

A photograph of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in a dark night sky, with vibrant green and purple light streaks. The text is overlaid in a white, handwritten-style font.

Southern Lights
Altrusa Lighting the Way
in Our Communities

District Fifteen 41st Conference 2025

Ascot Park Hotel
Invercargill,
New Zealand

Programme



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National Anthem of New Zealand

E-ihoā Atua
Ongā iwi mātou rā
Āta whakarongona
Me aroha noa
Kia hua ko te pai
Kia tau tō atawhai
Mana-a-kiti-a mai
Aotearoa

God of Nations, at Thy feet
In the bonds of love we meet
Hear our vices we entreat
God defend our freeland.
Guard Pacific's triple star
From the shafts of strife and war
Make her praises heard afar
God defend New Zealand

Karakia Timetanga

(starting prayer)

Tuia i runga
Tuia i raro
Tuia i waho
Tuia i roto
Tuia te here tangata
Ka rongō to pō
Ka rongō te ao
Haumi e
Hui e
Tāiki e!

United from above
Unite from below
Unite from outside
Unite from within
Unite to connect people
The night hears
The day hears
United
Together
As one!

Altrusa Grace

For this food before us spread
For our steps in safety led
For Thy favour on our way
Lord accept our thanks today.

National Anthem of United States of America

Oh, say can you see,
by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed
at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars
through the perilous fight
O'er the ramparts we watched
were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare,
the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night
that our flag was still there.
Oh say does that star-spangled banner yet
wave
O'er the land of the free
and the home of the brave?

Altrusa Benediction

May we go forth with high ideals
To greet our fellow man
Be true to all Altrusan aims
Until we meet again.

Karakia Whakamutunga

(closing prayer)

E te Atua
Tēnei te mutunga
Kua mutu to roanga
Kua mutu to kaha
Kua mutu to mahi nei
Kua pai
Haumi e
Hui e
Tāiki e!

Let the universe know
This is the end
The long journey is done
The effort is finished
The work is over!

Conference Rules

The following Rules of Order, based on the District Fifteen By-Laws, shall be observed at all Business Meetings at the Annual Conference:

1. The voting body shall consist of the District Officers, Past District Governors and accredited delegates.
2. All votes shall be cast in person. No vote by proxy shall be permitted.
3. A majority of registered members who are entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum and the act of the majority shall be the act of the members of District Fifteen.
4. Delegates shall wear the Delegates badge at Business Sessions and must sit in the section reserved for the voting members. Alternatives may vote in the absence of delegates, and in this case must sit in the voting section and wear an Alternate badge. A registered Alternate may, upon clearance from the Credentials Chair, be transferred from Alternate to Delegate at any time during the continuance of Business Meetings.
5. Only members of the voting body may introduce motions and vote, but all registered members may participate in the discussions.
6. Discussion is limited to two minutes for each speaker. No-one may speak twice on the subject until all who wish to speak have had the opportunity. The maker of the motion shall have one minute for right of reply to end discussion. Discussion time for each agenda is restricted to 20 minutes and individual speakers to two minutes.
A motion for extension of time must be made within the original 20 minutes.
7. All main motions shall be presented in writing, signed by the mover and given to the District Secretary before the close of the session.
8. No motions shall be required for accepting reports of officers or chairpersons, unless there are recommendations.
9. No report of a committee which has not been presented to the Conference body shall be printed in the minutes.
10. Members shall be in their seats at least three minutes before the scheduled business meeting time.
11. Parliamentary procedure, as followed in New Zealand, shall govern the Conference in all cases in which it is not consistent with the Bylaws of District Fifteen and these Standing Orders.
12. All cell phones must be switched off in all meetings and official functions.

Conference Information

Key To Colours

Past & Current Governors	Orange /Orange Button Rose
District Board Members	Gold
District Chairs	Green
Delegates	Purple Button Rose
Alternates	Lemon Button Rose
First Timers	Pink/ Pink Rosette
Altrusa Supplies Officer	Pale Green
International Representative	Red & White Rosette

Registration Desk

The registration & credentials desk is located in the Waihopai Room of the Ascot Park Hotel as follows:

Friday	May 2	12 noon - 5pm
Saturday	May 3	8.00am - 8.50am

Credentials Desk

Delegates and Alternates should present themselves at the Credentials Desk to register. Only those who have been confirmed as Official Delegates by the Credentials Chair may vote.

The Credentials Desk is in the same area as the registration desk and will be open at the same times.

Foundation Raffle

District Foundation Chair Alison Burr and Susi Chinnery Brown will be accepting all Foundation items from 12 noon on Friday.

The Foundation Raffle area is in the Aparima Room. Foundation Raffle tickets will be on sale until 1.45pm on Saturday.

All winners may collect their prizes on Sunday morning.

Greetings from the International President

International Board Members

Linda K. Smith

International President

Chris DeVlieger President Elect

Kitty McElhaney

Vice President

Bettina Schempf

Treasurer

Kathy Folley

Immediate Past President

Melinda Aguirre

International Director

Penny Daugherty International

Director

Ileana Pacheco Morales

International Director

Linda Ring

International Director

Ex-Officio Member

David Mena

Executive Director

Foundation Representative

Karen Robinson

International Board Consultants

Patricia A. Woodward, JD Legal

Advisor

Colleen M. Duris,

PRP Parliamentarian

Kathy Surratt - States BRR Chair

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www.altrusa.org

Dear District Altrusans,
On behalf of myself and the Altrusa International Board, I welcome you to your District Conference. Whether this is your first Conference, or you are a seasoned Conference attendee, I hope you have a great experience.



Please take advantage of all Conference has to offer. Your District Board, host club or clubs, and Conference committee have worked hard to create a great Conference. You may be tempted to skip out for shopping, to take a nap, or just do something else, but if you do you will miss out on some great speakers and workshops.

I hope all of you make several new Altrusa friends during this Conference. Some of my best friends are Altrusans I met at District Conference more than 30 years ago. Had it not been for Altrusa, I would not have met these dear friends. My wish for all of you is that you can make lasting friends through your Conference experience,

I always leave conferences energized and with new ideas. I hope you all do, also. I encourage you to find a project idea, new fundraiser, or membership ideas that you can share with your club.

Please make an effort to meet and visit with your Altrusa International Representative. She is there to share information with you, meet with your Board and report back to the International Board about any concerns you may have. As the representative to your District, we want to meet each of you.

Thank you for all you are doing In your communities. Please continue to engage in our kindness and book challenges for this biennium. Your efforts for Days for Girls also remain strong with over \$72,000 in contributions since this project was adopted.

Altrusans R.O.C.K. - Recognize Opportunities, Create Kindness!

Yours in Altrusa service,

Linda K. Smith, President Altrusa International, Inc.

Greetings from the Executive Director



Welcome to 2025 District Conferences,

District Conferences are here!

This year I'll have first-hand experience as my staff and I attend District Five Conference. I'm excited to witness and participate in the event, not only for the fun, but also for the opportunity to gain an insight into what Districts do to organize and serve their clubs.

I'm looking forward to working with our incoming Governors. Please give them your support while also considering lining up behind them to become your District's next Governor. The leadership opportunities in Altrusa are plentiful, and the International Board is here to help each of you succeed in any role you'd like to pursue.

As we prepare for Conferences this year, we are also preparing for our International Convention, which is quickly approaching. Don't miss out on a trip to the beautiful Quebec City to visit with friends and make new ones, to network, and to attain some invaluable knowledge along the way. Be on the lookout for more information about booking your stay and registering for Convention. Hope to see you there.

Enjoy Conferences!

David Mena
Executive Director
Altrusa International, Inc

ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Refresh &
Revitalise
2023 - 2025

Greetings from the Foundation Chair

Greetings Altrusans!

On behalf of the International Foundation Board of Trustees, I would like to welcome you to the 2025 District Conference and thank you for your generosity in supporting the Foundation. Conference is an exciting time where we get to immerse ourselves in Altrusa by connecting with friends, making new friends, learning about service projects, sharing ideas, and learning more about the Foundation.

It is our pleasure as the philanthropic partner to the Association, to provide funding for each of the international awards including the Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun International Relations Awards, the Letha H. Brown Literacy Awards, Mamie L. Bass Service Awards, and the ASTRA Service Awards. The Foundation also provides the funding for the ASTRA Scholarships. Congratulations to all of the Clubs that are recognized for their good work through these awards.



The Foundation provides resources to first responders in areas where a disaster has occurred. This year, the Disaster Relief program has helped local communities address needs as a result of hurricane flooding and wild fires including housing assistance, meals and other emergency services.

For over 60 years, the Altrusa International Foundation, Inc. has supported our Clubs throughout the world. Through the grants process, Clubs are provided with the financial resources to support their service projects, as well as funding provided to multiple children's camps through Club 21 donations.

This year we are introducing a new award at the Quebec City Convention. The Wilma B. Hogan Award is to recognize an Altrusa Club service project that has been in operation for a minimum of five years, has demonstrated success, shown growth and development over time, and plays a role in providing community service. For more information, please go to Altrusa International website @ www.altrusa.org.

Your Foundation District Liaison is an excellent source of information. The Liaisons provide resources to local clubs and are also the major contact for fundraising at conferences. Through the hard work of these individuals, monies are raised to support all of the Foundation's activities. We thank them for their hard work.

Thank you for your generosity in supporting the Foundation. We wish you a successful, exciting, and fun Conference.

Yours in service,

Karen Robinson, Chair
Altrusa International Foundation, Inc.

Our International Visitor

Kitty McElhaney
International Vice President
Altrusa International of Lake City, Florida, Inc.
District Three



An Altrusan since 2000, Kitty has served on numerous committees in her club, including Club President (2006-2007 and 2018-2019).

She served as a District Three Director, Governor Elect and Governor for the 2019-2021 biennium. During her biennium, she chaired the Governor's Council for Altrusa International.

Currently, Kitty is the Parliamentarian for the District Three Board, in addition to serving as the ASTRA Committee Chair. She served as a Director for the International Board (2021-2023) and is currently Vice-President for the Altrusa International Board.

Kitty's professional career spanned more than forty-two years in the role of teacher, school-level administrator and Assistant Superintendent. Though retired, she is often contacted by school systems in surrounding counties to consult on a special project. During her tenure in the school system, she began her service on the Take Stock in Children Board, which provides college scholarships to First Generation College bound students. She continues to serve on that Board, having chaired it for many years. Her altruistic spirit in other areas include serving on a Board that manages foster care and adoptions. A member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Kitty has served as Vice-Regent, Regent and is an Honorary Regent of her Chapter.

Kitty is married to her husband, Frank, of forty years. She has a son, daughter in law, two awesome grandchildren; and her stepdaughters' family includes four amazing grandchildren. When not engaged in family or volunteer activities, she enjoys reading, camping, crafting and quilting.

I am excited to attending the "Southern Lights - Altrusa Leading the Way in Our Communities." I am looking forward to making new friends and strengthening connections with familiar ones.

Kitty McEhaney

Conference 2025 Speakers

Lynley McKerrow



In 2015 there was a call for someone to be the Town Crier during a celebration here in Invercargill, I accepted the challenge and voila here I am.

In being the Town Crier, it is my incredible privilege to put a smile on the faces of those around me and certainly bringing a little bit of wonderful ceremony into conferences, meetings and gatherings.

My life is busy now as I am a full time a Celebrant, both marriage and funeral, and I also preach in many of the local Churches.

Selina Burnett

Inspiring Women – Change Makers

In increasingly challenging and complex times for our businesses and communities, we need to work together to build resilience and remain sustainable. Join us to hear life stories from inspiring women who have used ‘friend raising’ to deliver outcomes and make real change.

Selina is a globally experienced change management and organizational development consultant. With 20+ years’ experience in consulting, industry and government, Selina has delivered large-scale people, change and organizational development programmes for FTSE100 / Fortune 500 companies in Asia, Australia and New Zealand. Selina is also an experienced facilitator, trainer and leadership coach.



Melissa Vining

Melissa Vining is a Southlander known for her dedication to improving cancer treatment in New Zealand. After her husband Blair was diagnosed with terminal bowel cancer in late 2018, Melissa and Blair realized the significant lack of resources in the public health service in their region.



Motivated by their own experiences, the couple embarked on an arduous campaign to advocate for better cancer treatment. Blair's petition to establish a national cancer agency garnered support from over 140,000 New Zealanders. Additionally, they founded the Southland Charity Hospital Trust, aiming to create a community hospital to provide free colonoscopies and dental care to the people of Otago and Southland denied care by the Southern District Health Board.

Tragically, Blair passed away in October 2019, but Melissa continued their mission relentlessly.

The community has worked tirelessly to build the charity hospital which opened in February 2025

Melissa Vining's unwavering commitment to making a positive impact on cancer treatment in New Zealand earned her a well-deserved place as a two-time semi-finalist for the prestigious Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year award. Her story is nothing short of amazing and serves as an inspiration to many.

Sarah McCarthy

Sarah McCarthy (Dip Journ) is a not-quite-born and for-the-most-part-bred Southlander with a passion for words, stories, collaboration, the arts, and Pinot Noir.



Sarah has worked in Southland for many years helping people tell their stories as a reporter and columnist for The Southland Times and The Eye and now The Southland Tribune, where she has a weekly column Thirsty Thursday.

Sarah is an experienced MC, who dabbles in event management, has interviewed a former PM in front of 900 people, and helps to create a vibrant arts community in the South.

Sarah is also a Shakespeare in the Park Trust trustee and a Kind Women Trust trustee.

And a busy mum

Co Governors' Annual Report 2025

The second year of this biennium has been a busy one as your Board continued to build on the work of the first year. Governor Marvynne was very focused on revitalising Altrusa in District Fifteen and getting back to the basics. With this in mind we have continued to work on delivering her plans and ensuring we deliver on her goals.

Your Board have organised an excellent series of IFF Days around the country. These events provide a great opportunity for members to connect with each other and share ideas on how to serve our communities. Each event certainly delivered on the acronym IFF, providing **Information, Fun and Friendship**. A big thank you to our Board, District Chairs and host clubs that helped make our IFF Days a great success.

In October we held the mid-year board meeting face to face in Wellington with this meeting supplemented by the use of online zoom meetings which have enabled your Board to keep up the pace on our mahi during the biennium. In October we held the first Special AGM to allow approval of the annual financial statements, so we were compliant with the provisions of the new Incorporated Societies legislation. This necessitated the revision of our District and Club bylaws and standard constitution documents, the delivery of which has been a major piece of mahi during this biennium. It is great to see so many of our clubs working through the process of re-incorporating or incorporating for the first time. A big thank you to our task force Danae McConnell and Tui Hunter for your support with this project.

During the last year we have completed a full cycle of club visits. As Board members visiting with clubs is a highlight of our roles and we enjoy learning of the wonderful ways that our clubs serve their communities, assisting in whatever way we can to support clubs in their activities. We have also enjoyed celebrating with clubs who had significant anniversaries, Te Awamutu and Tauranga 30 years, Taieri and Queenstown (40 years) and Invercargill (50 years). Often at these celebrations clubs recognize long-serving members with lamplighter awards, which is a great way to recognize their service and support the International Foundation at the same time.

After the success of our last Conference in Hamilton, where we turned our typical programme “on its head” we continued to shake things up with programming changes for the Invercargill Conference as part of our strategy to revitalize this hallmark event.

We would like to thank our programme committee chairs and committee members for their work. Production of DSBs, website updates, service newsletters, and support of our clubs with ASTRA and membership growth alongside assisting with IFF days and ad hoc projects has all been part of the mix over the past two years. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our District Board members, Margaret, Katrina, Robyn, Anne, Denys and Ming-Chun for their mahi and support over the past two years. Marvynne was very focused on revitalising Altrusa in District Fifteen and getting back to the basics and with this in mind we have had a very busy time updating policies, guidelines and generally attending to the “housework” of the District. We believe that Governor Marvynne would be proud of the work we have done in her name.

We would like to wish our Governor-elect Margaret and her Board and programme all the very best for a fantastic 2025 – 2027 biennium as they continue to build on the refreshed and revitalized platform.

Jenette Borrell & Leanne Milligan
Co-Governors

District Board Annual Reports 2025

Governor-Elect Report

The year since Hamilton Conference has been a busy one. I have continued to attend regular monthly zoom meetings with all the Governor Elects of each District within Altrusa International. As the current Biennium draws to a close, Zoom meetings have also included attending the Governor's Council monthly meetings. I attended Governor Elect training in Kansas City in July, under the guidance of the International Leadership Committee. It was also a valuable opportunity to meet the International Board and members of the Altrusa International Staff.

The District Fifteen Board has continued to adjust how we do things, and introduce new ideas, as we continue to search for ways to offer the best returns, in time and money, for our members. There is always a risk attached to new ideas, but I believe we are working towards a positive future, keeping up with modern ways and attitudes, to make the organization sustainable for many years to come.

The retiring Governors have been committed to making improvements, to 'Refresh and Revitalise' District Fifteen. I thank them for all their work and look forward to continuing with and consolidating the changes and programmes they have introduced. The most important one being the introduction of the Presidents Council Zoom meetings. These have been a real source of information, to help our Presidents gain confidence and provide support to them during their term in office.

IFF Days, and Club visits continue to be an important part of the calendar for Board members. I look forward to continuing with these, for the next Biennium, in my role as Governor.

A huge thank you to all the Altrusa members who have put their hands up to work together in District roles, for the benefit of the whole District. I am looking forward to the next two years working with you all.

Margaret Melhop
Governor-Elect

Vice Governor Report

As with most leadership positions in Altrusa, the second year on the board has been easier than the first, with the tasks being more familiar. I continue to be grateful for the support and discussion provided by our Co-Governors and other board members.

I enjoyed running IFF Day for the Upper South Island in September. Thanks to the Christchurch club for hosting this event. There was a lot of positive feedback from the 15 attendees who travelled from Timaru, Ashburton, and Christchurch. We made a small donation to the local food bank and enjoyed some fun back-to-school activities.

This year my club visits were to Levin and Hawera. I was grateful to be assigned "local" clubs that made it slightly easier for me to juggle travel alongside other commitments. I had a warm welcome from each Club Board and the wider membership, and enjoyed hearing about the ways that each group is active in service.

While I have enjoyed my time on the board, I am not continuing for the next biennium at this time due to changes in my work circumstances. I wish Margaret and the incoming board members all the best for the next biennium. I'm sure they'll enjoy the learning, friendship, connection and challenges that the board roles offer.

Katrina Clokie
Vice Governor

Director Report

This year began after a very successful Conference in Hamilton where changes were made to Refresh and Revitalize the format with a scavenger hunt type lunch, hands-on workshops and quick-fire workshops.

During the year I made visits to Te Kuiti and Morrinsville Clubs, which were very informative, and I was also able to attend the Tauranga Club's 30th birthday celebrations. I attended the Lower North Island IFF day in Ohariu along with others from my club. I conducted the Upper North Island IFF day in October hosted by Tauranga with 37 registrations, 7 of whom were 1st timers.

These visits and IFF days have been a great opportunity to meet fellow Altrusa's and learn how other clubs are conducted and the projects you are involved in. The Kiwi Altrusan and club newsletters are also a great source of information, which I very much enjoy receiving. I was tasked with writing up the Archiving Guidelines and (with Anne) a guide for new Directors elected to the District Board.

Issues facing clubs, seems to be aging membership with board members being "recycled" too many times and other members not being willing to step up. We need to look at ways of attracting younger members and investigate why people are not invested in giving back to their communities. This problem does not only affect Altrusa but a lot of other Service Clubs too.

I would like to thank Leanne and Jenette for their leadership this biennium and the knowledge they have passed on to us all on the board.

Denys Astin Director

Director Report

In the second year of this Biennium, I had a clearer understanding of my role as a Director and would like to recognize the dedication and enthusiasm of both the Board and all the leadership teams within District Fifteen.

Attending Board meetings, via Zoom or in person, has highlighted for me the range of skills and experience across our members. The 'Completed Actions' List highlights Leanne and Jenette's skills in guiding us through their Biennium. Records of the past two bienniums on Google Docs will provide a great resource for future Boards.

The I.F.F. Day allowed Lower South Club members to meet and share ideas. Despite the distance, these events do offer significant benefits and enable focused interaction among Clubs. My visits to the Oamaru and Queenstown Clubs enabled me to share the Boards vision and engage in discussions about each Club's plans and projects.

Altrusa aims to empower women as leaders. The website provides resources for key leadership roles in a Club, allowing everyone to learn skills and participate on their Club Board. Zoom training sessions have also allowed members in similar roles to connect for further discussion and advice.

While I have decided not to stand again for our District Fifteen Board, I look forward to serving the Board in other roles. It has been an incredible journey, and it has given me great respect for the skills of our amazing leaders within Altrusa. Thank you to my fellow Board members for their patience and for sharing their wisdom and knowledge so generously.

I wish Margaret and her new Board well for the upcoming Biennium.

Anne McElwain Director

District Chair Annual Reports 2025

Communications Report

At the beginning of this biennium there was an urgency to 'Refresh and Revitalise' the website and after two years I feel we are achieving this to some degree, but it very much relies on each Club providing photos & up to date newsletters for their club pages. A few are still very much out of date.

Emails have been sent to all Club presidents and secretaries requesting club photos & member testimonials.

Due to some local print media no longer existing and people not subscribing to print media how do Altrusa clubs tell their story?

We are relying more on social media such as Facebook and because of this Club presidents were sent information on using social media. Many District Fifteen Clubs have an active facebook page and Megan does a fabulous job of sharing club posts and making reels of the monthly happenings from clubs in District Fifteen. At the Upper South Island IFF Day I assisted our facilitator, Katrina Clokie with a workshop which led onto a 'walking the talk' exercise.

The Kiwi Altrusan DSB team form part of Communications committee. Both Jan and Megan have worked hard to bring you all a bright, newsy publication on a quarterly basis covering District Fifteen news as well as a snapshot of the fundraisers and projects happening up and down the motu. Thank you, ladies, for all your tireless work in producing a very professional document.

*See DSB and Facebook reports at the conclusion of my report.

Lastly, I thank Katrina [web support] for her patience and for always being so happy to help answer my "how to" questions in a very timely manner.

As I conclude this biennium as your Communications Chair, I have enjoyed the challenges it has brought along the way, learnt a lot, enjoyed reading club newsletters as I post them on our website and updating photos for your club page to keep Altrusa relevant.

It is important to keep our website refreshed so that someone visiting can see the difference all clubs are making in their individual communities – a fun photo says a thousand words. Your one interesting photo or project might just plant the seed in the heart of a future member of Altrusa.

Jenny Bevin

Communications Chair

District Service Bulletin [DSB] The Kiwi Altrusan

The Kiwi Altrusan has been delivered quarterly in a bright and easy to read format, with some great information for all. Club contributions, and action photos received, have added to this. As well, the aim has been to add a variety of items for members enjoyment. The special extra edition after the 2024 conference was full of colour, and reports for all those unable to be there in person. It is still a concern that many District Fifteen members do not open international emails, thus the considerable work put into our DSB by Megan and myself has gone unread by our NZ club members. It is hoped they are encouraged to otherwise check it out on our website where it is immediately posted.

Jan Jordan

DSB Editor

Submissions Editor

As this biennium comes to an end and Jan Jordan resigns as Editor, I would like to commend Jan for her hard work, dedication and calm through sometimes frustrating circumstances. Jan, jumped into the position at short notice replacing one half of an established team. She came with a passion to honour Governor Marvynne's theme of Refresh and Revitalise and that has been at the forefront of every issue. Jan has worked alongside me to put the Kiwi Altrusan together, despite the physical distance between us and our different ideas and working styles.

Compiling a 20-page newsletter with all of the styling and formatting in a week is no easy feat. Not once has Jan complained or been anything but gracious when I have asked for changes and she has always met deadlines. I have enjoyed the challenges she has given me and the easy, no offence taken, communication we have had. We have, in my opinion, been able to combine my more formal, minimalist aesthetic with Jan's less formal, colourful, friendly approach to provide a newsletter that represents Altrusa District Fifteen.

Having two defined roles is difficult when putting the issues together. The submissions Editor collects all of the submissions, does a first proof and edit of word count then sends it to the Editor who formats and styles. Not everyone has the same knowledge and use of software to make the task easier.

A theme to work to certainly makes the job easier but it would be useful to have a defined board driven strategic plan and style e.g. business, warm and friendly for communication so that the Kiwi Altrusan is cohesive with all other communication streams. Maybe we have that and I just haven't read it. Jan and I played with each issue to see what worked. No doubt the new Editor will come in with fresh eyes.

In the search for a new Editor, I was asked by a potential recruit "what is the relevance of a newsletter. Why do we need it?" that could be something for the new board to consider.

If we leave out a club submission in error, it certainly gets noticed but we have no other indicator of how many members are opening and reading it. It is a lot of hours of work for something that may not be widely read.

It is a useful marketing and recruiting tool to showcase District Fifteen but could social media and the Website do that just as effectively? We do have to be mindful of digital inequity. Many of our members are older women who may not have the digital knowledge or access. How many of them open the email to read it? How many clubs have a printed copy for those members?

Face Book

Around the middle of last year, I was teaching myself how to do Reels on Facebook. I was seeing the photos from clubs appearing on my feeds and decided to have a play and do something with them. That led to a monthly round up of club happenings in a reel that I posted to the District Fifteen Facebook page. I started tagging the different clubs so that they had activity on their pages.

The reels have been popular and I have noticed an increase in clubs posting photos. In February of this year Denys Astin asked on behalf of the board if I would manage the Facebook page. I am happy to do this but I would like some strategic direction from the board for what content they would like included on the page.

In the last 28 days, there have been 7,489 views of the page. Engagement has risen by 185.9% The most popular posts have been the club birthdays. Admittedly, a lot of engagement is from our American clubs, but this helps with the Algorithms.

The research shows that to get the best out of the Facebook Algorithm and reach a greater number of people, you need to post three times a week minimum. If we follow and tag the organisations that clubs support or work with, we can greatly increase engagement and awareness.

My draft plan to increase posts and engagement is to share all the club photos and news from District Fifteen, look at all of the International and World Days and post those that are Literacy or volunteer related first and sprinkle in a few of the fun absurd days.

I would like to create a resource list of these for clubs to play with and post. On other pages I have seen, monthly micro challenges create good traffic flow. That is something that can easily be emailed to clubs as well e.g take five mins at your next meeting to google your club, what comes up? Post a screen shot to the Facebook page. Are you happy with what you find? Take a fun photo of your next meeting, put it on your club page and tag District Fifteen. Follow and post on your local community pages.

If Margaret is happy to give me the list of National organisations Kiwi Altrusans are supporting, I will follow those and we and share with them how Altrusans have supported them. It would be great to gently encourage more activity on club pages by showing and giving suggestions on ways to make it easy, fun and less time consuming.

Facebook is the preferred social media for older women and it is relatively easy to use but Instagram is the more dynamic, wider viewed platform. I don't have experience with it but there may be someone in District Fifteen who could do what I am doing on Facebook with Instagram.

Both Jan and I have benefited from the consistent support and guidance from Jenny Bevin, Communications chair. Jenny has been our fresh eyes on each issue and has been readily available for any concerns or queries. She has gone above and beyond her role and has been the anchor that has formed us into a Communications team rather than separate entities.

Megan Harding
Submissions Editor

Leadership Report

The leadership committee has continued to be very proactive in connecting with Altrusans in leadership roles. Last year we ran online workshops for the just installed presidents to ensure they were well set up for their presidential tenure.

This year we have run several workshops for presidents to upskill their personal confidence and leadership ability when running a meeting. Have to navigate issues and manage difficult conversations. We have also focused on strategic planning, mapping out goals for the year and how to achieve the goals.

We have also run sessions for the incoming President Elect group, ensuring they are well set up for a positive tenure. The training sessions have focused on establishing their role, gathering their team and strategically planning for their role as president.

Linda Larsen
Leadership Chair



Service Report

Altrusa Clubs in District Fifteen certainly R.O.C.K. **Realizing Opportunities ~ Creating Kindness** as demonstrated in the wonderful articles and photographs in the DSB and on Facebook during the year, where generosity, love and compassion for helping others through various projects, workshops and fundraising events have taken place.

The following are just a few examples of the commitment Altrusa members have shown to all ages in the community -

- Sewing fabric cuddle hearts for Neonatal unit at Christchurch hospital giving babies comfort and helping to bond with mother and family
- Books for babies and pencil cases filled with stationery essentials
- Restoring soft toys back to life to be re-distributed into the community
- Providing winter pyjamas to Grandparents raising grandchildren
- Giving support to Carers within other organisations - Kids in Need. Magic Mums
- Supporting Hato Hone St John
- Salvation Army - Christmas Food Bank
- Supplying Christmas Boxes for Women's Refuge shelter and sewing toiletry bags for Women's refuge and patients in emergency situations in hospital
- Clubs have had events and opportunities to promote Altrusa in their community
- telling the Altrusa story, raising interest and hopefully gaining new members
- knitting and sewing ANZAC poppies
- ANZAC biscuits, individually packaged and given out at a Memorial Service
- A stand at a Home and Garden show, and manning a Marshall station at a walking festival
- Selling raffles and catering at a Christmas House Tour
- Fabric Bazaars where information promoting Altrusa is available
- Supporting medical Bursaries to help assisting students

It is evident that many 'fun' events were held during the year bringing members together while fund raising for worthy causes... 'Brides Through the Ages', High Tea with a 'St Patrick Day' theme

Distraction Pack project, some clubs feel the Distraction Packs will be an ongoing project as the police and many social services distribute the packs to vulnerable children in a time of crises and often with a request for more packs.

Clubs have been encouraged to continue their support with Days for Girls NZ where several clubs have held workshops to construct the various aspects of the kits, although there are many other tasks that can be undertaken, as one club's workshop folded 1000 + facecloths into neat purse style packages for inclusion in kits. Monetary donations have been greatly appreciated as this enables the purchase of materials for Days for Girls (as it is expensive) for use when required.

The District Fifteen 'Service' September Newsletter challenged clubs to create at least one of the projects that we learnt at Conference and suggested the 'no-sew' blankets, these being suitable for an International project. One club crafted 13 blankets and sent them to Uganda. Other clubs decorated paper bags to be given out with food parcels at Christmas, which added a festive flare for the recipients. Another International project has included knitting woollen hats for newborn babies in Ethiopia.

The Astra club - **Abilities to Serve Training Responsibility Achievements**

The Waitaki Girls School Astra had a great 2024 year gaining new members throughout the year and becoming very focused on the community, any support your club is able to offer these girls will be appreciated.

Five Clubs have entered the Mamie L Bass Service award this year.

To all clubs who have celebrated significant Anniversaries during the year, we hope your members had an enjoyable and memorable occasion.

Thank you all for your dedication, commitment and support given to Altrusa it has been a busy and rewarding year. Best wishes to clubs for the new Altrusa year.

Isabell Page
Service Chair

ASTRA Report

The Waitaki Girls' High School ASTRA finished 2024 on a high note. Hannah Shallish their President had worked tirelessly, recruiting members and leading the girls in a very professional manner.

At the Waitaki Girls' prizegiving Hannah won the Altrusa Tertiary Award, the Rotary Award for service to the community and the Waitaki Girls' award for service. A great testimony to her character. 2025 has seen 32 girls signed up to become members of ASTRA. The new President is Gloria Kaur and the secretary is Lily Havler. Both these girls are year 13.

Liz Ballantyne, our Oamaru ASTRA support Chair, has appointed two year 11 students as their deputies, hence ensuring some continuity. The girls have already begun delivering baking to the elderly and are hoping to volunteer at a kindy or a rest home on their teacher only day next term. Altogether an exciting start to ASTRA 2025 in Oamaru.

I have had three zoom meetings with ASTRA International during the last twelve months. I couldn't say these were all that helpful as ASTRA in the other Districts seems to be on another planet. Still, it was interesting to listen.

At our fiftieth birthday celebration our Oamaru ASTRA Chair Liz Ballantyne was presented with a Lamplighter Pin, acknowledging amongst other things, her sterling work with Waitaki Girls' High School ASTRA.

I am guessing there won't be another ASTRA club in District Fifteen in the near future, so fingers crossed for the continuation of ASTRA Oamaru.

Lynette Budge
ASTRA Chair

Foundation Report

As my term as Foundation Chair comes to an end I have been reflecting on the past two years, feeling proud of what has been achieved.

Each club has had a Foundation Liaison representative which has made communication so much more effective. With regular emails, Foundation International updates and news; changes to Grant application criteria, closing dates of Grant submissions, and promoting the Act of Giving programme, the list goes on.

I have fielded many enquiries from clubs and individual Altrusans, some examples being - clarification about Grant applications; notification of donations made and obtaining Lamplighter pins for deserving club members.

At the IFF Day held by the Tauranga Club, I had the opportunity to promote The International Foundation Giving Programme and changes that were made to the Grant Application criteria. The flyer that I produced to promote The Acts of Giving programme was requested by the Board who then emailed it to all District Fifteen Altrusans.

I was excited to see in the latest Impact Newsletter that four District Fifteen clubs were mentioned as having made donations to the Acts of Giving programme. Lamplighter pins count as a donation and I am aware of several of these being purchased.

The International Foundation zoom meetings held throughout the biennium have been interesting and informative. Other Districts have been interested in what we as a District do to raise funds and how we communicate with our members keeping the message of Foundation alive.

My aim at the beginning was to promote Foundation International and reach out to our clubs and individual members. I have learned an awful lot myself over the two years and feel that the "Foundation message" is filtering through to club members.

A very big thank you to club members who agreed to be a Foundation Liaison representative for their club, with your help I am sure that District Fifteen Altrusans now have a better understanding of the role of International Foundation.

Alison Burr
ASTRA Chair

Membership Report

This is my final report to end my biennium as your Membership Chair. Since conference in Hamilton, I have attended the IFF day in Tauranga and did a presentation on Open Flames Communication.

I completed a small project for the Board looking at each Club's Facebook Page and how you are using this to communicate your projects and fun events with your local community, Unfortunately, I did not receive any Nina Calhoun International Relations Awards for judging.

I wish you and your clubs a prosperous and fulfilling year with building your club membership, caring for your community and each other. Remember the M & M lollies slogan "Membership Matters" as in look after the members you already have, they are just as important as the "More Members" which we strive to have.

Gaylene Cumpstone
Membership Chair

2025 Awards - Synopsis of Entries

Mamie L Bass Award

‘Still Born Memorial Garden’ Altrusa International of Ashburton

The several projects the Service Committee are responsible for were evaluated at the beginning of the Altrusa year and following a recommendation from the previous year’s committee the decision was made to revitalise the Stillborn Memorial. This memorial is a valuable asset to the Community for families who have suffered a stillbirth or similar loss, to use as a place for a quiet time of reflection.

‘Through the Ages - A Stroll through the decades of bridal gowns.’ Altrusa International of Hawera

An evening of entertainment for the community and, as lots of members, still had their wedding dresses, or their granny’s, or great granny’s it was agreed to give them an airing. With granddaughter’s keen to dress up, it was a wonderful night with friends and Altrusa members. There were a few tears and lots of laughter. This was a lovely, fun, nostalgic, relaxing evening. Our Club were delighted with the success of the event, it means we can continue our good community work but also it shows that with a little creativity and imagination we can create an incredibly positive outcome for everyone. We would thoroughly recommend this to any of our Altrusa Clubs.

‘Supporting Critical Health in the South’ Altrusa International of Invercargill

This entry is about service to our region by supporting the Otago Southland Rescue Helicopter Trust, which is funded largely by donations from the community. It is a vital service to the South and its people. A number of our members’ families and friends have had personal life-saving contact with the OSRHT, and it was a no-brainer for the Club to agree to devote their service hours to raise funds for the Trust. The event also educated the public to the extent of the work that the OSRHT does. Leading to a Better Community is the inspiration for Altrusa.

‘Oasis of Wellbeing’ Altrusa International of Levin

Staff of STAR 4 Rehabilitation Ward, Horowhenua Community Health Centre, were excited that our club offered to undertake a community project to enhance their unused soulless outside space. Working bees to paint seating and trellis work, refurbished planter boxes, colourful potted plants, umbrellas to shade cushioned seating, restored the neglected courtyard into an attractive haven. This facility benefits Horowhenua and Otaki residents following hospital stays, and their visitors enjoy the courtyard’s comforting retreat. Staff, and adjoining departments, welcome an outdoor break. Our focus was to work collaboratively with STAR 4 staff to create a calm and restful, fit for purpose “Oasis”.

‘Creating Kindness at Christmas’ – Altrusa International of Timaru

Realising we had opportunities to bring some happiness at Christmas to those who are often overlooked was the catalyst for these three smaller projects. We hope we made the Christmas season a little brighter for those who needed to be made to feel remembered at this time of year

Letha H Brown Award

Literally in Ashburton - Altrusa International of Ashburton

The Ashburton project “Literally in Ashburton” aimed to reach all ages in the community. “1000 Books before School”, and “Books on Wheels”, with the Ashburton Library, encompassed the full range of ages of locals, from birth to maturity. Public displays, at the annual Ashburton A&P Show, and the Ashburton Public Library, reached a wider, more casual audience. 150 children’s books, donated by the annual Bookarama, were included in Christmas parcels delivered by local charities. We wanted, and succeeded in highlighting the joys of lifetime reading, and the availability to receive this easily in our community.

A night at the movies – Altrusa International of Hawera

Our President’s project was all about promoting literacy. As a passionate speech and drama teacher her project aimed to excite children about books, celebrate Roald Dahl’s Birthday and bring to life on the Big Screen a children’s favourite - THE BFG. No cost, giveaways of popcorn, ice blocks, Roald Dahl books and the chance to dress up and have fun.

Next Generation Story Tellers – Altrusa International Invercargill

This entry is about providing a pathway for primary school children in a small rural school to enhance their written and oral literacy skills, along with honing their presentation skills. The pathway is a storytelling and speech competition with prizes for the participants and a memorial trophy for the overall winner. The children enjoy this annual event, and we have observed the progress they have made in their literacy skills over the years.

The Club feels it is a very worthwhile literacy project with great rewards for all involved as well as honouring the work of Elizabeth Miller aka “Dreamweaver”.



Refresh &
Revitalise
2023 - 2025

Conference 2025 Registrations

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR

Kitty McElhaney
Lake City Florida
District Three

ASHBURTON

Kathleen Naomi Bowman
Isabell Page
Valmai Prendergast
Rosemary Moore
Lorraine Tew

CAMBRIDGE

Alison Burr

CHRISTCHURCH

Val Lee
Danae McConnel
Helen McNeill
Christine Mouter
Margaret Simpson

HAMILTON

Kathryn Anne Turner
Jenny Wright-Gardner

HAWERA

Christine Cameron
Robynne Harford
Linda Phillips (Bishop)

INVERCARGILL

Jenny Craig
Nellie Garthwaite
Ceciley Mesman
Kay Pringle
Elizabeth Robertson

LEVIN

Denys Astin
Airini Bowler
Helen Clifford
Diane Goodin
Tui Hunter

MORRINSVILLE

Susi Chinnery-Brown

OAMARU

Liz Ballantyne
Lynette Budge
Lynette Ada Cartwright
Jeanette Halcrow
Clair Jeigersma
Maria Mackay
Beverley Helen Manson
Helen Newlands

OHARIU

Georgie Aspros
Katrina Clokie
Tricia O'Donnell
Ming-chun Wu

QUEENSTOWN

Linley Carter
Kate Dawson
Sharron Ede
Kay Edwards
Betty Hanan
Ngairi Hayes
Anita Lewis
Margaret Melhop
Jan Robertson
Kerrie June Sproull
Annette Thompson
Ella Wilson

ROTORUA

Cynthia Clark
Phyl Goodwin
Wendy Joy Morgan

TAIERI

Clare Banks
Kath Burrows
Jennifer Margaret Clarke
Glennys Espie
Susan Jane Johnstone
Anne McElwain
Margaret Munro
Claire Paterson
Glenys Rickerby
Rosemary Watson

TAURANGA

Pam Hayes

TEAWAMUTU

Lynley Brier
Lynette Coutts
Tania Green
Christine Melville
Leanne Milligan
Robyn Moore

TE KUITI

Gaylene Cumpstone

TIMARU

Gillian Allan
Jenny Bevin
Jenette Borrell
Robyn Brien
Gaya Griffin
Karen Liddy
May Mason
Marilyn Ross
Mary Stringer
Cathy Weith