to Parliament with 20,000 signatures asking for TV news and emergency notices to be captioned for the hearing impaired. This also continues to the present day.
- 1982: New Zealander Quotarians hosted the South Pacific Area Meeting in Auckland, NZ.
- 1997: A very successful International Convention was hosted in Auckland for Quotarians worldwide to attend.



A group of New Zealander attendees at the 1997 International Convention in Auckland, NZ.

- 1997 -1999: Lois Watson, of the Opotiki club, elected as South Pacific Area Director.
- Annual District Projects were collectively funded by the clubs and the projects were voted on at the District conferences.
- 2005: South Pacific Area Meeting hosted in Rotorua.
- Supported the newborn hearing screening programme.
- 2014: Final District 37 Conference.

In 2014, Quota clubs around the world were reorganised into fewer, but larger Regions. NZ clubs became part of Region 13 along with clubs in the Brisbane/South Queensland area and Ba, Fiji. Regional Director Ali Lingard selected Auckland, New Zealand, as the location of Region 13's first Regional Meeting which took place in 2015. The NZ clubs at this time were Auckland, Papakura, Opotiki, Ohope (dissolved in 2017), Rotorua and Whakatane.

However, it wasn't long before it became apparent that the change of structure from smaller districts to larger regions was difficult to manage. While 'Kiwis' and 'Aussies' are closely connected in many ways, Region 13 Regional Director, Ali Lingard, and then International President Karen Murphy agreed that it would be beneficial for NZ clubs to become their own Region. Approval was given by the International Board at the end of 2015, thus creating the new Region 21 for clubs in New Zealand and Fiji.



Past Regional Director, Ali Lingard, and Past International President, Karen Murphy at the 2016 Regional Meeting in Carrera, Queensland, Australia where Region 21 was officially announced.

Region 21



Quota clubs of Auckland, Ohope (now dissolved), Opotiki, Papakura, Rotorua, Whakatane – and the Ba club in Fiji, became the membership of the newly-formed Region, with Jan Rhodes as the inaugural Regional Director.

2016-2018 were busy, productive years for Region 21 as our members established their new identity and continued fundraising and service work in their communities. To celebrate our heritage, the accomplishments of our clubs, and show pride for Region 21, a Quota

pin was designed featuring the traditional New Zealand fern, in silver, on a black enamel “Q”. Unfortunately, these same years also held some major challenges for Quota International as an organisation. To give the South Pacific area a potential representation on the International Board, Jan Rhodes was persuaded to stand for the position of International Vice President. She was elected and installed at the 2018 International Convention held in Washington, D.C.



2016 Int'l Convention in Brisbane. Jan Rhodes, Regional Director Region 21 standing beside Karen Murphy and the other 2016-2018 Regional Directors.



Jan Rhodes elected as International Vice President at 2018 Convention in Washington DC.

*From Left to Right:
Upper Row - Int'l Vice President Brenda Cherry,
President Emilie Simon,
President-Elect/Treasurer Carol Patin
Lower Row - Int'l Vice President Luz Gonzales,
Int'l Vice President Jan Rhodes*



2018-2020 incoming Regional Director, Lois Watson, with Past Regional Director Jan Rhodes.

The next Quotarian to be elected Regional Director to Region 21 was Lois Watson (Past South Pacific Area Director). She was installed at the May 2018 at the Regional Meeting held in Papakura. This meeting was also attended by: President Elect/Treasurer Emilie Simon, International Vice President Shelly Brown and South Pacific Area Liaison Officer Beris Pritchard.

As we now prepare to enter a new era of Quota service without the international structure, we hope that Quota clubs in Australia and New Zealand will work towards a new geographic structure that will be easy to manage, while still facilitating future connection and collaboration.

Currently in Region 21

While our membership numbers average just around 140, our collective efforts contribute in a significant way to our communities. Our clubs differ in size and location, but we are all united in commitment to serving our communities, having fun, and fostering great friendships as we do this.



Regional Meeting 2019 was held in Rotorua in a lovely old hotel (see photo at bottom of previous page). Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 crisis, we had to cancel our 2020 Regional Meeting, and use online technologies, such as Zoom, to connect with each other. As with other Regions around our Quota world, we are now having to finalise the discontinuation of regional activities and finances as we reshape our independent futures. Our NZ clubs have always maintained close connections, and will continue to do so despite health or organisational changes.

New Zealand Clubs' Notable Achievements

For more information on the long-standing service and fundraising efforts of each of New Zealand's Quota clubs, take a moment to read each club's highlight section below.

QI Auckland

For the past ten years, the main service project has been organising the Hearing House Picnic. This started as a Quota Cares Month event and was run in association with Hearing House staff. Children attend the Hearing House for rehabilitation programmes following cochlear implants. The purpose of the picnic has been to provide opportunities for families with deaf children to get to know other families in the same situation. The picnic has been held in the beautiful Cornwall Park in central Auckland each year. Face painting for the children has always been a highlight, along with other games, a sausage sizzle, and few of the years' picnics event featured a clown, a fairy, or the highly-favored red dog to entertain the children.



It should be noted that, in a large, widespread city such as Auckland, organising fundraising events can be challenging. The longest running event QI Auckland has organised has been a dinner and movies evening, with funds raised and donated to local causes.



QI Opotiki

Opotiki is a small town on the east coast of the North Island and the Quota club there is a central part of the community. Since 1991 the major fundraiser has been the annual Book Fest, which has raised over \$200,000 NZD. Organising this event is a massive effort over many months for club members. Service activities the club has participated in include helping with a major local sports event, a Tea Dance for senior citizens, and with the usual cooking skills of Quotarians – catering for community events.



QI Papakura

For 30 years the main fundraiser for the Papakura club has been the annual Antiques Fair. This event is highly regarded by antiques dealers throughout New Zealand and they are always keen to attend. The fair is held in a school hall over a weekend, usually in July. Many months go into the planning of the fair and all members are involved.



The café food – all homemade by Quotarians – is a well-known feature of the Fair. Over \$250,000 NZD have been raised and donated to a wide range of causes. For 25 years, part of the funds raised each year have gone towards scholarships for final year Masters of Audiology students at the Auckland University. This support has been very appreciated by the recipients and has carried Quota's name out into the audiology profession.



Another long-standing service event has been the annual 'Salute to Seniors' concert, usually held in November at a local church hall. A variety of entertainers have attended, along with a bountiful afternoon tea and a gift of jam and shortbread as guests leave.



QI Rotorua

'Spring into Summer' has been this club's biggest fundraiser. It is a spring fashion parade and concert that all members are involved in organising, and is considered a prestigious event in the community. During the 17 years this event has been running, over \$92,000 NZD have been raised, with most of the proceeds being donated to Leukaemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand. In 2019 a change of venue allowed for an audience of almost 300 and the extra space also provided an opportunity for the club to showcase their work to the community.



Another special service project undertaken by the club annually since 2008 has been the donation of "Easter goodie bags". About 160 bags including gifted items and homemade treats are prepared by the members and delivered to Rotorua pensioners the week before Easter. These are delivered in person to the pensioners, who look forward to the Quota members visits each year.



QI Whakatane

Whakatane is our largest club and in recent years has been able to raise significant sums of money by holding public events with well known personalities. The big cheque for \$7,000 (pictured to the right) was part of funds raised in 2019 for the TECT rescue helicopter as well as other causes. Other major events have been a “Dancing with the Stars” evening, with a profit of \$28,000 NZD to hospice. Members have been excellent caterers and regularly cater for dessert and coffee evenings, weddings, and other occasions. Much of the focus of fundraising over the past 40 years has been dedicated to the many facets of hearing and other disabilities.



Additionally, regular hands-on service activities have included making sun hats as part of a clothing project, and assisting with collections for events such as Daffodil Day for the Cancer Society and Riding for the Disabled, as well as collections for the Blind Society and Women’s Refuge.



In Conclusion

This journey has been but a brief summary of the story of Quota in New Zealand over the 47 years since the first conversations began and clubs were formed. It is impossible to condense all of the meaning and value the countless hours of dedicated involvement of our members have provided. What *IS* possible, though, is to reflect and celebrate our journey together and to look forward to a collective future that will be different in many ways. But, as we have recited for many years in our Quota Collect, we will continue to “hold high those principles of Quota for which we stand”.

Author Jan Rhodes is a member of QI of Papakura, New Zealand and a Vice President on the 2018-2020 Quota International Board of Directors.