



Here Is The Goss



Northland Grey Power Associations' Newsletter

A Note About...

The high-faluting job titles Russell and I are graced with in the "Contacts" text box.

Grey Power Federation NZ Inc is our parent body: all of our Associations comprise the membership of the Federation (i.e. there are only 72 members). The Federation Board consists of a four member executive, elected at large at their AGM, and seven Zone Representatives (one from each Zone elected at Zone Meetings.)

Hence, Russell is our man at the Board Table on our behalf, currently creating a reputation as **Captain Question**, trying to keep them sorted!

I am the lesser of two weevils. I am a Federation Officer but not a Board Member. I chair Zone Meetings and act as a sort of information and advice facilitator between our Associations and the Federation.

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So, what to write:

At the best of times trying to write a Newsletter is a pretty thankless job. If, as happens, life is currently dealing to you in various fashions and you have an advanced case of the glooms it doesn't get any easier.

Currently I am catching up on deferred garden maintenance, waaay behind on my pink-pinny chores (house needs a blitz clean - in fact, blowing it up and starting over could be a good idea) and I'm sick and tired of waking up in a nightmare sweat because I've been dreaming about bloody Grey Power! Car needs a detail, bike ditto, and I gotta remember to stop off at the Yamaha dealer in Port Road (also Whangarei Scott Oiler dealers) and get some new tubing to re-plumb my chain oiler.

All quite ordinary for a disorganised sluggard like me but I've been overwhelmed with the dooms as well by the intentions of the new Government: are they seriously trying to create civil unrest? Oh well, at least we'll have good four lane highways for the riot squads and other emergency vehicles to race around the country, and there will be no unemployment, because half the population will be locked up and the rest of us will be drafted as prison warders. I have no idea who is going to service all the oil exploration vessels, they'll have to make port work into 'seasonal work' to get offshore people in to do that. Honestly, at the moment I'm so stressed I could take up smoking again (after 55 years) but I can't afford enough diesel to get to Northland's one tobacco outlet (or did Jack Tame put that faulty arithmetic to bed?)

By crikey! I'm glad summer is here, even I can't stay crotchety when the weather is warm. Our boys are both living over the ditch (as Muldoon said, raising the average IQ of both countries) but I hope those of you that have family here get to share some good family time with rellies over their holidays, eat too much, drink somewhat less than that, and be happy.

Cheers, *Bruce*

EVENTS

DATE/TIME	ASSOCIATION	EVENT	VENUE
Wed 7 Feb 24, 1100 Hrs	Far North	Public Meeting	Kaitāia RSA
Tue 13 Feb 24, 1000 Hrs	Whangarei	Committee Meeting	Cottage Hall, Kamo Bowling Club, Three Mile Bush Road
Fri 9 Feb 24, 0930 Hrs	Kaipara	Executive Meeting	Wesley Methodist Church, cnr Awakino & Normanby Roads, Dargaville
Fri 16 Feb 24, 1300 Hrs	Kaipara	Public Meeting (more info to follow from Assn)	Wesley Methodist Church, cnr Awakino & Normanby Roads, Dargaville
Tue 5 Mar 24, 1000 Hrs	Whangarei	Committee Meeting	Cottage Hall, Kamo Bowling Club, Three Mile Bush Road
Wed 6 Mar 24 1100 Hrs	Far North	Public Meeting	Kaitāia RSA
Fri 8 Mar 24 0930 Hrs	Kaipara	Executive Meeting	Wesley Methodist Church, cnr Awakino & Normanby Roads, Dargaville
Fri 15 Mar 24 1300 Hrs	Kaipara	Public Meeting (more info to follow from Assn)	Wesley Methodist Church, cnr Awakino & Normanby Roads, Dargaville
Fri 22 Mar 24, 1330 Hrs	Whangarei	Public Meeting (more info to follow from Assn)	Kamo Club, Meldrum St, Te Kamo
Tue 18 Jun to Thu 20 Jun 24	Grey Power Federation NZ Inc	Annual General Meeting	Brentwood Hotel, 16 Kemp Street Kilbirnie Wellington
Fri 19 Jul 24	Whangarei	Annual General Meeting	Kamo Club, Meldrum St, Te Kamo



Won a raffle at a Whangarei Christmas Luncheon before?

If not you want to toddle along next year and try it on for size.

Winners are grinners, and Jan Kini's batphone provided the evidence to prove it.

Death Without Debt

My generation of our whanau became aware of the cost of funerals when we started having to make arrangements after the deaths of older family members, and tragically, some of our children. Given we weren't the greatest savers in the world we wound up actually shopping around Funeral Directors (sounds bizarre, but needs must) to get the best bang for our buck.

Then Consumers' Institute took a look at the industry and a cobbler of mine from a family Funeral Directors business (we'll anonymise him by using his biker handle, Spike) told me how the majority of businesses in New Zealand had been hijacked by foreign owners, mostly Aussie corporates, and that they were more interested in getting profits out of New Zealand, just like Banks and Retirement Villages, rather than providing affordable funerals for families.

And they have really been pushing the idea of pre-paid funerals, which Consumer don't reckon to be the soundest economic sense. They recommend a dedicated savings account, so you (eventually your heirs and dependents) are in control of the money. In my own case I have always held on to a tiny whole of life insurance the Army made me take out before they sent me overseas in the 1960's. Costs me a very few bucks a month, take out today's \$1500 for a direct cremation and there's a big fund for everybody to have a BIG hoolie in celebration of the world being improved by my demise.

Our Zone Representative, Russell Bird, came home from the last Grey Power Federation Board Meeting with some printed material he got from a speaker from Death Without Debt, who was presenting to the meeting. That handout has been scanned and is available: [HERE](#) If you are not connected to the internet perhaps you could ask your Association contacts if they could arrange to print one for you. In desperation, contact the dear old Zone Director.



Death Without Debt also have a very informative web site, <https://www.deathwithoutdebt.org/>

Certainly different families will want different types of funeral, according to their customs and mores, but for those who are prepared to engage in a bit of DIY for the funeral of their friend or relative Death

Without Debt offer options that assist families to avoid much of the 'normal' funeral costs by taking charge of much of the process themselves.



Everyone in New Zealand has the right to an affordable and dignified funeral process

Help us make it right

\$10,000

NZ average funeral bill

versus

\$1,000

Dignified DIY

Kia ora

Official paperwork requirements are derailing D.I.Y. funerals and trapping New Zealanders in the funeral industry's business model.

All that needs to happen is for the Ministry of Health to issue a directive requiring doctors do the paperwork - a task which only takes a couple of minutes.

This could happen right now.

Add your voice to the campaign to end funeral debt

Te Kooti's Last Foray

The extraordinary story of Te Kooti's 1870 abduction of two Whakatōhea communities into the Waioeka Gorge and how Whanganui's pursuit won the day but never the credit.

Author: Crosby, R. D. (Ron D.) author

ISBN: 9781990042348

Publication Information: Auckland :

Oratia Books, 2023. ©2023

I found this book absolutely fascinating. Ron Crosby has changed our knowledge of the pursuit of Te Kooti after his raids on Ōpape and Ōmarumutu, east of Ōpōtiki, on 7 March 1870, and his abduction of 218 members of Whakatōhea hapu to the headwaters of the Waioeka River by Māori kāwanatanga forces from Ngāti Porou and Whanganui.

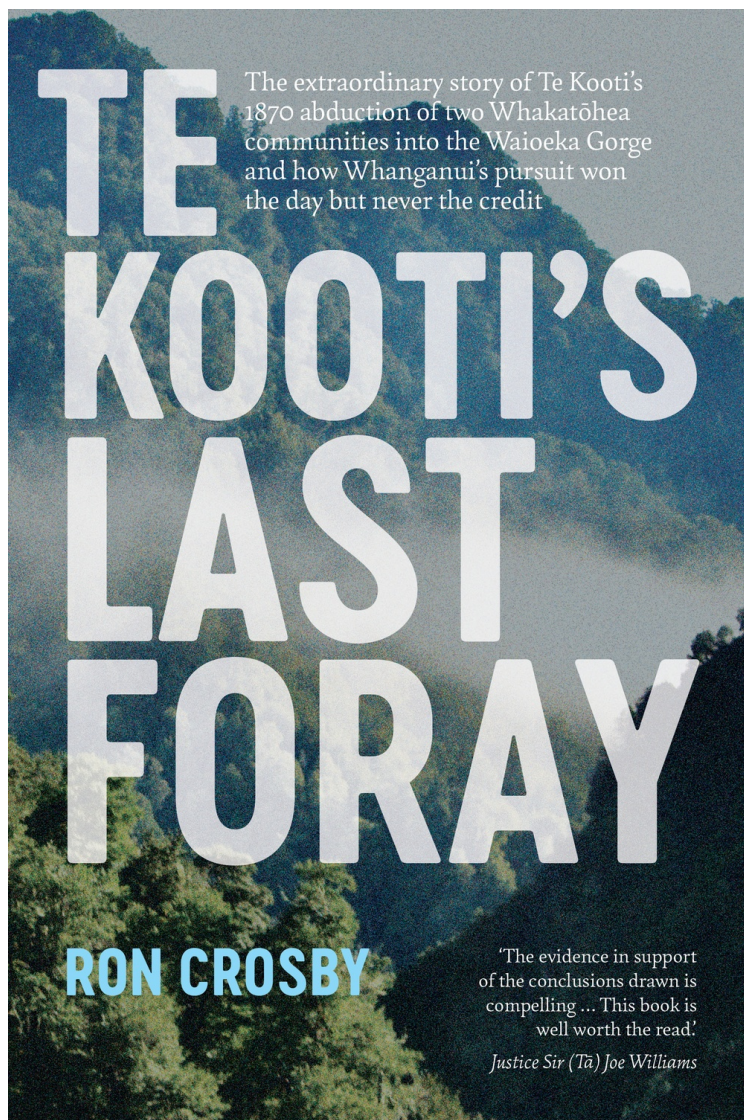
By meticulous research of contemporaneous documents including the diaries of Samuel Austin, a pākehā non-com who operated with Te Kēpa te Rangihiwini's contingent of Whanganui kūpapa, Crosby has shifted much of the credit given for the recovery of the abductees and effective weakening of Te Kooti's strength such that he was no longer a threat to the Bay of Plenty/East Coast areas from the Ngāti Porou force led by Major Ropata Wahawaha to Te Kēpa's Whanganui.

Crosby demonstrates how the self-promoting accounts of the campaign written by Lt Thomas Porter, a pākehā officer in Wahawaha's contingent were somewhat sparing with the truth - he fibbed. And yet Porter's account of the campaign has come to be accepted as historic orthodoxy. To be sure both kūpapa contingents suffered terrible hardship: very poorly equipped, often without rations, unpaid, and covering vast distances over some of the toughest country the North Island has to offer, but it now appears that it was Major Te Kēpa's contingent and their method of operation that claimed the critical successes of the campaign, not Wahawaha's. And it must be noted it was Porter talking up the Ngāti Porou, not Ropata Wahawaha.

I really enjoyed the fact that Crosby recounts his research on the ground to try and track the movements of the parties involved in the bush during this time. His efforts to locate the sites of contact between Te Kooti's followers and kūpapa troops, the refuges and hiding places used by Te Kooti in the Urewera strike me as almost as stunning as those of the original actors in the book.

Crosby was yomping over country my 75 year old legs wouldn't even contemplate while he sought to find over which routes Te Kooti had escaped from those seeking him. Most of it through very, very, steep, bush covered country - all at the youthful age of 73. The guy must be a machine!

I readily admit to being a bit of a history nerd, and this book was particularly interesting both for the gripping narrative of events at a very late stage of the New Zealand Wars, but also a demonstration of scholarly chasing of truth. What I didn't like? How unscrupulous our settler Government was, and how great some of the injustices they dished out, many of which are still not redressed.



Well, it's way past time for:

The Shamrocks

Petr Shamrock, the owner of Shamrock Farms, always wanted the best for his son, Jetr. Jetr got the best education, had the best nutrition at home, was always supported in trying instruments or sports, but the one thing Petr could never really give him was a good reputation. All the kids at school always said he was an arse, and Jetr swore that sometimes even the teachers or coaches would say he was an arse. Petr would confront them, of course, but they'd all deny it, say that Jetr was lying. And to be clear, it wasn't because his name was Jetr. People were accustomed to that name, in that part of the world, so it wasn't out of the ordinary.

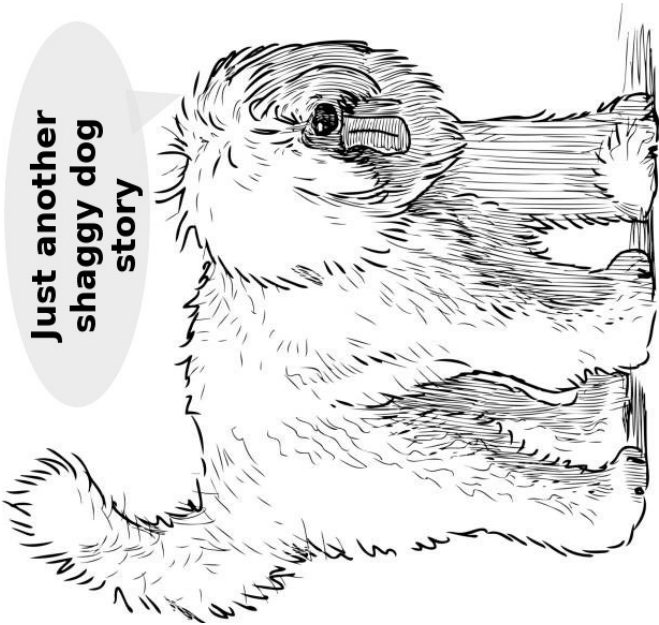
Even as Jetr grew older and left the house, went off to college to study business so he could take over Shamrock Farms in due time, he still felt that stigma around himself. Every holiday, he'd come home to his loving dad, and say, "Petr my father, they're calling me an arse here too, even though I've been so nice to everyone!" And Petr would call the school, but they'd deny it, saying they never said or heard anyone say such things. Eventually, Jetr managed to make friends, though he insisted that even his closest friends called him an arse sometimes, and by and by he got his degree in business management.

The years went on, and Jetr struggled with love, again because, he said, his romantic interests would call him an arse. And Petr tried to give him advice, and Jetr tried every trick and method and approach he could think of, but he always felt so alienated, so unlovable. Aside from the unconditional fatherly love of Petr, of course.

Despite such troubles, the time came when Petr felt himself slowing down, having trouble reading the reports and keeping all the data straight. And so, Jetr went to drink with his friends, to tell them all about the news, and they seemed sincerely sad for Petr's changes, but sincerely happy for Jetr to inherit Shamrock Farms. "But I have to know," he insisted after a few beers, "You're all such good friends of mine, but why do you call me an arse?" They seemed confused, until finally one of them understood.

"We've never called you an arse, Jetr. You're the Dairy Heir."

Just another shaggy dog story



What the Sam Hill is this gyrogadous monstrification of a truck doing in the 'burbs of Kaikohe? Hazard to us cyclists!!

Instant Social Housing

That is erzackery what the truck on the previous page had been delivering before it motored off to the next job: delivering a house built at Dargaville High School to replace the one an offender with severe mental problems torched a couple of years ago - with his Mum and his children inside. Fortunately they all got out OK, and the local Firies got to it before it had done anything more to next door other than melting the PVC guttering.



Taking the strain



Just clearing the trailer



Fully levitated



Hope nobody is in the plastic thunderbox!



Mission Control, we have TOUCHDOWN!

Gotta love this stuff. Between Te Hau Ora O Ngāpuhi and Northland Holdings development on the old RSA carpark site and Kāinga Ora's combination of infill new builds, renovations and relocatable homes there has been a lot of good housing stock added to Kaikohe and other towns across the Far North in the last twelve months.

Sure, there are plenty of people that don't agree with me about the value of

social housing - I'll even allow that some of them would have been bought up in a state house by a single Mum, like John Key (and me), but I firmly believe if you give people a decent roof over their head it improves the value of their life and gives them a greater chance of improving their lot. (John Key did so conspicuously better than Mr Bwucie.)

The driver of the truck that delivered the house said, while I was talking with him, that he loved delivering to Kāinga Ora sites because he knew the house he delivered would give people new opportunities, so I wasn't the only socialist in my street that morning.

There was a blistering letter to the editor of 'The Northern Advocate' on Saturday 2 December in response to an article earlier in the week reporting on a proposal sponsored by Hilary Sumpter, Chief Executive of Kerikeri Retirement Village, to recruit and assist training young people seeking qualifications in skills involved in Elder Care. The writer was obviously angry that this suggestion came from Kerikeri, where there had been a huge pushback against several Kāinga Ora projects earlier in the year by local residents. (I've expressed my disgust over that also.) And, in this case, Kerikeri Retirement Village, which is operated by a local trust, are enlisting partnership with some of the big, commercial, largely overseas owned Villages, because every organisation involved in elder care is short of skilled staff.

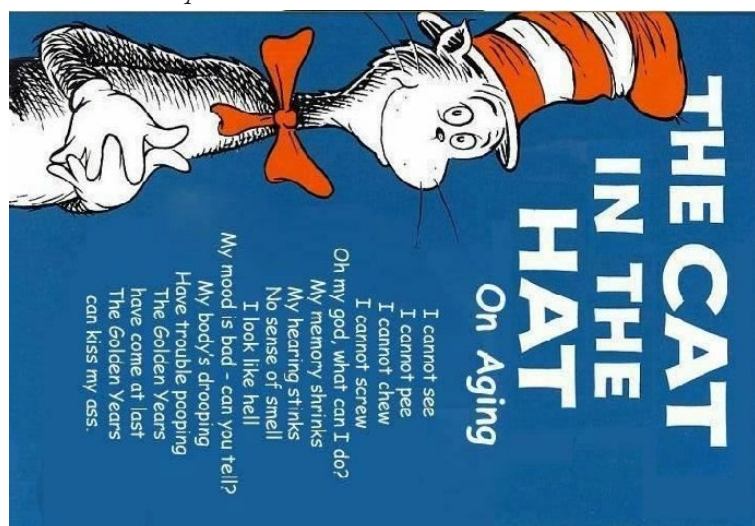
Grey Power Whangarei offered a partial scholarship several years ago to a person studying for a relevant Elder Care qualification, but they had difficulty with people moving away from the sector before finishing their qualification. Plain fact is a very great number of us are going to need assistance in the near future, and it looks right now like there will be no people to provide it. The "traditional" independent Rest Homes have been priced out of business, and vanishingly few of our generation can afford to move from our owned homes or a rental to take up an Occupation Right Agreement with a Retirement Village.

It is quite amazing that the members of the Retirement Villages Association are prepared to even contemplate helping to train care staff. Two years ago I sat through a presentation from their PR wonk about a new Australian based training scheme. It was all about management, accounting, and legal, nothing to do with people beyond vacuuming their assets. He sounded so proud about it: never mind care, look after the money...

So what are the alternatives? Do we rediscover multi-generational living, which Māori, Pasifika and some other more recent immigrant cohorts have not abandoned like European kiwis largely have? Surely that will necessitate more of the type of Social Housing Kāinga Ora are trying to build: different sized dwellings built around community facilities, with access to public transport, schools and healthcare and support services. In other words, a re-invention of the village.

Or are we content to just let our neighbours who have less than us expire in misery?

Getting angry doesn't solve the issue. Getting depressed doesn't really help a lot either, but I do a bit of that because it makes my head hurt to think about how we prepare for the future as a community.



Far North President...

Russell took his phone for a wander through the Te Hiku Sports Hub site in Kaitiāia, and scored a photo of the pool complex under construction.

It is unknown what Health and Safety wallah he had to bribe to get inside the work area, but he did good.

The following is cribbed off the Far North District Council's website:

"Construction is progressing well on Te Hiku Sports Hub in Kaitiāia and is on track to open in time for summer later this year.

The full PVC roof cover is now completed on the aquatic wing. Having passed this key milestone, installation of the internal liners and insulation between the two layers can now begin as the 'closing in' phase approaches. This is when walls and joinery between the steel portal frames are installed, and the facility is made weather tight.

This area will include a kids splash area, hydrotherapy pool, learn to swim pool and eight-lane swimming pool.

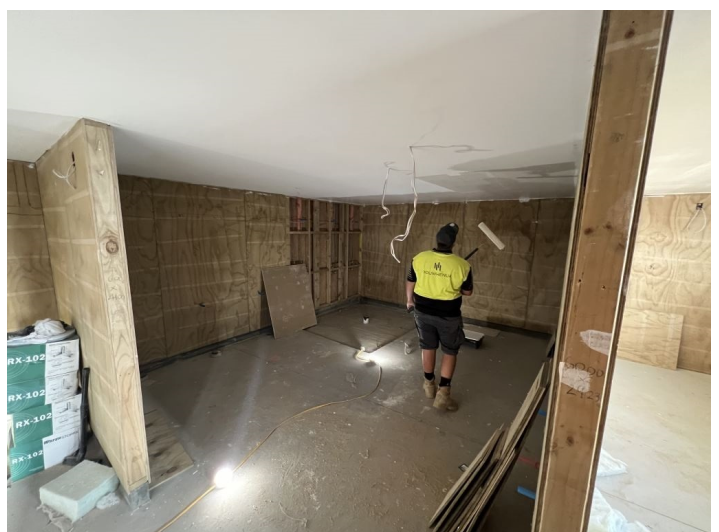
Installation of wall linings and insulation is now underway on the sports wing with all pre-wiring, plumbing, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning completed. This work will now begin in the aquatic wing.

Once completed, Te Hiku Sports Hub Aquatic and Sports Facility will provide sports clubrooms, a gym, and revamped grounds for year-round multi use sports fields. A fitness track around the perimeter and that links to Te Ahu is complete and has already proved very popular with residents. This area also includes outdoor fitness equipment, lighting, and cricket nets. Existing netball courts on the site are also due to be upgraded.

The council is a significant stakeholder in the community-led project, which promises to be transformational for Kaitiāia when completed at the end of the year."



Both these images were pinched from the FNDC website as well.



It is worth mentioning

The Te Hiku Sports Hub on the previous page is built almost straight across the road (SH1) from the Claude Switzer Memorial Trust Rest Home. Residents there have been watching the opening of the Te Hiku Library, Cafe, Museum, Council Office and Cinema just to the north of them, also on the other side of SH1. Now they are watching the walkways, courts, playing fields and the indoors complex just to the South.

And some of the more mobile have asked if they could get a pedestrian crossing outside the Switzer Home. And so the Trust Board have asked the question (unknown at this point if they are dealing with both Waka Kotahi, to whom the road belongs, or FNDC, or both) but their chances are probably slim. The new facilities are going to generate a lot of traffic, much of it turning across the road to get in or out of the complex. The 100 kph sign is only about 100 metres down the road, and when the camera van is parked outside the Switzer Home you can be sure he collects a lot of involuntary donations from people still rolling off speed as they pass him.

As Waka Kotahi are still working at re-opening the Mangamuka Gorge the obvious hazard for pedestrians will only grow worse late next year when it is scheduled to reopen. (Watch this space: Shanes Reti and Jones haven't announced any bold four lane highways that far north, they may have to permanently close Mangamuka to fund tax cuts for the wealthy.)

Meanwhile, Russell and his best mate Sal Fone continue to keep in touch with the Switzer Trust and will surely keep us updated.

Renting in Retirement – a growing challenge for older people.

A growing number of retirees are facing the challenge of renting as they age. Suitable affordable properties are rare, and often only offer short term tenancies resulting in uncertainty and stress.

For those retirees with limited financial resources trying to survive on the single NZ Superannuation weekly payment of \$477.52, rental payments can easily exceed 60% of their income. This leaves very little for energy, food, and other basics. Our older citizens deserve to live in dignity when they can no longer work, and for a growing number this is no longer the case in New Zealand

In *Last Home Renters*, director Vanessa Patea constructs a portrait of her 76-year-old father, a Māori fisherman. It is narrated through a series of intimate but understated interviews with Rodney, who is in a position an increasing number of us will face as the housing crisis continues. Watch Rodney's story on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cpvc7XboCrg>

Better Later Life – He Oranga Kaumātua 2019 to 2034 strategy document, from the Office for Seniors, acknowledges that for some retirees NZS is no longer sufficient to live in dignity in retirement:-

“As our population continues to age and numbers of older people increase, central government will need to spend more on NZ Super and health care costs. We also expect to see increased numbers of financially vulnerable older people needing extra support, including housing support.”

Grey Power advocates strenuously on behalf of retirees struggling to meet their accommodation needs. Grey Power urges Government to increase the Accommodation Supplement asset level, and the maximum payments, which have not increased for 5 years, to provide urgent relief for our seniors in rental accommodation currently unable to live in dignity.

David Marshall

Vice President

Grey Power NZ Federation Inc