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**Dear Surf Life Saving New Zealand Member,**

I write to you concerned at where our organisation finds itself and am most disturbed by the recent media articles. They are not helping our organisation. So it is with heavy heart I advise that your total Board at its meeting last Saturday resolved to step down at the Annual General Meeting on 24 September so that fresh elections can be held.

I am pleased that we have found a strong leader in Pat Waite who has joined us as our Interim Chief Executive. Pat brings a steady hand on the organisation and in only a few weeks Pat has pulled the finances together and has built a true picture of our financial situation.

He has put in place tight controls and we face the new financial year with confidence and stability with an excellent management team each of whom presented their plans to the Board at Saturday's meeting.

We were delighted at the level of thought and planning that had been committed and your directors came from the meeting with confidence that the management of core programmes and service delivery across of SLSNZ is in good shape.

The next round of Club Chairs meetings start in August and if there is time at these I encourage as many as possible to attend and hear of the plans that Pat and his team have put in place.

Amongst the many issues discussed at the meeting was the Centenary Exhibition and I must correct any misperception that I may have caused by my previous comments. The financial situation we are now dealing with is no reflection on those charged with the responsibility of planning and implementing the various activities including the exhibition itself. Any inference that may have been taken that they caused the financial situation was not intended and I apologise to them and any others who were involved. The reality however is that SLSNZ for whatever reason did not raise sufficient funds last year to support its

activities. We mustn't allow that to happen again.

I want to pay a particular tribute to Marilyn Moffatt and her role in delivering the Centenary programme which gave us pride in Surf Life Saving New Zealand and its accomplishments during the past 12 months. In addition I also want to recognise John O'Connell who was instrumental in securing State's sponsorship and has been providing valuable support to Pat with the financial accounts, in his own time. They not only delivered a significant project but gave us pride in Surf Life Saving New Zealand and its accomplishments. I must also pay tribute to Mark Weatherall who after the CEO left gave his heart and soul in ensuring that gaps were covered. Indeed on his last day with us, I understand he worked until after midnight in completing tasks and lists for Pat and the others to follow up on.

It is with enormous pride and satisfaction that I have been your chairman for the past 7 years. In that time we have led the discussion, introduced Groundswell, attracted significant new sponsors and delivered such great programmes and services. We now have an organisation that is poised for even bigger things as it starts its second century! It has been a privilege to be part of such a fine organisation with wonderful caring people who have willingly given time to serve you as directors.

There is a price that each person who takes on a governance role pays and that is the impact on personal, family and business lives. It is a pity that there has been such negative energy given by a small number of members but that is democracy!. My thanks to those numerous members and clubs that have sent me and my fellow directors their support.

The Board will meet again on 13 August and then before stepping down as your directors will report to members on the past year at the Annual General Meeting on 24 September in Hamilton.

Further advice will come out from the Interim Chief Executive on the election process, where current directors can each independently stand for election, if they choose to, with all other open candidates. Advice will also be given shortly on the Annual Awards lunch which will be held after the AGM.

Wishing everyone a wonderful surf life saving season ahead.

Yours in surf,



Graeme Cullen

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