



CHAIR REPORT FOR HKNZ ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tēnā koutou katoa,

It's been another big year for Heart Kids. With twelve children diagnosed with a congenital heart disease or heart disease acquired in childhood each week, the need for our services continues to grow. Our membership now stands at over 13,600 people, with well over half of our heart kids now heart adults. Heart Kids is honoured to remain walking alongside our community as they navigate their heart journey.

The vision of our founding members Linda Davies and Michelle Mann as they sat in a windowless hospital room in Greenlane over 40 years ago has never wavered. While Heart Kids may have changed operationally and our services adapted to meet what our community needs today, we're still just as passionate and dedicated to ensuring all heart kids and their whānau fully supported, connected, informed and hopeful for the future.

Reflecting on the year that's been

What started as a year of change and transition, has ended in a place of stability and focus for Heart Kids. In early 2024 we farewelled Ruth Gorinski who had served as Chief Executive for two and a half years, as well as Senior Leadership Team members Denise Kitto and Sarah Morgan. Later in the year we welcomed David Pimblott as Chief Executive, firstly in an acting capacity and now permanently, as well as Hanna Griffin, Ngaire Lyall and Viv Stark into the Senior Leadership Team.

This year Heart Kids governance Board farewelled Board members Robyn Wickenden, Katie McCrae, Kevin Sharpe and Steve Abley through a combination of individuals term's ending or resignation. We were also lucky enough to welcome Samir Govind as the Member Elected Representative for the Upper South Island, and Eleanor Koningham and Gina Cheung as appointed members for their Legal and Finance expertise respectively. I want to thank all Board members who volunteered their skills and knowledge to govern Heart Kids over the last financial year. It's a big workload and responsibility.

We continue to provide extensive services across the motu. Our family support Taituarā provided support to 3,275 whānau this year, both in hospital and in the community, with 2,130 of these contacts being delivered in person. We take advantage of being able to

provide online support given that our members live right across Aotearoa and the need is forever increasing. The annual camp was a highlight in 2024 with 78 heart children and teens descending on Woodend Camp in Canterbury for a week. In total, 221 murmur coffee groups and family events were held providing the opportunity for members of our community to come together and connect.

While we are privileged to have an ever-expanding membership, and in turn rising demand for our work, it does present challenges. We need to simultaneously increase resources and grow our services to provide the support our community needs and deserves. How we navigate this balance has been a focus of the Board and Chief Executive over the last year and as we look forward towards our future, remains a top priority.

Looking towards the year ahead

With the Board's support of David, and under David's strong leadership, the year ahead is likely to be one of continued stability and focus for Heart Kids. This is also supported by having a strong and dedicated team in place and having invested in improving our organisational culture – both at governance and operational levels – over the second half of the financial year.

Heart Kids must update its constitution and re-register our organisation by April 2026 to remain an active Incorporated Society under the new Incorporated Society Act 2022. This presents the opportunity to reflect on whether Heart Kids' current constitution sets us up well for the future and to deliver the most meaningful and impactful services on the ground where we're needed most.

The Chief Executive and I have hosted online sessions with our staff, volunteers, branches and interested members in early 2025 to gather input on the changes people think will make Heart Kids better, before summarising this into a draft proposal for feedback. Once all feedback has been incorporated, the final proposal will be presented to our members to consider and discuss at the AGM. While our constitution focuses on governance matters, we've intentionally looked at Heart Kids more broadly, and as a whole, as there are no doubt other, non-governance related ways, to improve Heart Kids, its operations and support to members.

The Board will continue to monitor Heart Kids finances carefully this year knowing it's likely to continue to be a year of increased competition for philanthropic funds coupled with a continuing high cost of living. We recognise in these economic conditions make it a big decision for individuals, businesses and corporates to make donations or to the level of generosity that's been easier in previous years or stronger financial times.

Everything we do is made possible because of the generosity of others

With every person who gives back – be it donating, fundraising on our behalf, or becoming a volunteer to support a local regional branch, run a branch or govern our organisation – Heart Kids is better enabled to serve our community. It allows us to provide value to our members far in excess of what our financial resources alone would allow.

Our organisation's staff are exceptional, always going the extra mile for our families, and with the upmost dedication, passion and skill. As a Board, we cannot thank our staff enough for what they do. They work tirelessly to bring the Heart Kids vision and mission to life and are both the heart and backbone that holds our community together. A special acknowledgement goes to David Pimblott, our Chief Executive, who has provided strong leadership and stability for our organisation in 2024.

Our heart kids and whānau need support and services despite tough economic conditions, so we couldn't be more indebted to those who have financially supported us in 2024 when every dollar has really counted. We couldn't do what we do without some of our foundational sponsors, like Supercheap Auto, and the many who give to our national campaigns like Little Heart Day, Hero's for Heart Kids and the Heart Stopper Challenge. Thank you to all those organisations who provided grants, business and corporates who provided sponsorship and individuals who provided donations.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa – our sincerest gratitude to you all.

Ashlee McCormick
Board Chair
12 April 2025