



REBUS NZ INCORPORATED

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NEWSLETTER NO 9

Good morning Club Officers and Members,

New Committee member. Russell Tether, Councillor for 9940 has now joined the **REBUS** committee. You may recall, that FNZI dismissed him late last year, but such action was later found not to be in accordance with their Constitution and “reluctantly” (their words) rescinded his expulsion. Since then, all attempts by Russell to re-engage with Council have been unsuccessful and he has felt that he had little choice but to sever all connections. In an extract from a letter dated 13 March to all Clubs in his District 9940, Russell has written:

“You will have received offers from Rebus NZ Inc. to run a simple Service Centre which includes facilities for travel insurance and Public Liability club protection. I have been invited to join Rebus NZ Inc as a committee member and now consider I can best continue to assist clubs by accepting that invitation.

I hope after reading this letter you will understand my decision to cut all ties with the present FNZI Council. The frustrations, lack of co-operation and generally unacceptable treatment I have received, has convinced me that any continuing relationship is futile.

My recommendation to clubs is to affiliate with Rebus NZ Inc. I have every confidence in the Rebus committee having worked with Graeme McIntosh, John McColl and Murray Dunbar in the original Steering Committee that launched the New Zealand scheme in 2014. They have already demonstrated their commitment to liaise and promptly respond to all questions and are determined to give Clubs a credible alternative to FNZI”.

Use of the Probus name by Clubs not affiliated to PSPL. Whilst some non-incorporated Clubs have been reassured that (for the meantime), PSPL are not planning to take legal action against them, we must not lose sight of the extreme measures taken by PSPL to enforce the High Court ruling. This required that not only did PNZI have to change *its* name but also the **7 Incorporated Clubs** who were caught by that ruling. Each was faced with threatened daily penalties for non-compliance.

There are those Clubs who still have a hope that somehow, a sweetheart deal will be worked out between PSPL and FNZI, which will not require removal of the Probus name. In the unlikely event this was to occur, be assured it will not be without some fish hooks. In news to hand from Australia, the new CEO of PSPL Silvana Martignago said on the 3rd March:

“We will be shortly advising all clubs about changes to the Probus South Pacific Limited Constitution which includes a consultative process with Probus clubs.” Other announcements indicate that she will give priority to addressing the reducing Probus membership, rather than focus on the widespread discontent also present within many Australian Clubs over increased affiliations fees and mounting overheads associated with the provision of unwanted services.

We well recall the last Constitutional Review conducted by PSPL (which is scheduled to take place every 5 years), Clubs were invited to submit suggestions but with the high percentage threshold required for change to take place – or objections to PSPL’s proposals, Club input was largely irrelevant. Clubs who did not respond were counted as having approved. In the case of the Probus Club of Hibiscus Coast, an objection was lodged over the Article which would enable PSPL to demand from Clubs any information whatsoever concerning their membership. We knew this to include actual members’ names and contact details (required for the “passport” fiasco).

Our signed copy of the proposed Constitution qualified our obligation to make such information available **only** if it did not contravene NZ’s Privacy Act. After 3 months and several unanswered inquiries, our un-presented cheque for affiliation fees and the amended Constitution were eventually rejected. That was the catalyst for disaffiliation and support for the new PNZI.

We mention this in detail as it is our view that sooner or later, Clubs who are not affiliated to PSPL will have no choice if they wish to continue as a Probus Club – or accept some other arrangement which will still bind them to PSPL control by the adoption of PSPL’s Standard Constitution.

We believe that REBUS offers a practical “fuss-free” alternative and hope that your Club will or has given due consideration to the benefits of **full affiliation with REBUS** or as an **Independent Associate** as outlined in Newsletter No 8. At your choice, you can retain your existing Constitution and continue using the Probus name until or if legally obliged to cease. Please keep those applications rolling in.

Public Liability Insurance. There remains some confusion over the need for such coverage. Some Clubs have indicated that they will disaffiliate from FNZI and **“go it alone”** for the meantime until they see how **REBUS** performs. They need to understand that NZ’s ACC coverage is **not** a substitute. **REBUS** has in place protection for up to \$10m for any affiliated Club which finds itself at the receiving end of an action to recover loss caused to third party property arising from the negligent act of a member of the Club itself. **Only accidental injury to members or the public is covered by ACC.**

Travel Insurance. We are receiving many compliments from Clubs who find the information on how to obtain an application form for “Fit to Travel” insurance and the rates payable, are so easily downloadable from our website. However, please note that this facility is only for travellers whose Club is affiliated to **REBUS.**

Website. If you have not visited our website recently – or yet to do so, please have a look. It is updated regularly with news and events. Go to www.rebus.nz or simply type **rebus.nz** in the top line of your browser and press enter. Whilst we had earlier said that we would have a “members only” section protected by a password, in practice, we have decided that the sheer logistics of having each member needing to go to their Club’s Secretary to obtain that Club’s password, would prove a significant impediment. So for the foreseeable future, our site can be accessed by any Club or member. Information which could be regarded as confidential, will be sent electronically to any affiliated Club upon request.

Sincerely,

Graeme McEntosh (Chairman)