EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INCORPORATED

MINUTES OF THE 70th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held online, on Tuesday 22 September 2026 at 7:00pm

PRESENT: 20 members – 12 online and 8 members present by virtue of electronic votes lodged (Quorum of 15 achieved)

Board: Tess Ahern (Chair), Dave Guruge, Chris Selbie and Ricky Bennett.

Commissioners: John Bartels (Commissioner elect)

Staff: Tracy Tierney (CEO), Catherine Wightman, Bobbi Oliver and Sasha Clarkson

Attendees: David Thorp, Joy Thorp, Philip Haythornthwaite, Marc Piercey, Murray Waring, Carol Buchanan, Paul Kellet

Votes Received by Electronic Means: (*Votes received by electronic means count towards quorum)*
Philippa Tolley, Karanga Marsh, Victoria Dundas, Amy Barrett, Liane Thomson, Luke Piercey, Leota Meredith and Sam Piercey.

Apologies: Glenn Livingstone, Peter Bergin, Pauline Scanlan and Marjo Tenhagen

1. **Welcome**

The Chair, Tess Ahern introduced herself, opened the meeting and welcomed members to the 70th Annual General Meeting. A quorum was confirmed.

Resolved the apologies were accepted.

T Ahern / P Haythornthwaite

2. **Guest Speaker**

The Chair welcomed ENZ Ambassador Angus Mabey, who shared his personal experience of living with epilepsy and discussed:

- His epilepsy diagnosis and treatment journey.
- The impact epilepsy had on his family and support network.
- The challenges associated with driving restrictions.
- His advocacy and awareness activities as an ENZ Ambassador.
- Support received from New Zealand Rugby and the wider rugby community.

Members asked questions regarding transport challenges and responses from the rugby community. The Chair thanked Angus Mabey for his contribution and ongoing support of ENZ.

3. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 69th Annual General Meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes.

Resolved the confirmation of the minutes of the 2025 Annual General Meeting held on 23 September 2025.

T Ahern / R Bennett

4. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Special General Meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes.

Resolved the confirmation of the minutes of the Special General Meeting held on 25 November 2025

T Ahern / M Waring

5. Annual Report

The Chair presented and tabled the Annual Report for 2025/26 which was taken as read.

The Chair highlighted:

- Successful re-registration under the Incorporated Societies Act
- Increased engagement with members
- Appointment of Ambassador Angus Mabey
- Progress implementing the Strategic Plan
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The CEO, Tracy Tierney, presented the Management Report and noted:

- The commitment and passion of staff, Board and Members
- Growth in advocacy and awareness activities
- Progress towards addressing audit qualification issues
- Positive results from the inaugural annual client survey
- A financial deficit of $65,000, reflecting lower-than-expected revenue and planned investment in organisational capability
- Strong reserves and investments supporting ongoing service delivery
- Introduction of Member Coffee Catch-Ups
- Recent advocacy work regarding access to medicines. Thanked David and Joy Thorpe for their support at the Wellington Parliamentary event.

Members invited to comment or ask any questions on the annual report.

David Thorpe acknowledged the importance of advocacy and welcomed ENZ's work on medicine access and neurology workforce issues. He also commented on the development of new service performance measures and the need for trend data and stronger performance reporting to show the impact of our work.

The CEO responded that the new Statement of Service Performance framework would provide more meaningful measures over time, with future trend reporting available as additional years of data are collected. Impact difficult to measure, the client survey is the first step.

A question was received from Murray Waring regarding opportunities for collaboration

between ENZ and the Cerebral Palsy Society for members living with both conditions. The Chair indicated this would be followed up outside the meeting.

Resolved that the Epilepsy New Zealand Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2026 be received.

T Ahern / P Haythornthwaite

6. Election of Board Members

The Chair advised that three vacancies existed and three valid nominations had been received. Accordingly, the following members were declared elected unopposed:

- Ricky Bennett
- Chris Selbie
- Dave Guruge

Each was elected for a further term on the Board.

Resolved that Ricky Bennett, Chris Selbie and Dave Guruge were elected to the Board.

7. Election of Commissioners

The Chair advised that two Commissioner vacancies existed following the retirement of two Commissioners.

One valid nomination had been received from John Bartels. The Board considered his nomination, is satisfied that he has the appropriate competencies for the role and supports his election. As there was only one candidate for the two available positions, this was an uncontested election and no comparative ballot was required. John Bartels addressed the meeting and outlined his background and interest in supporting ENZ.

Resolved by the voting members participating in the meeting that John Bartels be confirmed as Commissioner for a two-year term commencing at the conclusion of the meeting.

T Ahern / R Bennett

The Board advised it would undertake a further recruitment process to fill the remaining Commissioner vacancy.

8. Confirmation of Auditors

Resolved that Silks Audit Chartered Accountants be appointed as the auditor for Epilepsy Association of New Zealand Incorporated for the financial year ending 31 March 2027.

T Ahern / D Guruge

9. General Business

Philip Haythornthwaite raised concerns regarding medication brand changes and supply arrangements affecting access to Neurontin (gabapentin). He noted concerns expressed by some consumers regarding changes to alternative brands and their perceived effectiveness.

The CEO advised that consumer experiences such as these had informed discussions within her role on Pharmac's consumer advisory mechanisms and emphasised the importance of sharing lived experiences to support advocacy efforts.

10. Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked members for attending, welcomed John Bartels to his new Commissioner role, congratulated the re-elected Board members, and acknowledged the leadership and contribution of Tracy Tierney during the year.

There being no further business, the meeting closed.

Meeting closed at approximately 7.45 pm.

Signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.



Signed as Confirmed Minutes
Glenn Livingstone
President

For and on behalf of the Board:
Glenn Livingstone, President