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SeniorNet Federation NZ AGM

In early May I attended the National SeniorNet AGM in Auckland. It was an interesting couple of days mixing with others from SeniorNet Learning Centres throughout NZ.

Some interesting facts: 4000 seniors are involved in 37 learning Centres. Numbers have reduced by 830 people since Dec 2022. Some Centres are struggling with numbers and a few Centres have closed in the last year. Most Centres follow the traditional class course offerings as we did previously. The introduction of Hangouts, offering a new approach, was discussed and the Federation is expanding this scheme.

Major changes in the Incorporated Society Act resulted in a couple of sessions explaining the changes and outlining what we needed to do to satisfy the new regulations. We have to re-register in 2025.

There was some discussion on ways to attract new members. Eden Roskill outlined their Open Day, and I took the opportunity to explain Rotorua's approach. This was well received. Discussion with members from other Centres showed the great variety of approaches being offered.

In looking forward the Federation has suggested that all the people we deal with - in the Library, Age Concern and Parksyde should be encouraged to join our Learning Centre as members. This is now under discussion by our committee, and we will be covering the ramifications at our next Forum Meeting.

CERT NZ has joined the Federation as a provider of information etc. They are concerned with how to keep your cyber information safe and secure. They will be providing webinars soon. Gene will provide information in his weekly updates.

It was a very worthwhile two days and I look forward to next year's AGM.

John Somerville

Rotorua SeniorNet is just one of 75 local groups in the New Zealand Federation. If you would like to know more about what goes on elsewhere, OR what discounts or services are available to members, go to the Federation website. www.seniornet.nz

Next members' forum

2 pm at Parksyde Monday 10 June 2024

From Bert, Activities Co-ordinator

I receive, most weeks, many newlinks which allow me to keep up with what is happening in the computer world. One which I received this month I felt was worth passing on to our SeniorNet members. There are organizations out there that gather all kinds of information and statistics, much of which is largely irrelevant to most people's daily lives. However, one that I received couple of weeks ago examined something that I would be sure that we have all experienced.

Someone has trawled through the numbers regarding the amount of time that members of the public spend on their phones waiting to get through to a particular business or government department. We have all been through this and listened to the mantra of the recorded voice saying, "We are experiencing very heavy call volumes at present. Please hold and you will be connected to one of our operators as soon as possible." Sounds familiar?

This message is usually followed by the playing of continuous music which is of unknown origin, tuneless and monotonous. From time to time the music is interrupted by a further recorded message which says, "Your call is important to us," followed by some platitude that someone will be able to deal with you shortly, interspersed with more pearls of wisdom that remind you that the company or department you are calling can be contacted on their website or you can email them. Inevitably you have already tried this which is the reason you need to call them, because the information you require is not available even in their list of frequently asked questions.

The following statistics are a mind boggling insight into the time wasted and the financial cost of this casual non performance of our large companies and government departments in NZ:

- New Zealanders spent a total of 22.3 million hours on hold to make service complaints or resolve issues in 2023, marking a 13% increase from the 19.7 million hours recorded in 2022. This is an average of 10.1 hours per person - a significant jump from approximately 8 hours the previous year.
- The time spent on hold during work hours is negatively impacting the economy, causing a loss of about NZD\$167 million in productivity. Key findings in the report also indicate that 95% of New Zealand consumers are modifying their spending behaviour due to escalating cost-of-living pressures in 2024.
- The sectors witnessing the highest complaint volumes included utilities (62%), financial services (60%), and retail (57%). On the other hand, the government scored the smallest average customer service ranking (5.4), with only 18% of consumers rating its service as good. Furthermore, 72% of the Kiwis predict the most significant advantage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be after-hours customer service.

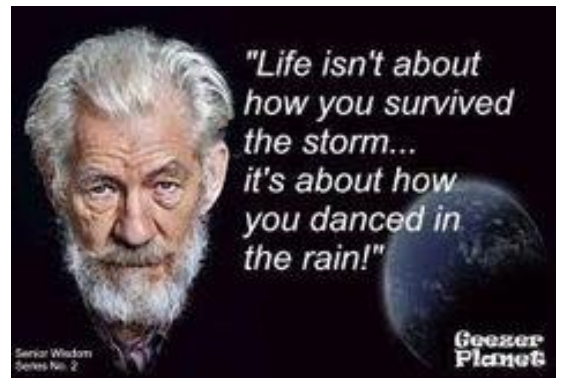
- Nearly 57% of the respondents stated they would opt for alternative businesses after waiting merely two or three days to have their issues resolved. However, companies are currently taking more than a workweek (averagely 5.9 days) to rectify customer issues.
- The statistics above are gathered from the working community. The only time these services are available are during business hours, so the time wasted is costing employers as their employees are forced to make their calls during working hours. The loss of productivity in the workforce is horrendous.

The people not included in the statistics are the retired community whose time is even more precious than the younger workforce. Every minute wasted is time lost from the rest of our lives. I personally resent every minute I spend on the phone chasing up information from organisations who run their businesses or departments thinking that wasting their clients' time is of little consequence.

I do not know the answer to this problem but I am sure that the poor productivity that successive governments constantly complain about could be greatly improved by addressing this problem.

FYI/FYE (For Your Information/From Your Editor)

Somehow, given the weather at the moment, this seems very appropriate. It would be very easy to be pessimistic, all doom and gloom, apocalyptic and all the rest of it. The news is always bad, climate change is all our fault (really? ALL of it? Nothing to do with heavy industry, wars, etc? No – just the poor consumers are to blame, apparently.)

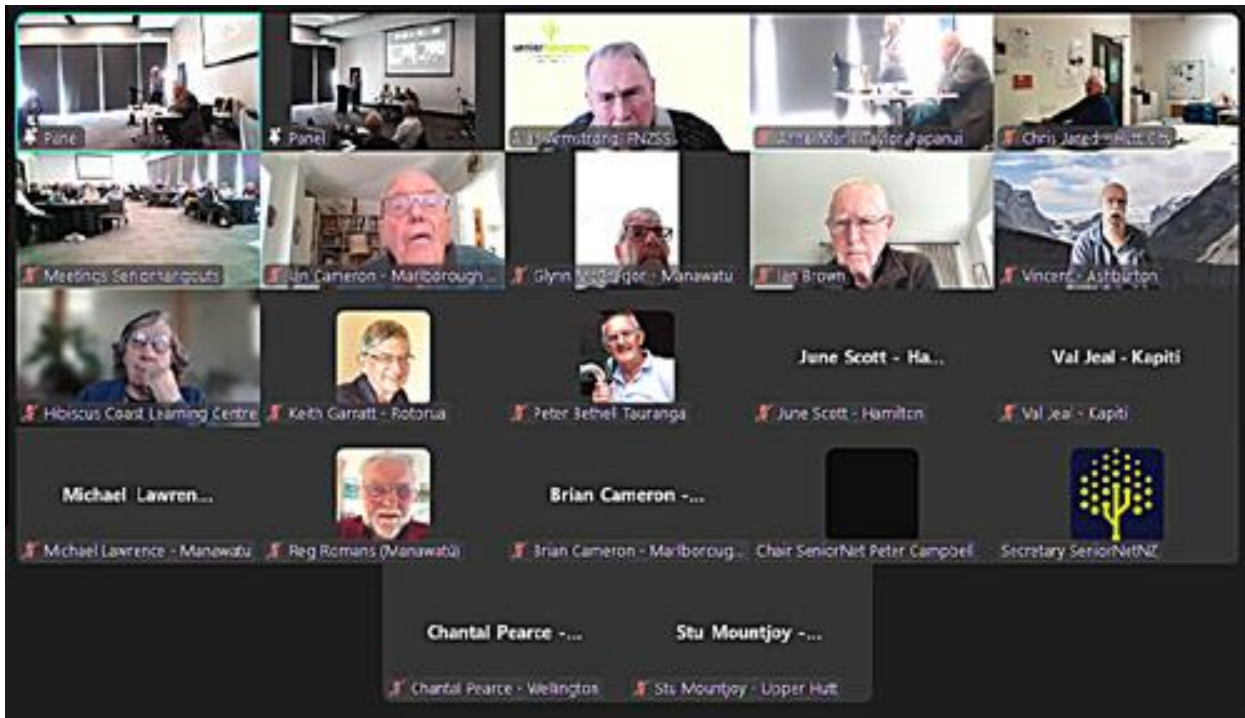


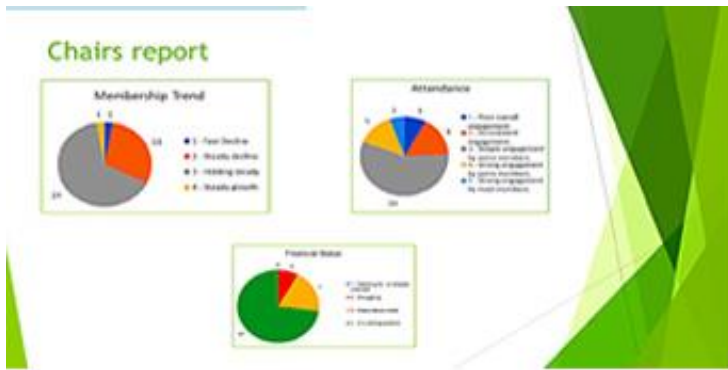
But enough of that! I've just had the nice young man from the AA pronounce my 27-year-old RAV4 fit for purpose, just needs an adjustment to the battery connection. The 18½ year old cat survived his surgery and is back to 23 hours daily snoozing in the sun; 1 hour daily eating, pestering me for food or telling me it's bedtime and he wants to get cosy! Never mind my TV programme! My heat pump works, the roof is watertight and there's enough in the cupboards to keep me from complaining.

So, why is the news all doom and gloom? Inflation is high! Remember when it was more than double the current level, in the 1980s? Unemployment is up! I'm sure the workers from the Depression era wouldn't be too worried. Covid is rampant! So, keep your vaccinations up to date and wear a mask if you're especially vulnerable – it's not the bubonic plague!

Wouldn't it be nice to see more good news on our TV screens and in the papers? Failing that, just in our day-to-day dealings with people we can all try to be positive and '*always look on the bright side of life*'. (But you don't want me to sing that, believe me!).

The Federation's AGM and Symposium as seen by the On-line audience on Zoom





SeniorNet Eden-Roskill

OPEN DAY

Monday, 11th March
10 am — 12 noon

Learn basic computer skills
 And other new exciting
 Computer based technology skills

Come along to our friendly
OPEN DAY AT
 Mt Eden Senior Citizens' Club Rooms
 487 Dominion Rd, Mt Eden
 (opposite Pollers Park)

Email: sner.membership@gmail.com
<https://www.seniornet-eden-roskill.org.nz/>



"Without participation, you cannot be part of the conversation."

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