

The Kiwi Altrusan

District Service Bulletin



A

Absolutely Positively "Altrusa"



Overview of the 2026 Wellington Conference

The 2026 conference in Wellington was a unique and memorable event, offering attendees a fresh experience compared to previous years. The schedule featured a later start, a Friday night movie, and a Saturday Governors Banquet held in a Chinese restaurant. Combined with engaging guest speakers, these elements contributed to a conference that was thoroughly enjoyed by all participants.

Keynote Speakers and Presentations

The conference opened on Saturday with a keynote address by Professor Bev Lawton. Her presentation, titled "Maternity to Menopause," highlighted her distinguished career as a researcher focused on infant mortality and her pioneering work in establishing the first menopause clinics in NZ.

Saturday lunchtime included a brief presentation from the Assistant Wellington City Missioner. Following this, attendees collaborated to create table centerpieces. These were judged and then dismantled, with Pip taking them to the Mission. The delivery was so substantial that her car was nearly filled to capacity.

On Sunday, the final keynote speaker was Dr. Claire Robinson, an author, playwright, professor, and political commentator. Her talk, "You'll never know until you try," encouraged attendees to embrace new opportunities and develop the confidence to realize their potential. Her inspirational message was especially directed at those considering leadership roles, urging them to become "gutsy girls" and step forward.

Workshops

The first workshop was led by Pauline Courney, a member of the Arbitrators and Mediators Institute of New Zealand. She addressed the topic of "Having Difficult Conversations," providing valuable insights into managing challenging interactions.

The second workshop, "Absolutely Positively Altrusa," was presented by the board, further enriching the program with relevant discussions and activities.

Conference Reflections

One of the key takeaways from the conference was the recognition that there are many ways to accomplish goals, and it's not necessary to always follow tradition. The event underscored the value of flexibility and openness to new approaches, serving as a reminder that change can lead to positive outcomes.

Denys Astin – Governor Elect



Governor's Message

Kia ora

Another year has passed and we have celebrated with another wonderful Conference in Wellington. Thank you to all those that attended.

However, we all know it does not happen without a team of dedicated people, working hard to make it happen. This time it was the Past Governors, with some help from their Clubs. When no-one puts their hand up to hold a conference, to be able to fall back on such a small team of enthusiastic members was a blessing.

We are fortunate to have the next two conferences covered: 2027 will be in Oamaru, and 2028 in Te Awamutu. Thank you both for making the commitment to support District in this way.

We continue with the Biennium theme of "Share the Journey" and I would like to remind you all again of the meaning of this theme:

It is about us engaging more as a District, sharing our knowledge and having fun together at IFF Days and Conferences. If we work together, we can share in each other's achievements. We can recognize the contribution that Altrusa makes as a District and acknowledge that we are part of a much bigger picture.

It is also about getting out and interacting with other Community organizations, to spread the word about who we are and what we do.

Lastly, it is about recognizing there are communities in the world, less fortunate than ours, and doing our bit to make a difference to their lives as well.

The District Board worked very hard to present the workshop "Absolutely Positively Altrusa" at Conference. I hope you now understand the role we all must play in ensuring the Legacy of Altrusa continues. I hope you will now have the knowledge you need to go out and tell your stories with confidence and passion and help make Altrusa thrive and grow.

Despite the restrictions in time over the weekend, I believe you all had an opportunity to engage with members outside of your Club, if that was your wish. The Friday night venue was spacious and allowed plenty of time to mix and mingle. Saturday morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea gave you the opportunity to sit with others and share your conversations. This was compulsory at the Saturday evening banquet, with allocated seating. I hope again, you took the opportunity to make new acquaintances and find out more about what else is happening in District Fifteen.

The City Mission challenge was well supported. Another positive was how competitive you all are! I was blown away with your enthusiasm and generosity. It was also another opportunity for you mix and mingle, to look around and see what each Club had come up with.

Enough from me. Enjoy this summary of the 42nd Annual Conference in Wellington.

Start saving now, so you can be there, to share the fun in Oamaru next year.

Yours in Altrusa

Margaret





District Fifteen Board with International visitor Penny Daugherty



Club Presidents session at Conference



International President Message

Christine DeVlieger International President

What an exciting moment for your District — and what a joy to welcome you to your 2026 District Conference. Gatherings like this are the heartbeat of Altrusa. They remind us why we serve, why we lead, and why this organization continues to make a meaningful difference in communities around the world.

Conference weekends have a special energy. They give us space to learn from one another, exchange ideas that spark new possibilities, and strengthen the friendships that make our work so rewarding. They also give us a chance to celebrate what you've accomplished and to focus on the important business that keeps your District moving forward. Most of all, they give us time to simply enjoy being together as Altrusans.

Your District Board, host club(s), and Conference Committee have poured tremendous effort into creating an experience that is both inspiring and practical. You can look forward to thoughtful speakers, workshops that expand your skills, and plenty of opportunities to connect with fellow members who share your passion for service.

I encourage you to spend time with your Altrusa International Representative during the weekend. She is here not only to share updates from the international level, but also to listen — to your ideas, your questions, and your hopes for the future of your clubs. We value your voice, and we want to support the work you're doing to strengthen your communities for generations to come.

On behalf of the International Board, I hope this weekend leaves you renewed, energized, and ready to carry the spirit of Altrusa back to your club. Travel safely, enjoy every moment, and share what inspired you when you return home. Together, we continue this biennium with purpose and heart under the theme Love, Literacy & Legacy.

With Altrusa Love,



Christine "Chris" DeVlieger
International President
Altrusa International, Inc.



International Visitor

Penny Daugherty

Altrusa International of Mexico

International Vice President 2025 - 2027

Penny has been a member of Altrusa International of Mexico, MO since 2001. She is the Office Manager and Vice President of KXEO/KWWR Radio where she has been employed since 1999. She is married to Michael and together they have four children: Katelyn Daugherty, Sarah Hollenberg, Logan Daugherty, and Logan Meeks, as well as four beautiful granddaughters.



In addition to the busy work life at their family-owned radio station, grandchildren, and Altrusa, Penny and Michael enjoy traveling when time allows. They both volunteer on various service boards and committees in her hometown, including the Mexico Area Chamber of Commerce, Audrain County United Way, and Audrain County Relay for Life.

Penny originally started serving at the District level of Altrusa as a Communications Chair in 2008 and then was elected as a Director on the District Eight Board in 2011 before eventually serving as Governor from 2019 to 2021, International Director 2023 to 2025, and now is in her first year as International Vice President.

She credits Altrusa as playing a big part in helping her build more self-confidence and becoming a more effective leader. She has been encouraged by the way many Altrusa clubs have embraced and supported the International “Days for Girls” project at the level of their choice and hopes that mutual service projects and events will help bring our clubs closer together, gain more publicity, and attract new members that we can share the Altrusa bond with.

She is also a big supporter of the ASTRA program and hopes that it helps our organization stay relevant for another 100 years. Penny is truly thankful for the support and friendships she has made over her years in Altrusa and looks forward to seeing those familiar faces on Zoom sessions, visiting clubs, at Conferences and at International Conventions.

This will be her first visit to District Fifteen, even though she has already worked with a few of the District’s members. Please feel free to introduce yourself and get to know her while she is here.



Key Note Speakers

Claire Robinson

Claire Robinson is an award-winning designer, a painter, author, playwright, political scientist, political commentator, former professor of Communication Design and Pro Vice-Chancellor of Massey University's [College of Creative Arts](#). Currently Te Tumu o Toi CEO of Toi Mai, the workforce development council for New Zealand's creative, cultural, recreation and technology sectors.



Claire has been researching and writing about visual political communication, political advertising and marketing, leadership image, media bias, election campaigning and political history for more than 20 years. She is one of New Zealand's most experienced political commentators.

In 2020/2021 Claire wrote pieces on New Zealand politics for [The Guardian](#). Her book [Promises Promises: 80 years of Wooing New Zealand voters](#) was published in September 2019 by Massey University Press. The book was a finalist in the [2020 Publishers Association of New Zealand \(PANZ\) Book Design Awards for Best Illustrated Book](#). Claire's play [The Lee Letter](#) had its first public reading at Wellington's Circa Theatre on 13 March 2021.

In 2014 Claire established the [Design + Democracy Project](#), a multi-award winning Massey University research unit exploring the role that design can play in advancing 21st century citizenship and youth voting engagement.

Claire is a two-time finalist in the Fairfax/Westpac Women of Influence Awards in the Arts and Culture category and a finalist in the Education category of the Wellingtonian of the Year Awards in 2017. She has won two Wallace Awards from the New Zealand Electoral Commission for contribution to public understanding of electoral matters.

Claire has twice worked in the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade as Director of Public Diplomacy and Outreach (2009) and as a Foreign Service Officer (1985-90). She worked as (departmental) Private Secretary (Women's Affairs) for the Rt Hon. Jenny Shipley in 1991.

**You'll never know until you try.
The mindset required to develop
the confidence to try new activities
and realise your potential.**



Claire Robinson

Professor Bev Lawton ONZM

Professor Bev Lawton ONZM (Ngāti Porou), is the founder/director of Te Tātai Hauora o Hine (the National Centre for Women’s Health Research Aotearoa, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington) and a pioneering force in women’s health in Aotearoa.

Named Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year (2025), she has driven critical advancements in cervical cancer screening, maternal health, and Indigenous health equity. Bev’s advocacy led to New Zealand’s historic shift to HPV self-testing as the primary method for cervical screening – making Aotearoa the first high-income country to do so.



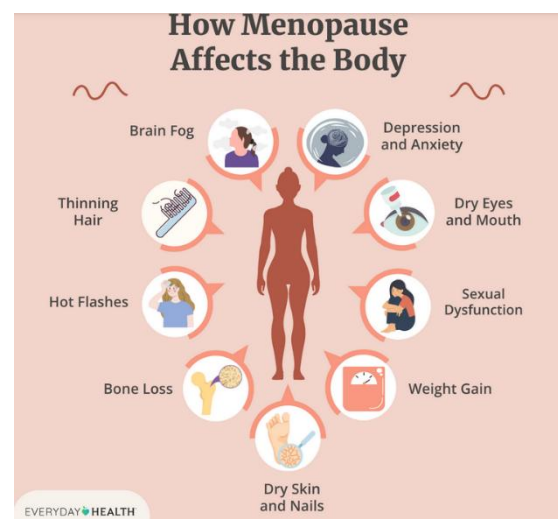
Bev previously worked as a general practitioner in Wellington for 17 years and cofounded the Wellington Menopause Clinic. These experiences led to an interest in research to address the many questions relevant to women’s health and inequities. Working closely with kaumātua, Bev builds strong relationships with communities, ensuring research is relevant and innovative, and grounded in Māori community engagement. Her research on women’s and children’s health has led to changes in policy and practice in Aotearoa and internationally.

Bev’s ability to disseminate important information about women’s health more broadly ensures the profile of women’s health in Aotearoa is elevated, and she regularly contributes expert commentary to media, providing evidence, ideas, and opportunities for system transformation. Her research-informed policies and international alliances continue to shape healthcare systems, tackle inequities and reduce preventable harm for wāhine Māori and all women across the motu.

Bev was appointed an Officer of the NZ Order of Merit by the Queen for services to women’s health in 2005 and made a Distinguished Fellow of the Royal College of General Practitioners in 2017. She was awarded the Royal Australia and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Māori Women’s Health Award in 2020; the 2021 Women of Influence Award (Innovation, Science and Health); The Beaven Medal by the Health Research Council in 2023; and The Maarire Goodall Award by Te Ohu Rata o Aotearoa in 2024.

Bev’s mission is to illuminate those areas of wāhine, maternal and child health that require investigation, understanding and appropriate intervention, and to inform system changes to provide equitable outcomes particularly for Māori women, their children and whānau.

Maternity to Menopause



Altrusa International District Fifteen Awards

Mamie L Bass Service Award 2025



1st place Ohariu, 2nd place Timaru, 3rd place Invercargill

Letha H Brown Literacy Award 2026



1st place Taieri, 2nd place Ohariu, 3rd place Timaru

Mamie L Bass Service Award

Ohariu – Stationery for Schools

Stationery for Schools was a community literacy initiative designed to collect reuseable stationery and distribute it to local schools to support students and teachers who may otherwise lack access to adequate supplies. Donations were collected at the end of the school year, sorted by club members, and redistributed to primary and intermediate schools across the wider Ohariu area.

Letha H Brown Award

Taieri – Helping Children Through Literacy

This year the Altrusa Club of Taieri concentrated on supporting literacy involving children. An opportunity to discuss with Dunedin Hospital, led to purchasing books for children visiting Emergency and Intensive Care Departments. Children are vulnerable during traumatic times and need distractions and understanding when a loved one is gravely ill. Some communities have little literacy skills, not the ability to purchase books for their children and, this led to the initiative to provide books for babies, giving them early learning opportunities. The Foodbank and Market Day promotions led to positive feed back for Altrusa while donating books.

Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun International Relations Award 2026 Recognition



Ashburton

Dr Nina Fay Calhoun

Ashburton – Building International Relations

We incorporated three projects in our Dr Nina Fay Calhoun International Award, reaching out to Mothers, newborn babies and children in developing countries.

Members knitted woollen hats for babies at Victoria Fall Hospital in Ethiopia, crafted No Sew blankets for babies and children in Zimbabwe, and members worked alongside another organisation to pack Birthing Kits for Mothers in emergency and humanitarian situations in areas of Africa, the Pacific, and the Caribbean.

These projects reflect Altrusa members' love, care and support towards International countries where some are in desperate situations and have very limited resources.

Margaret Inch District Leadership Award



Kay Edwards from [Altrusa International Queenstown](#). An amazing lady who has done and continues to do so much for her community.

Lamplighter Pins



Jenette Borrell Timaru



Leanne Milligan Te Awamutu

This is Jenette's and Leanne's second Lamplighter pin so will earn a diamond chip Lamplighter



CONGRATULATIONS

Foundation

WOW – great Conference in Wellington. And a great result for the Foundation Raffle 2026. We raised \$2920 (a combination of ticket sales and donations in lieu of raffle items)

Thank you to all clubs who understood the space constraints and did a sterling job selling tickets to their club members pre-conference. And for the generous donations, it all worked out very well !

Also, a big thank you to Claire Paterson (Taieri) for grabbing the bull by the horns and producing her wonderful gardening tool for all clubs to sell. Made by her local Men's Shed , this will sell for \$20, a perfect gift that will raise \$10 per tool for Foundation. If any of you have clever ideas to raise extra funds for Foundation, please share them with us so we can all support you in your club projects.

We also signed up 7 new members to Club 52 at Conference. Well done everyone, you will all become Charter Members of Club 52.

Lastly, applications for Foundation Grants Cycle 2 close on September 15th 2026. You can find the forms on the Altrusa website: go to Foundation and you will find them , ready to print out.

September seems a long way off but we all know how time whizzes past, so an early start will ensure a well presented/researched application.

Winter is almost upon us, keep well and warm

Yours in service

Susi 😊

DISTRICT FIFTEEN FOUNDATION CHAIR



This is a photo of the gardening tool Claire Paterson has offered to make available for Clubs to sell, to make money for Foundation.



The second photo is to try and show the size of the tool.

Selling these items not only raises money for Foundation, but as each Club makes their donation to Foundation, it is recorded. When their contributions add up to the amount required to purchase a lamplighter, they can then award a lamplighter to a deserving member of their Club, from the proceeds of the sales. It is a win for Foundation and a win for the Club.

First Timers

Conference 40 welcomed eight first time Conference attendees. Two were seasoned Altrusans but had never attended a conference. The First Timers were given a quiz sheet to complete during Conference. To complete the quiz and go into the prize draw, they had to seek, and ask questions, of Altrusans attending. Betty Hanan a long time Altrusan from Queenstown won the draw. Thank you all for being a part of Conference and Altrusa International of District Fifteen. A very warm welcome to all new members.

The recent highlight for our club was attending District Conference – being a first experience for a number of our contingent! It was great to be reminded that we're part of a much wider community of like-minded women, and to have the opportunity to meet so many of them.

Special highlights were the amazing speakers, and Ohariu winning the Mamie L Bass service award and placing 2nd for the Letha H Brown literacy award. We also appreciated the 'First Timer' badges which helped fast-track us into conversations, and excused anything we were meant to know but didn't!

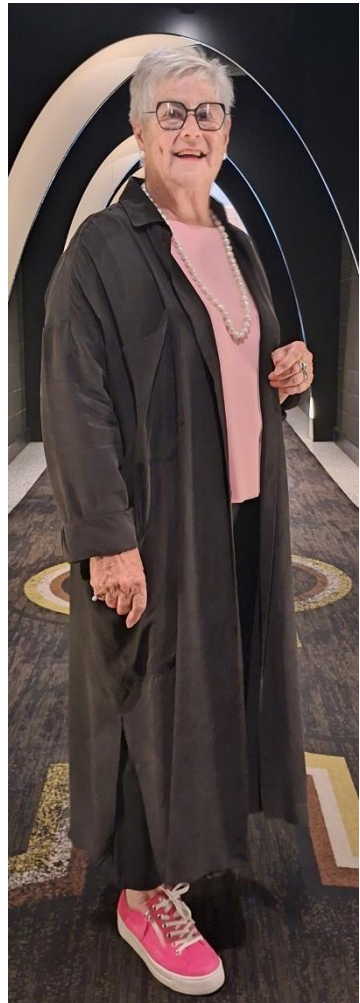
Thank you to the organisers and the Board for all your work both on the weekend and behind the scenes. We're already looking forward to Oamaru! – Yolanda Ohariu Club



Friday Night – Movie Night

Conference Glamour girls walking the brown and gold carpet of the Embassy theatre to see The Devil Wears Prada 2.





Inter- Club Challenge



Taieri and Wellington City Mission were the winners of the conference inter club challenge. A full carload of toiletries and food was donate to the missions social supermarket.



More photos of the amazing entries on District Fifteen's Facebook page – check them out.

Saturday Night Banquet



Accent

Each of us is part of a story

Sharing the journey, and weaving threads through our community – about the friendships we've built, the lives we've touched and the difference that continues long after this gathering ends.

Tonight is a chance to enjoy the connection, to celebrate what we've done together and simply enjoy each other's company.

Thank you for being part of the journey.

Enjoy the evening.

Lynette Budge (Club President & District Fifteen Astra Chair)
Altrusa International Oamaru

Sunday morning Accent

We all know the story of the Good Samaritan.

Today where others may pass by without helping, Good Samaritans help their fellow man, not expecting any thanks on Instagram or Tik Tok. They just help.

A Samaritan epitomizes one of the core values of Altrusa . Service.

We women are Good Samaritans.

We serve individuals and our communities.

When we see a need; we try to help and when we can't help with 'hands on service' we look for other ways to service the need. We do it without expectation of thanks or reward. Although it is nice to be thanked.

These 'acts of service' demonstrate the principles/values of Altrusa;

- Practical Idealism,
- True leadership,
- Expressing good will and democracy.

In times like we live in today expressing our good will and upholding democracy empowers the ways we can show there is still good in us all; and so let's evil sink into oblivion it merits. Democracy; it knows no class, no favourites but is founded upon merit alone.

We are a rare group of women us Altrusans; we come from many different backgrounds but we share similar values and our hearts are true.

Thank you

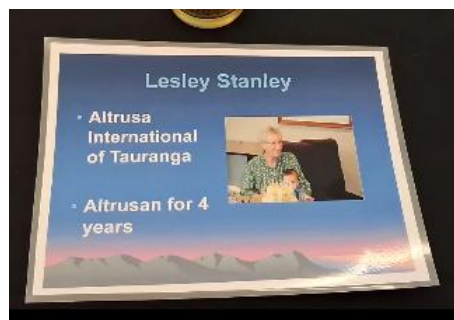
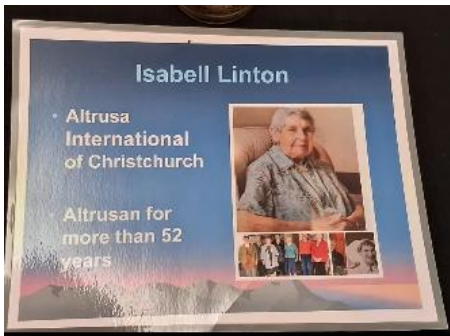
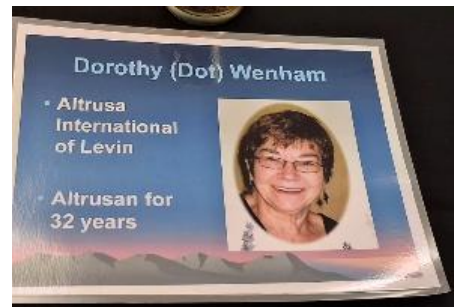
Lynette Coutts (President)

Altrusa International Te Awamutu

In Memory



In memory of the treasured and inspiring Altrusans we lost over the past year.
Thank you for your service and your friendship.





In lieu of flowers

Although I love flowers very much, I won't see them when I'm gone. So in lieu of flowers: Buy a book of poetry written by someone still alive, sit outside with a cup of tea, a glass of wine, and read it out loud, by yourself or to someone, or silently.

Spend some time with a single flower. A rose maybe. Smell it, touch the petals.

Really look at it.

Drink a nice bottle of wine with someone you love.

Or, Champagne. And think of what John Maynard Keynes said, "My only regret in life is that I did not drink more Champagne." Or what Dom Perignon said when he first tasted the stuff: "Come quickly! I am tasting stars!"

Take out a paint set and lay down some colours.

Watch birds. Common sparrows are fine. Pigeons, too. Geese are nice. Robins.

In lieu of flowers, walk in the trees and watch the light fall into it. Eat an apple, a really nice big one. I hope it's crisp.

Have a long soak in the bathtub with candles, maybe some rose petals.

Sit on the front stoop and watch the clouds. Have a dish of strawberry ice cream in my name.

If it's winter, have a cup of hot chocolate outside for me. If it's summer, a big glass of ice water.

If it's autumn, collect some leaves and press them in a book you love. I'd like that.

Sit and look out a window and write down what you see. Write some other things down.

In lieu of flowers,

I would wish for you to flower.

I would wish for you to blossom, to open, to be beautiful.

Shawna Lemay



**Watch for your emailed edition of the June
2026
The Kiwi Altrusan DSB
to be emailed to you early next month**

Note: There are photos of most Conference activities on the Altrusa International District Fifteen New Zealand Facebook page. Check them out and copy them for newsletters, marketing, or just to see how gorgeous your club looked. If you click on a photo, you should get an option to save the photo. It will save on your device and then you can edit or share it.