



President Kristine Johnston

Speech for 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Seroptimist International of Wellington

The Pines - 9<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Thank you, Thelma Luxton, for our special karakia

It is very pleasing to see so many people here today to help us celebrate this wonderful milestone of 80 years old!

Today, we are delighted to welcome our N.Z National President, Joanne from Invercargill. And a warm welcome to our Sisters, Life Members, family and friends who have joined us today!

Seroptimist International of Wellington was the first club of its kind in New Zealand. Our club was formally chartered in Wellington with a rather grand dinner on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1939. The first President was our Founder, Miss Kathleen Moore.

After 80 years, our club members continue to be committed to bring service to communities at local, national and international level, and to advocate with active participation in decision making at all levels of society.

**To this day Seroptimist International of Wellington's aims and objects remain the same:**

Through goodwill, understanding and friendship, Seroptimists strive for:

- Advancement of the status of women
- High ethical standards
- Human rights for all
- Equality, development and peace

'Women Inspiring Action, Transforming Lives' - our Federation by-line sounds very 'lofty' but question any Seroptimist here (or for that matter in the world), and she will give you some great examples of what those words mean to her!

From very early beginnings fundraising for ambulances during WW11, to over the years many since, with educational scholarships and education projects, support for people with disabilities or sickness, assistance in providing solutions for people in need, Pacific Island projects, work in protecting children and women from violence and exploitation, and advocating gender equality, members of the Wellington club have made and continue to make, an outstanding contribution to Seroptimism and to their community.

In 2019, service organisations such as ours that work to empower and support women and girls, are now, more than ever, very relevant in society. They help to provide and promote the social cohesion that is so badly required. 'Women helping women', very often quietly without fanfare.

Lifelong friendships are very important to members of our club. We hold dearly the connections we make through fellowship and our Seroptimist involvement within NZ, Australia and further afield.

Women who are no longer with us, leave a strong legacy that is honoured today and we thank them for their much valued contribution in helping make our club an enduring 80 years old!

We would also like to thank all our supporters, particularly our 'Soroptimisters', family members and friends who enable us to do what we do! A special thank you to Lyn Stewart and her organising team who helped make today such a success! We are truly grateful.

Please all enjoy yourself, catch up with old friends and make a few new ones!

This is a day when we can justifiably feel very proud of what we have achieved as we look forward to an exciting future together!