

## The Freemasons Charity



### Overall Press Release of The Freemasons Charity

Issued: 28 Oct 2008

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Media Release  
28 October 2008

The Freemasons Charity is the benevolent arm of Freemasonry assisting those in our community who are in need.

Whether it be the needs of the very young; assistance provided to medical research; aid supplied to our elderly; recognition given to those who excel in their chosen areas of learning, arts, and culture; or assistance provided to those seeking knowledge and experience; Freemasonry has for many years continued to play a significant role in all.

Stan Barker, Grand Master Elect of Freemasons New Zealand said "It is almost impossible to cover all areas of activities undertaken by Freemasons. Daily, there are hosts of individual charitable acts and deeds done by our members and their lodges that do not come to general attention."

Further work undertaken at a national level is where it is possible to put some figures around the contributions made by New Zealand Freemasons.

These contributions are made by 'The Freemasons Charity':

1. University scholarships – this sponsorship started as a pilot scheme back in 1978 and came on stream in its current format about 16 years ago. Each year \$250,000 is committed to the programme to reward university scholars and graduates. Over the last 10 years, over \$3 million has been awarded to over 850 recipients.
2. The Freemasons Chair of Gerontology at Auckland University. This project was first started in 1986 in preparation for our centenary in 1990, and was established to focus on the ageing process, and the problems associated with the elderly. It has produced world class results, and is seen internationally as a leader in its field attracting the very best of researchers – the latest, Professor Martin Connolly, being recruited from the UK.

From the inception of the Chair over \$2.66 million has been committed to this important area of medical research on issues affecting the elderly.

3. However, medical research at Auckland University is broader than simply the Chair of Gerontology. Freemasons also support research into neuro-degenerative diseases such as Alzheimers, Parkinsons and Huntingtons. This is now reaching an exciting phase with years of painstaking research culminating to offer a glimmer of hope to those suffering from these diseases. Freemasons' contribution to this research is just on \$1m over the past five years.

4. With the University of Otago, Freemasons support a number of Paediatrics Fellowships providing research into the needs of children in their first couple of years of life. In the 1980's, this was an area of research that Freemasons saw as important but under-resourced. Accordingly the Freemasons Paediatrics Fellowship was started in 1988 and in subsequent years has seen over a million dollars paid to support childhood research and development.

5. In 2005 a Travelling Fellowship was constituted with the University of Auckland to support trans-Tasman scientific research and collaboration. It enables the development of trans-Tasman synergies by giving post-doctoral students access to colleagues and facilities in Australia, but requires that they return to this country to share their expertise. They increase their knowledge and experience and, on returning, our community benefits from their expertise. Freemasons have contributed \$250,000 to this programme.

Not included above is the huge contribution made by many other Masonic trusts, and by members and lodges individually and within their communities.

Stan notes "Freemasons strive to live by the fundamental principles of integrity, goodwill and charity, and we are proud to work quietly within our communities for the benefit of all those less fortunate."

Ends

Information from:    Freemasons New Zealand  
Laurence Milton, Grand Secretary, Phone 04 385 6622 or 021 970 117,

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