

Camp Elsdon Incorporated  
Chairperson's Report  
for the 32nd Annual General Meeting  
5 November 2020



Welcome to the 32nd Annual General meeting of Camp Elsdon Incorporated.

It is great to be able to meet in person and to celebrate another successful, if not uneventful and “simple” year.

Since the last AGM, Camp Elsdon has experienced the highs of the 2019/20 spring and summer and the lows of Covid 19. Like much of New Zealand the lows included the change and uncertainty associated with a significant public health risk and lockdowns, and of reduced activity and loss of significant income.

Despite the significance of Covid, the Board and Camp management have remained focused on the camp's key role and charitable purpose - the provision of a quality camp ground experience at a very reasonable price to young people and their whanau. In 2019/20 the camp hosted 78 community groups and provided 4,998 subsidised camp nights. Before Covid the Camp was on track to exceed last years performance of both occupancy nights and numbers of visiting groups.

While our standard camp rates remain good value for money the charitable purpose discount totalled over \$14,000 in 2019/20. Because of Covid the discount was not as high as the previous year. The Board offers it to encourage use of the Camp and to provide an opportunity for people to visit Porirua and Wellington when they otherwise might not be able to afford it.

Despite the significant reduction in business activity over the last quarter of the 2019/20 year with higher than budgetted income in the first 9 months, careful cost management and with the help of the Government wage subsidy, the camp operated at a surplus in the last financial year. This result was generated despite despite reduced revenue of almost \$50,000 or approximately 10% of the 2018/19 revenue, that amounted to \$511,000.

Under the Covid level 3 and 4 lockdown period the Camp was deemed to be an essential service. While it we did not take in new residents or campers it did remain open for Long Term residents who were happy to comply with social distancing and other requirements . It effectively operated as a “series of bubbles within a bubble”. This was able to be achieved through the efforts of Tom Ludlow and Jed Butters who looked after the camp on a reduced opening hours basis. They implemented the Boards plan and directions and followed advice from the Ministry of Health and others as appropriate. A big thanks to Tom and Jed for this.

The bounce back from Covid has overall exceeded Board planning and assumptions. We have seen increased demand for short term accommodation, while, not surprisingly school and community activity is taking a little longer to comeback. In youth and group bookings there remains uncertainty about being able to make forward bookings, and there are increased

health and safety concerns for travelling groups including school children and sports teams. As I write this report I am pleased to report that the camp is fully booked, in large part due to school and community groups coming back to use the Camp, to enjoy the experience that it and the surrounding environment offers.

I wish to acknowledge the Board who are dedicated to the Camp and its purpose. This year the Board, who work on a voluntary basis, have held emergency meetings both in person and over “ZOOM”. Board members have freely offered their time and expertise even with the extra pressures of Covid and what might be happening within their own lives and family.

During the year the Board sub committees have continued to make a significant contribution to the effective operation of the Camp and have helped further improve Board decision making and Governance processes.

The sub committees and the work of individual Board member has enabled the Board to;

- Renegotiate electricity and gas contracts with subsequent savings
- Complete a safety management system document review audit
- Apply to the Department of Conservation (DOC) for a lease renewal beyond 31 December 2020.

The Board submitted its lease renewal application in June 2020. DOC has taken 4 months to respond. This delayed response means it is very unlikely the lease will be renewed as at 1 January 2021. The Camp has been assured by DOC that it can carry on under the existing lease until a new or renewed lease is put in place. There is legislative provision for this. The Board is keen to achieve a lease renewal, and the increased planning, investment and staffing certainty for the future that a confirmed lease provides.

Following Level 4 Lockdown Tom Ludlow decided to retire. Over his twenty months in the role he led and implemented some significant and positive changes at the Camp. Our thanks to Tom for his contribution and for his support of the Camp. Duty managers Jed Butters and Dave Molnar have managed the often quiet and uncertain period since Tom's departure in June 2020. Their teamwork, flexibility and co-operation is appreciated.

The Board is taking some time to consider the role and focus for a new manager in an uncertain time resulting from not only Covid but the need to secure a lease renewal from the Department of Conservation in 2021.

The Board continues to be well supported by Anna Scott and Sheena Kilmister. They have provided invaluable financial reporting and advice. Anna has worked very effectively with the Camp's auditors and managed the year end process and publication of the 2019/20 Annual Report very effectively.

The Camp continues to enjoy a positive experience within the local community and with its residents. An example of this is the ongoing relationship with the Department of Corrections where their clients help out with Camp ground maintenance supervised by the Camp's duty managers.

While 2020 has offered a number of challenges for Camp Elsdon the camp remains well positioned to bounce back, and with the continued focus of the Board and the support of the community and key stakeholders the Camp can remain viable and deliver to its key purpose

even it it needs to “pivot slightly” in the interim to meet demands for accommodation and manage any downturn in tourism and youth and community group activity.

John Kyne  
Chairperson  
Camp Elsdon Board of Management