



Altrusa International of Timaru

Special Edition
Celebrating Changeover
& Conference 2026

Newsletter

Changeover 2026 was a little different - celebrated in April along with our 55th Birthday, no invited guests or partners, and held in our usual meeting room. And it worked!

It was great to have former President Marilyn join us for the evening, sharing the formal proceedings with Acting & Incoming President Donna.



Above: Lois Kirkwood, our member of 36 years, cuts the beautiful Birthday Cake baked by Jenny Bevin

At R: May Mason, Donna's sponsor in 2009 pins President Donna



Quotes from President Donna's Acceptance Speech -

My theme of **Hands in Harmony – Hearts in Action** (Process & Result) feels like a natural progression from Marilyn's theme of Hands Joined – Making a Difference.

It also reflects my personality and my life to a fair degree. I am a heart centred person who loves it when a plan comes together, when people care for each other, when support is given freely and when I am able to support someone through some tough times.

I want to say a big thank you to the outgoing Board Members plus the Literacy and Membership committees for putting together a beautiful Changeover evening at relatively short notice and a month earlier than usual. Many of these ladies are on our Board, and/or the D15 Board and also preparing for Conference this week.

An extra special thank you to May for installing me. You are the closest person to my mother, save her immediate family, and it is really special to have actually been present to be installed by you this time - after missing my previous installation in 2019.



President Marilyn thanks her Committee Chairs of 2025 to 2026

The table decorations reflected President Donna's theme of *Hearts In Action*



The 2026 to 2027 Board were introduced.

Absent from the photo are - Gaya Griffin, Secretary and Nola Searle, Director



Long Service Pins were presented to -

5 Years:

Cathie Weith
Karena Butler

10 Years

Evelyn Robinson
Nola Searle (absent from photo)

15 Years

Cushla Connelly
Sally Marsh

20 Years

Jenny Bevin



Enjoying the evening.....



District Conference 2026

Held in Wellington with 8 members from Altrusa Timaru attending

From Donna.....

Conference 2026 in Wellington was really enjoyable from start to finish.

Friday afternoon found me at the President training workshop. It was really interactive which was quite enjoyable. There was a game called Kahoot! which was actually a quiz about leadership, agendas and meetings etc. We all used our phones to download the game and try to be the quickest to answer AND get the question right. It was also shown on the projector screen.

Yours truly was in the lead the whole way, only got one question wrong - AND I WON! Yes, there was some competitiveness in the room.....

We were put into two groups made up of Clubs with lower numbers and Clubs with higher numbers. Everyone wrote on sticky notes about any problems or questions they had and collectively we talked about and offered solutions to the most common ones.



The interactive nature of this workshop was really good.

Overall, Conference is an excellent way to connect people's faces to the names we see on our emails. Great friendships are made with people from other Clubs. Deeper connections and friendships are made with the members who attend from our own Club.

It is empowering to women and I recommend you go next year as it will be in Oamaru!



At Left: Mary, elegant as always all 'dressed up' for the Movie Night

Below: May and Mary at the Governor's Banquet

From Mary.....

Friday night - a leisurely build to Conference Opening, all dressed up for the film **The Devil Wears Prada 2**. Absolutely fabulous, most enjoyable and a good alternative to the usual 'wine, dine, and dress up' theme.

The Guest Speakers were interesting and informative, especially Professor Bev Lawton, quite passionate on her subject.

All in all a most enjoyable weekend meeting with other Altrusans.

From May.....

Attending Conference again was such a pleasure to meet up with fellow Altrusans from other areas, who I have known for many years.

Through Bev Lawton's presentation we were awakened to such needs in the Maori/Pacifica community in the area of Maternity and Menopause..

Oh how we live in such a sheltered little bubble here in South Canterbury. We can all learn something new.... and Director Megan Harding enlightened us on the so many and varied ways we can use resources to promote our Club and our work.

Walking through Claire Robinson's address with her 4 Hacks certainly gave inspiration to further develop our skills in communication. Never too old to learn.

All in all, an enjoyable Conference with little twists and tweaks to 'change it up'. Certainly making it a relaxing time for the 78 participants. Thank you to the Organisers.



From Nola.....

For me I enjoyed the whole Conference. It was held at the Copthorne Hotel overlooking the sea, a lovely venue.

The guest speakers were all very interesting and informative, I got something from all speakers.

Bev Lawton speaking on 'Maternity to Menopause' and women's health.

Pauline Courtney a barrister and mediator entitled her speech 'Absolutely Positively Altrusa'.

Claire Robinson, a political communications academic.

A important thing for me was meeting and getting to know lovely women.

Everyone was so friendly and being with people you didn't know was really great as you soon got to know them. We were all there for the same reason, serving the community in a lot of different ways.

I would recommend other members to attend a conference if possible as you learn a lot and meet lovely ladies.



From Karen.....

The two keynote speakers at Conference left a lasting impression on me. Professor Bev

Lawton (Maternity to Menopause) and Dr Claire Robinson (You Never Know Until You Try), both outstanding women in their fields.

Telling their life stories, including the wide variety of roles and many initiatives they've been involved with, resonated with many in the audience, and I just kept thinking, how lucky are we to have these confident, well educated women willing to stand up and do everything they can to make a difference in improving the lives of others – just as we do on a smaller scale.

They definitely inspired, entertained and gave Conference attendees food for thought.

Google them, you won't be disappointed!



From Jenny.....

What made this Conference 'Absolutely Positively Altrusa?

- Inspiring Speakers
- Friday Fun Night with a difference
- Great Food as always
- A creative hands-on project
- Supporting one another
- Idea sharing opportunities

I am going to focus on the hands-on project as I know we were all a little mystified as to how it was going to work!

The fun started as we found our way to the nearest supermarket and thought about our 'Breakfast Box' The trolley soon became filled with weetbix to form the foundation followed by fruit tins, fruit pottles, muesli peanut butter, jam, marmalade, Nutella marmite, vegemite, baked beans, coffee, tea. We then spread the load between 4 members and staggered back to the hotel with our bounty!

The following day we listened to Pip from the Wellington City Mission speak on their work and it was staggering what they achieve by 'creating lasting positive change every day'. She told us the story of Naomi [Naomi's story - Wellington City Mission](#) which just showed what an impact their work has on many people.

It was then time to create our table centre with the purchased groceries which eventually came together with the weetbix forming the "box" and inside all the items slithered a bit until we had it balanced and quickly wrapped in cellophane and tied with a big red bow! Robyn had made a label to attach to our "box"

While we didn't win, we certainly worked as a team with lots of ideas flowing!

Pip's car was packed full of all the items from the 17 clubs present including Donna's wee ice bag - but that is another story!! All the items donated would end up in their [Social Supermarket Wellington | Wellington City Mission](#)



I thought this idea was an innovative and creative quick hands-on project which really did create much interest from all those attending as we roamed and looked at all the creations!

The winner was Taieri with their maypole construction -

Above is a photo of the winning display



**Saturday Morning -
The Business Session.....**



From Jenette.....

As always, Conference is about
greeting old friends
meeting new friends
broadening one's horizons
stretching one's brain
And enjoying oneself!



**Sunday
Morning -
All packed
and ready to
leave.....
The End!**