

Notice of Motion: Change to Society Subscriptions

In terms of Rule 6.1 of the Society's Constitution, I give Notice of Motion to members on behalf of Council **that the rate of subscriptions for all classes of Society Memberships be amended. The present and proposed amended subscription rates are as follows.** (Note: Life subscriptions are paid once for the life of the subscriber. Other subscriptions are annual payments).

A. New Zealand Membership Subscriptions (\$)						
Category	Ordinary	Family	Student	Group	Corporate	Life
Present Rate	70.00	17.50	35.00	140.00	350.00	1,380.00
Proposed Rate	80.00	20.00	40.00	160.00	400.00	1,580.00
% Change	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.5

B. Membership Subscriptions for the Rest of the World (\$)						
Category	Ordinary	Family	Student	Group	Corporate	Life
Present Rate	115.00	28.75	57.50	225.00	690.00	2,400.00
Proposed Rate	134.00	33.50	67.00	262.50	805.00	2,800.00
% Change	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.7	16.7	16.7

A background paper with an explanation has been published on the Society's website:

<https://www.birdsnz.org.nz/about-us/>

Explanation

Council has been considering the long-term financial viability of the Society for several years. Services to members have increased; the quality of our publications with more full colour images has improved and has markedly raised the visibility of the Society; the costs of undertaking Council business have increased; the cost of maintaining our digital profile is an increasing cost and the expectations of members and Council as to the activities of the Society have all increased. Several activities that have been financially supported by the Birds NZ Research Fund have increased dramatically as a result of a very comfortable partnership with the T-Gear Charitable Trust. This is good and is positive as it supports us as a Society, but these activities are separate from the costs of operating the Society.

As part of attempting to address these issues, the Council has established a Finance subcommittee to look at a long-term approach for addressing these matters. At a meeting in 2019 the subcommittee identified the following as significant financial risks to the viability of the Society:

- Postage rates have gone up and we can expect that the costs of posting out hard copies will continue to increase. Members have indicated that they prefer receiving a hard copy of publications but it is coming at an increased cost to the Society.
- Publication and distribution of *Notornis* is critical to the reputation of the Society so we need to do everything to keep it, but this comes at a printing and postage cost.
- Executive Officer costs compared to the budget are a risk. It's not that the work is unimportant, far from it, but we have not been budgeting accurately to what's required.
- Membership numbers are changing and so we need to respond accordingly.
- Future digitising of databases – should this new function be funded from operations, or should it be supported from project funding?
- More advertising? Is it feasible to ask Birds New Zealand magazine to carry more advertising? What is the current income from advertising and what does this cover?
- How much are we paying for IT costs for both maintenance and development? Is there any way that this might decrease in the future?

Resolving some of these questions is work that we are pursuing as part of the Society's strategic plan and will understandably take some years to address, but at the same time there is a clear discrepancy between our subscription income and the operating costs and so Council at its November 2019 resolved to progress this matter at the 2020 AGM. Regrettably, the 2020 AGM was not held because of restrictions on the movement of the population caused by the Covid-19 pandemic; it is however proposed that this topic be included on the AGM Agenda in 2021.

The following tables set out schedules of the current and the expected income from each membership class (New Zealand and 'Rest of the World') if this **Notice of Motion** is passed.

A. New Zealand Membership Subscriptions: Expected Income from Membership Classes (\$)						
Category	Ordinary	Family	Student	Group	Corporate	Life
Numbers of members	741	117	76	21	0	49
Current total income	51,870	2,048	2,660	2,940	0	Not estimated
Expected income	59,280	2,340	3,040	3,360	0	Not estimated

B. Rest of the World Membership Subscriptions: Expected Income from Membership Classes (\$)						
Category	Ordinary	Family	Student	Group	Corporate	Life
Numbers of members	22	0	5	23	0	12
Current total income	2,530	0	288	5,175	0	Not estimated
Expected income	2,948	0	335	6,038	0	Not estimated

The matter of subscriptions is both vexed and complex. Council is trying very hard indeed to find a practical compromise between balancing the books of the Society, maintaining all of our activities

and being reasonable about the subscriptions charged to members. The position has been made that much more difficult in 2020 because of the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic and the uncertainties in our lives that are a consequence of the pandemic. We do not wish to have a large increase in subscriptions but there does nonetheless need to be increase in all membership classes to protect the interests of the Society into the future.

Bruce McKinlay
President

Paul Garner-Richards
Treasurer