



The legacy of Andrée Talbot, CNZM

Andrée Talbot, a leader, volunteer and honorary life member of Plunket who was instrumental in the development and success of Plunket services has sadly died. Throughout her more than 20 years' service with Plunket Andrée created a legacy that Plunket is forever grateful for.

"Andrée started with Plunket in Devonport in 1996 as a volunteer following the birth of her first child. She swiftly became the group's President and led a major project for new Plunket rooms" says Amanda Malu, CE of Plunket. As a practising lawyer she put her skills to the test, successfully arranging the building's purchase, negotiating the ground lease terms and co-ordinating the physical move to equipment which ensured the families of Devonport had a community base for their children's health.

She was elected President of Plunket's Waitemata Area Society eight years later which saw her successfully link eight associated committees and over 40 sub-branch committees into a cohesive group in a three year period. Andrée had a great ability to identify, articulate and discuss the crux of a problem which held to bring people along on change journey.

As a reflection of her hard work and dedication to Plunket staff in the Auckland region, Andrée was elected to the National Board in 2007 and later on the Plunket Board. "She earned a place on the Plunket board and then National President – all testimonial to her sensitivity, hard work and dedication not only to the organisation but all its members and their own issues, views and priorities" says fellow Waitemata area board member Marguerite Spencer.

During her time on the Plunket Board she sat on various committees which oversaw the governance of Plunket. Her work on the Risk, Audit and Assurance Committee and oversight of the Plunket Electronic Health record project meant that Plunket made steady progress along the path of national health collaboration.

Plunket Board chair Christine Lake says "Andrée was naturally always at the forefront of these discussion and a strong voice for her community for the children of New Zealand". She had a way with people and would be frequently sent to conferences on behalf of Plunket.

From 2014, Andrée oversaw the start of Plunket's transition from 18 area societies into a charitable trust. She led discussions on Plunket's need to change and provided inputs on how change could look. Even when Andrée was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016 and handed her role as chair of the National Board to the Vice president, she continued to provide governance, strong leadership and legal guidance which aided the successful formation of the Plunket Charitable Trust on 1 January 2018. "Her ability to allow staff and volunteers to get on with the job at hand whilst gently steering people in the desired direction meant that Plunket is very well placed to continue with excellent Well Child Health service," says fellow Plunket Board member Liz King.

Her passion however always remained supporting volunteers and ensuring they had a voice at the table. "She always found time to connect and support the volunteers" says Christine Lake. At Plunket conferences Andrée was the Waitemata area delegate to ensure volunteers had a voice in the passing of Remits. These Remits formed the advocacy agenda for Plunket and carried weight with government at local and national levels and had a major impact on the wellbeing of New Zealand families whether it be Plunket's advocacy on car seas or pool fencing.

Andrée continues to support Plunket. This year she donated to Plunket to help grow, engage and recognise Plunket volunteers. The Andrée Talbot fellowship will support leadership and governance development, volunteer managers professional development and establish a volunteers recognition award. “Andrée embodies all that is great about volunteering and service with Plunket. Her dedication and 20 plus years of service to Plunket is a true testament of the difference just one person can make towards their local community” says Amanda Malu.

“Andrée was thoughtful, sincere and thorough leader at Plunket who had a knack of grasping the crux of situations and asking tough but fair questions. Her leadership and dedication to Plunket was invaluable and her passing is a tremendous loss,” says Amanda Malu. On receiving her New Zealand Order of Merit in 2019 Andrée stated “I’ve loved my years working with Plunket. It’s such an important organisation for New Zealand families and I’m proud of my various positions over the years helping to ensure that Plunket continues to play tis important role in the wellbeing of our young children”.

Her legacy will remain at Plunket through the Andrée Talbot Fellowship and the thousands of Kiwi tamariki and whānau who received care over her time at Plunket.

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