

# ANNUAL REPORT: THE WISE RESPONSE SOCIETY INC.

## August 28, 2018.

This report covers the period following last year's Annual Meeting of August 24, 2017. Being the fifth full year of our operation since the launch in March, 2013, we have continued with some of our earlier exercises while responding to several major new opportunities and challenges, mostly provided by the election results and creation of a Coalition Government between the Labour, NZ First and Green Parties. The Society's webpage provides a record of our more significant activities over the year, thanks to webmaster Mark Jackson.

### 1. Otago Regional Council's Regional Policy Statement and Long-term Plan:

Mediation meetings continued into the early New Year, assisted by Royden Somerville QC and his lawyer Mr Will Anglin, and was eventually completed to the Society's satisfaction. We await the Environment Court's completion of the exercise and the Policy Statement being signed off and becoming operational.

Meanwhile, the Society made a 16-page submission on the Council's Long-Term Plan on 14 May. The Summary and Recommendations provide the essence of the submission:

#### **Summary:**

*Human impacts are now so significant, that we will need to use all possible opportunities to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change underway. Genuinely integrating our natural and physical resource management is one such opportunity that we can no longer afford to ignore. Wise Response builds its case around two requests*

- i) "please recognise biophysical limits message" and*
- ii) "please facilitate the GHG drawdown path" required to get us to Zero net by 2050.*

*We feel those two aspect are so fundamental that unless they are recognised, we can have little confidence that this LTP will stand the test of time. This shift in direction brings with it new challenges but also new opportunities to shape the necessary change.*

#### **Recommendations:**

- i. that the legal provisions, policies and draft policies identified be given particular regard when considering this submission recommendations and finalising the LTP.*
- ii. that there needs to be a section at in the LTP that sets down clearly the assumptions about the context for the LTP over the next 10 years taking into account current scientifically validated biophysical trends.*
- iii. that the ORC allocate funds in the LTP to establish and facilitate a collaborative process that will enable landowners to design economic pathways*

*that comply with the remaining emissions budget to stabilise the climate according to the Paris COP21 International Agreement.*

*iv. that a Regional Land Plan be developed to provide the legal mechanism and common framework for implementing a genuinely integrated climate change emissions reduction, mitigation and response, that includes biodiversity.*

The full submission is at: [WiseResponseSubmission-ORC LTP 2018 Final.pdf](#)

## 2. Integrated Landscape Management:

A landscape approach deals with large-scale processes in an integrated and multidisciplinary manner, combining natural resource management with environmental and livelihood considerations. The landscape approach also factors in human activities and their institutions, viewing them as an integral part of the system rather than as external agents.

During the process of submitting on the ORC's Regional Policy Statement, it had become evident from the widespread and growing conflicts in land use that the requirement for "integrated management of natural and physical resources" in the RMA had not been properly implemented. Issues with the likes of declining water quality, erosion and siltation, and climate change (carbon budget) might otherwise be better mitigated and adapted with more appropriate land management.

Thus, we arranged a meeting on 15 Sept 2017 with Otago staff of Federated Farmers (David Cooper) , Public Health Otago University (Dr Alex MacMillan) and Catchments Otago (Dr Gerry Closs). This was followed up by a seminar on 13 November 2017, at the University's Centre for Sustainability. Both meetings were devoted to examining the potential for Integrated Landscape Management to remedy such issues and the potential role of new catchment models in facilitating its implementation. The 13 Nov seminar was attended by 22 and included representatives from both the DCC and ORC. The programme is shown below:

|                     | Time | Talk | Item   | Presenter                             |
|---------------------|------|------|--|---------------------------------------|
|                     | 1330 | 5    | Background to Wise Response  | Sir Alan Mark                         |
| <b>The Issue</b>    | 1335 | 10   | A context: critical issues for Wise Response relevant to landuse                               | Nathan Surendran                      |
|                     | 1345 | 15   | Scoping the potential of an integrated landscape approach to address emerging issues and risks | Sir Alan Mark and Dugald MacTavish    |
|                     | 1400 | 10   | A legal viewpoint on integration in ILM  | Will Anglin                           |
| <b>Perspectives</b> | 1410 | 10   | A Public Health perspective on ILM and participatory approach                                  | Dr Alex MacMillan                     |
|                     | 1420 | 10   | Local Authority perspectives on ILM  | TBC                                   |
|                     | 1430 | 10   | The Halo Project/Beyond Orokonui example   | Rhys Millar                           |
|                     | 1440 | 10   | GIS as a support tool for ILM and collaborative process  | Aubrey Miller and Craig Macdonell     |
|                     | 1450 | 10   | <b>Afternoon Tea</b>   |                                       |
| <b>Approaches</b>   | 1500 | 10   | Climate and ILM  | Dr James Renwick                      |
|                     | 1510 | 15   | ILM type initiatives elsewhere and approaches that we might consider                           | Dr Bethanna Jackson                   |
|                     | 1525 | 15   | LUCI model and possible role in Otago  | Dr Bethanna Jackson                   |
| <b>Discussion</b>   | 1540 | 40   | Envisioning a landscape approach in Otago  | Dugald MacTavish and Nathan Surendran |
|                     | 1620 | 10   | Summing up   | Sir Alan Mark                         |
|                     | 1630 |      | Close  |                                       |

The day after the seminar a more focused meeting was held with the ORC (Dean Olsen and Rachel Ozanne), Federated Farmers (Kim Reilly and David Cooper) and Bethana Jackson (Victoria Univ.) and Mark Fitzpatrick (Ravensdown Env. Rep.).

Following up this, Dugald and I meet Stephen Woodhead (ORC Chair), Gretchen Robertson (Deputy Chair), and Ella Lawton (Councillor) on Tuesday 20 March at the ORC. We outlined the reason for WR's goals, its work to date and its hopes for ILM, particularly that the new provisions in the RPS might find their way into implementation plans. The idea that a Land Management Plan would make the ideal mechanism by which to implement ILM emerged for us. We have an invitation from the ORC to meet again once the RPS is operational.

### **3. Emissions Trading Scheme:**

On December 18, the Government announced the process for a Zero Carbon Bill and how it would relate to the NZ ETS: that “work is progressing to improve design and operation the operation of the NZ ETS” and that “this includes: how best to implement the in-principle decisions made by the Government in July 2017. Also, that public consultation in May-June 2018 on the proposed content of a Zero Carbon Bill, would include options for a 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.

### **4. Productivity Commission:**

The Productivity Commission, established in 2010, Chaired by Mr Murray Sherwin (who, among other roles, was adviser o the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, on national risk issues), has recently become involved in assessing New Zealand's transition to a lower net emissions economy. In response to their original “issues paper”, the Society presented a comprehensive 56-page submission in October, 2017, among a total of 133 other submissions, providing responses to each of the 40 questions posed.

We were particularly concerned with the Commissions Terms of Reference: which included “identify options for how New Zealand could reduce its domestic greenhouse gas emissions future, while at the same time continue to grow incomes and wellbeing.” Moreover, the inquiry “should only consider the implications of a changing limits to inform consideration of different economic pathways along which the NZ economy could grow and develop.”

We posed an alternative view, quoting further from the TOR, that “the focus should be on practical applications relevant to NZ's circumstances”, and that it “... should have a long term focus ....”.

Nov. 2017. Productivity Commission Issues Paper: Wise Response submission: <http://bit.ly/2zmQmBv>

The Commissions subsequent Draft Report did not respond to this issue but recommended hasty reductions in GHG emissions through three key drivers: replacing fossil fuels with electricity, reducing the emission intensity of agriculture and shifting land use from pasture to forestry and horticulture. Another round of submissions was requested and the Society responded with another comprehensive 51 page tome in June 2018. Headings were as shown below:

- 1 *Introduction and Key Concerns*
  - 2 *Recommendations*
  - 3 *Exclusions in Terms of Reference / Purpose of the Commission*
  - 4 *Review of Emission Market Mechanisms*
  - 5 *Short Window of Opportunity to Act*
  - 6 *Air and Sea Travel*
  - 7 *Landuse and Forestry*
  - 8 *Implications of a deterioration of the international economy and engaging with all NZ citizens*
  - 9 *Pressure from population movements*
  - 10 *Recognition that both successful adaptation and mitigation are necessary for a viable low carbon economy*
  - 11 *Excessive reliance on economic pricing tools and technological fixes*
  - 12 *Investment*
  - 13 *Laws and Institutions are not fit for purpose*
  - 14 *Need for profound shifts in values and culture*
- Appendices*
- 1 *Tradable Energy Quotas in brief*
  - 2 *Rare Earths*
  - 3 *Responsible Investment*
  - 4 *Duties of Legal Entities*
  - 5 *Predicting Consequences of Neoliberal free market economics*

The core assertion in that second submission was:

1. *Because a "no growth" scenario would literally reconfigure the "decision pace" for a transition to a low carbon economy, it is extremely important that this possibility be included in any analysis. Indeed, based on the array of indicators, it is the Society's view that such an eventuality is inevitable and the sooner we start planning for this the better.*
2. *The Society has no quarrel (indeed, would be delighted!) if the Commission can convincingly rebut our assertion that material limits, such as those expressed as diminishing returns to energy, need to be part of this enquiry, but we do have a problem if the proposition is simply ignored.*

June, 2018. Productivity Commission Draft Report: Wise Response submission:  
<http://bit.ly/2l9s318>

We acknowledged 16 contributors in our submission which was one of some 400 submissions in this second round. The Commission's final report is due late August.

## **5. Tax Working Group:**

The Government established the Tax Working Group (the Group) in March, 2018, "to examine further improvements to the structure, fairness, and balance of the tax system. The Group has also been directed to apply a particular focus on the future to its work, with a view to exploring the major challenges, risks, and opportunities facing the tax system over the next decade and beyond."

The paper called for public submissions on a range of issues that the Group considered important to its work. Public submissions were to inform the Group's

consideration of proposals for improving the tax system. The Group is to provide an interim report to the Ministers of Finance and Revenue in September 2018. There will be further opportunities for public comment following the publication of this interim report. In the spirit of openness and inclusion, the Group indicated they would like to encourage all New Zealanders to share their own views about what is working – and what is not – in the current tax system. A 57 page “Background Paper was produced by the Group.

The Group is chaired by Sir Michael Cullen and, among its membership is Dr Marjan Van Den Belt, formerly Assistant Vice Chancellor (Sustainability), Victoria University of Wellington.

The Society made a comprehensive 26-page submission under the headings: Summary and List of Recommendations; Who Is Wise Response; Role of Taxation; Taxation Principles; Conceptual Foci and Lenses; Earth’s Stresses and Constraints; End of Exponential Growth; Constraints of Climate Change Emissions; Applying the Principles; Recommended and General Policy Priorities; Appendices.

The Wise Response submission is available here:

[Wise Response Submission Tax Working Group-20300418.pdf](#)

## **6. Paris UN re-Negotiations - NZ Priorities:**

In April 2018 the Society submitted recommendations for the review negotiations in relation to NZ’s INDCs by responding to the 3 questions posed:

1. What outcomes should NZ prioritise in the 2018 International negotiations on the Paris Agreement guidelines?
2. Are there issues we should consider less important than others in this year’s negotiations?
3. What other information or ideas would you like New Zealand officials to consider before this year’s negotiations?

A key request in our submission was:

*Given the now extreme risk posed by climate change and its irreversibility, NZ’s INDC must align with the Precautionary Principle which would require that:*

- a. GHG emissions be reduced to the extent, and at a pace, necessary to protect against the threats of climate change that can still be avoided,*
- b. the level of reductions of GHG emissions required to achieve this, must be based on any credible and realistic worst-case scenario, generally now accepted by mainstream climate change experts.*
- c. measures should be adopted without regard to the direct short- and medium-term economic cost, unless that cost is completely disproportionate to the reduction in emissions achieved, and the limit goal can be achieved by another means.*
- d. An assessment that takes account of the potential economic and social benefits that can be achieved, deliberately leading the global transition off GHG. The previous INDC consultation document could only see transition to a low carbon economy as a cost.*

## 7. Child Poverty Reduction Bill:

A submission on this Bill was appropriate in relation to the Society's concern for human welfare. I consulted the Child Action Group on the details of the Bill and was encouraged by their assistance with clarification of many of the issues. The Society's submission was supportive of the Government's efforts to reduce poverty in New Zealand, as quickly and effectively as possible, believing that there is no moral justification for people in New Zealand having to live in poverty.

We stated that all New Zealanders should have access to a basic standard of living that should include adequate food, housing, education, welfare and health care, and where appropriate, meaningful employment. The overwhelming majority of international (e.g., Universal Declaration of Human Rights), moral and religious codes state that society has an obligation to provide the social and economic institutions so that people do not have to live in poverty.

We also applauded the various proposals contained in this Bill and agreed that tackling and measuring child poverty is complicated and demanding, but our children are relying on civil society to act and so we strongly supported the Bill. We also endorsed and added our support for the Children's Sector Joint Submission on this Bill and also endorse the detailed submission presented by the Child Poverty Action Group. I also made an oral submission with SKYPE on April 2.

The Wise Response written submission is available here:

[Wise Response Submission-Child Poverty Reduction Bill.doc](#)

## 8. Zero Carbon Bill:

The Government announced its decision to legislate for a net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, ahead of the Ministry for the Environment's release a 61 page Discussion Document, "Our Climate Your Say" in June, 2018. The Minister of Climate Change, Hon James Shaw also announced an interim Climate Change Committee to provide relevant advice pending the establishment of a Climate Change Commission following promulgation of the Bill, next April.

The Minister later conducted a series of public meetings in many centres, including Dunedin, promoting the Bill. The Dunedin meeting attracted a capacity crowd and was attended by several Society members and supporters.

Appended to the Discussion Document was a series of 16 questions aimed at directing the submissions which were encouraged. The Society provided a comprehensive 31-page submission on the Bill, contributed by 20 members/supporters, who are named in the Submission. The most challenging question (No 2) asked whether the preference was for:

- a) **net zero carbon dioxide:** Reducing net carbon dioxide emissions to zero by 2050
- b) **net zero long-lived gases and stabilised short-lived gases:** Long-lived gases to net zero by 2050, while also stabilising short-lived gases
- c) **net zero emissions:** Net zero emissions across all greenhouse gases by 2050.

After much consultation and deliberation the Society was firm and unanimous in its recommendation of Option c.

Comments on the proposed Climate Change Commission, including the areas of expertise it should contain were also sought.

The Society produced a comprehensive 31-page submission, in which it listed 20 “main contributors”, including some non-members.

The Minister reported that some 14,746 submissions had been received by closing time, showing very encouraging interest in this important exercise.

Our Wise Response submission is available here:

[Wise Response Submission-Zero Carbon Bill July 20 2018-Final.pdf](#)

The Discussion Document asked what range of expertise was required by the Climate Change Commissioners. Wise Response supported the proposed expertise but suggested several additional areas in the submission, including biophysical or ecological economics.

But we followed this up with more explicit recommendations directly to Climate Change Minister, Hon James Shaw, with a list of 16 nominees for up to 15 positions on Commission. In addition to the eight types of expertise listed in the Document, we added a further five categories:

- Public health and social and organisational change,
- Energy and transitional engineering,
- governance and public policy approaches,
- Integrated systems thinking and modelling, and
- Ethical investment and corporate social responsibility.

We recommended that the scope of the Commission be broadened from that outlined in the Document, since we considered climate change of itself is but a symptom of overly dependent lifestyles and that the real climate challenge is the use and management of fossil carbon as a source of energy. We argued that the Commission is therefore more likely to deliver effectively if it includes social and psychological expertise to both characterise current motives and to determine how the necessary behavioural changes might be achieved across society.

## 9. Public meetings:

The Society organised two public meetings during the year. The first in late January, entitled "**Climate Change Issues: From Bonn COP23 and Beyond**", was addressed jointly by the Hon James Shaw, Minister of Climate Change and Mr Dave Cull, President of Local Government New Zealand and also Mayor of Dunedin City. There was also a short address by the Hon Clare Curran, Dunedin South MP.

The purpose of this meeting is to consider both the Central and Local Government's roles and proposals, to address the extremely important subject of Climate Change that is now receiving increasing attention from the media as concern heightens, particularly among climate scientists, for its implications, regionally, nationally and globally. We had four other co-sponsors of this meeting (Forest & Bird Protection Society, Fish & Game Council, Sustainable Dunedin City, Blueskin Resilient

Communities Trust and Our Climate Declaration), which was attended by some 400 public in the University's St David Theatre.

The meeting was filmed by Ms Sue Maturin and is available at:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RfQ\\_ytq3t4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RfQ_ytq3t4)

The second meeting, on July 14, was organised by Deputy Chair Liz Slooten, as a contribution to the **University's International Science Festival** and involved six speakers as follows: Prof. James Renwick, Victoria University of Wellington on: '**Global warming and climate disruption**'; Prof Bob Lloyd: Rec. retired Assoc Prof of Physics, University of Otago on: '**Energy, transport and waste issues**'; Dr Alex MacMillan: Senior Lecturer in Environmental Health, University of Otago, on: '**Health issues**'; Dr Susan Walker: Ecologist, Biodiversity & Conservation: Landcare Research, Dunedin on: 'Biodiversity and ecosystem issues'; Assoc. Professor Lisa Ellis, Philosophy & Politics, University of Otago, on: '**Social issues**'; and Assoc. Professor Janet Stephenson, Director Centre for Sustainability, University of Otago, on: '**Overview**'. There were some 200 in attendance, all of whom I, as facilitator, encouraged to submit on the Zero Carbon Bill. This meeting was also videoed by Ms Sue Maturin and should be available in the near future.

The cause was further enhanced with a double-page feature article in the ODT Supplement, 'The Mix', the same day, by Tom McKinlay, under the heading: "**Calls for action**", which also promoted the meeting and featured the Society and provided a link to its draft submission:

- Main story: <https://www.odt.co.nz/lifestyle/magazine/calls-action>
- Wise Response's "all gases" position, urgent action and link to our draft submission: <https://www.odt.co.nz/lifestyle/magazine/making-submission>
- An argument for "fee and dividend" over an ETS  
<https://www.odt.co.nz/lifestyle/magazine/putting-price-our-emissions>

## **10. Submission on Proposed Auckland Airport Extension:**

At the request of the International Climate-safe Travel Institute (ICSTI) of Auckland the Society prepared a brief, 4-page submission, endorsing that of the Institute, in opposition to the proposed Airport's Northern Runway. The submission was based on aspects of the predicted environmental impact (contribution to global warming and climate disruption through increased greenhouse gas emissions). It also cited the lack of consideration for the associated reduction in future demand for air travel, for the reasons stated in its own submission. Professor James Higham assisted with this submission. It was generally consistent with the predictions of the Sustainability Advisory Panel, recently established by Air New Zealand.

The submission can be viewed at:

[Wise Response Submission-Auckland Airport Runway Ext2018.pdf](#)

## **11. Student Internships:**

Our Student Intern for 2017, Ms Hannah Milner, completed her role with a final report on 2 September 2017. Her main role was circulating and gaining support for the Society's Climate Change Coalition Aotearoa (CCCA), ahead of the General Election on September 16. Hannah assisted with gaining further support for the Coalition from the

60 organisations and 172,180 supporters we reported at our 16 August meetings at Parliament, to a final tally of 100 organisations representing some 330,000 supporters when her internship concluded. Hannah received an A+ grade for her course; most impressive!

Another of Prof Lisa Ellis's students, Mr Ollie Leuthart, has accepted an Internship with the Society for 2018, and is currently developing a programme in collaboration with Nathan Surendran, Dugald and me. We have identified four "Frames":

- Human-human and human-environment connectedness.
- Promoting conscientious environmental behaviours in a socially just way.
- Recognising limits to growth.
- Reaching beyond using keep cup and reusable grocery bags.

and two "Goals":

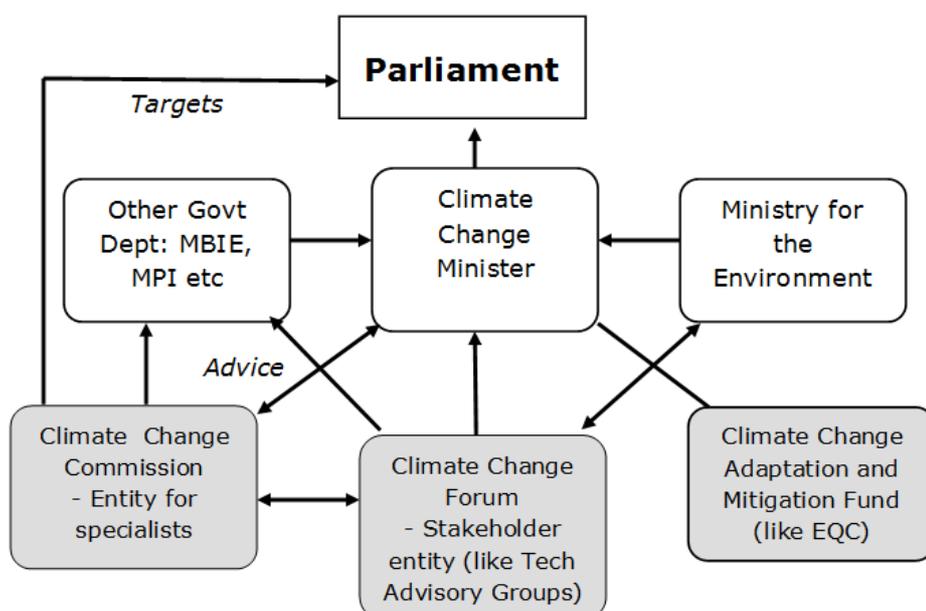
- Lowering social barriers for young adults.
- Capturing individuals on the margin of sustainable behaviour/attitudes.
- 'Make sustainability cool.'

to date, as the basis for Ollie's project.

## 12. Other activities:

**1. ECO AGM, Nelson:** I was invited to contribute to the **ECO AGM** in Nelson, on August 26, 2017, with a presentation on the Society's Climate Change Coalition Aotearoa (CCCA), which had been finalised earlier in the year (see the Figure below from the 2017 Annual Report). This Coalition was received enthusiastically and generally endorsed.

**Concept of main information flows as proposed under CCCA (New institutional entities highlighted)**



**2. Pre-election Meeting:** Wise Response co-sponsored with Sustainable Dunedin City and Forest & Bird Protection Society, a pre-election meeting: “**Climate Change and Environmental Issues**” at Otago Polytechnic on 6 September. This produced some lively discussion and debate.

**3. Hon Michael Woodhouse:** At the request of GenZero, I arranged a meeting, together with John Cocks of Sustainable Dunedin City, with Dunedin List MP and ex-Minister of Immigration, Hon Michael Woodhouse, on December 19, to discuss the proposed Zero Carbon Bill. We emphasised the critical importance of cross-party support for this legislation if it was to be generally accepted, particularly by the business community. This was accepted by the Minister but until the details of the Bill were known, he would not give his assured support. However, we felt the meeting had served its purpose, as did the GenZero organisation when we reported back.

**4. Engineers for Social Responsibility:** Six members of the Society presented a one-hour video-linked power-point aided session on as part of the AGM programme of the Engineers for Social Responsibility on 15 March. Entitled: “**High expectations for the Climate Commission: Will Government’s action plan push us fast enough?**” there were contributions by: Alan Mark. “**Introduction: NZ’s Climate Change Programme**”; Dugald MacTavish: “**Meeting the GHG Target: The Stabilisation Wedge**”; Hugh Campbell: “**The Land Use Sector**”; Bob Lloyd: “**The Transport Sector**”; Janet Stephenson: “**The Industrial and Energy Sectors**”; Nathan Surendran: “**The Waste Management sector**”, and Lisa Ellis: “**Sociological Aspects: The Human Factor.**” Some discussion followed and it was generally agreed by both the contributors and the audience, that the exercise had been well worthwhile. A PDF of the presentations is available here (2MB):

[WR ESR Compiled presentations 2018](#)

**5. "Our City, Our Climate" Workshops:** The Society formally supported, and some members of the Society also participated in **three Workshops on “Our City, Our Climate”**, organised by the Blueskin Resilient Communities Trust (BRCT) and supported by the Deep South Science Challenge and the Dunedin City Council. Aimed at a collective city response to climate change, these were the City Leaders Workshop in the DCC Council Chambers on February 8; the Blueskin Workshop at Waitati on February 9; and the South Dunedin Public Workshop on Climate Change Adaptation. Presentations by leading authorities were made at the national, regional and local levels, followed by relevant discussions, assisted by Auckland Facilitator, David Rees.

**6. DCC Long Term Plan:** I also attended, on April 13, on behalf of the Society, a public wide ranging discussion session on the Dunedin City Council’s 10-year Plan.

**7. The Third Industrial Revolution:** Several members attended an excellent video presentation on March 7, on the University Campus of “**The Third Industrial Revolution**” by **Dr Jeremy Rifkin**, organised by the DCC and the University’s CSAFE.

### **Newsletter and Website:**

Only one

Newsletter was produced during the year; on 6 September, but the Website contains a very comprehensive record of the Society's activities.

### **13. Committee meetings:**

Two committee meetings were held during the year, in the CSAFE Seminar room: 26 June, 2017 and 21 February, 2018. Attendance, as in the past, was generally limited to local members, with a few outsiders on SKYPE, including Jim Salinger tuning in from Israel (where he's visiting at the University of Haifa) but useful ideas were generated in response to the rapidly developing agendas with the new Coalition Government, that were inviting submissions on several important issues (see records above).

I've had valuable support from committee members in various ways. Dugald MacTavish (Secretary) and also Deputy Chair, Prof. Liz Slooten, as well as Rob Lawson (Treasurer), Nathan Surendran (Facebook manager of Invercargill), as well as Prof. Janet Stephenson, (who also provided valuable insight as well as arranging the CSAFE venue for our meetings), Jocelyn Harris (minutes recorder), Mark Jackson (website manager), Lisa Ellis, Bob Lloyd, Philip Temple, Pat Scott, Brian Turner, Donna Watson and Jim Simpson and, as well as Wellington member Peter Barrett and our Student Intern, Hannah Milner, is also greatly appreciated, as is the complimentary use of the University facilities for our occasional public lecture.

Alan F. Mark, FRSNZ, KNZM. Chair. August 28, 2018.