



# The Selwyn Foundation:

*Its history and the celebration  
of Founders' Day*

22 May 2020

# An enduring vision

**Sometimes, the initial vision for a civic deed is so strong that it gains size, quality and significance over the decades.**

Such was the vision for Selwyn Village, conceived of by a small group of Aucklanders – clergy, businessmen, local and Central Government and citizens – in the tough, defining years leading up to the mid-1950s.

When Governor General Sir Willoughby Norrie laid the foundation stone of the main block on 22 April 1953, according to the NZ Herald, he said: “If this venture succeeds...it may well become the forerunner of others in all parts of the Dominion.” Little did the 1,300 people watching him that day know that their enthusiasm would indeed build a village, now housing some 500 residents on site (the original plan had been to accommodate 70). The same group of visionaries would also redefine the model for care of older people in New Zealand for generations to come.

## Legacy of the Great Depression

The idea for Selwyn Village was a revolutionary concept in New Zealand at the time. It was envisaged as a village for independent living for the elderly, based around cottages rather than a hostel-type residence, and was born out of the painful legacy of the Great Depression in New Zealand in the 1920s and 30s, followed by the growth and struggle of post WWII. Each event had a profound effect on the country. The man at the coalface of this change was the original Missioner for the Auckland City Mission, the Reverend Jasper Calder. Practical and down-to-earth, Jasper realised from his experiences with the Mission that some of Auckland’s elderly were living in squalid and destitute conditions, and wanted to do something about it.

*Top: The Reverend Jasper Calder*

*Middle & bottom: Examples of squalor post WWII*



When Jasper was due to retire in 1946, Bishop Simkin felt that “Jasper’s Mission” (as the City Mission was dubbed) had not yet served its time and he, therefore, wanted to keep the principles of the Mission and its operations intact. In Hokitika, a young Vicar - Douglas Caswell - heard that the City Missioner’s position would become vacant. He and his family came to Auckland, settling in Sale Street - in the centre of the City, within a stone’s throw of Freeman’s Bay’s slums (many of them occupied by older people). Caswell had a “flair for publicity, skill in managing and enthusing committee-men, the sense of timing and tactic of the lobbyist who has to engineer the support and consent of (as yet) unconvinced officials and Cabinet ministers,” says Russell Stone in his history of the first twenty-five years of Selwyn Village, In the time of Age (1979).

Within fifteen months of arriving, Douglas Caswell had developed a ten year plan for the Mission which included the establishment of youth hostels and the provision of accommodation for old people, in which they could spend the rest of their lives in comfort. It was the concept of elderly care which caught the imagination of the public and the eye of the media.

As Caswell was redefining care for senior citizens, the demographics of New Zealand’s population were rapidly changing.

In 1891, only 2.7% of people were aged 60 years and over, and only 0.75% were aged 70 years and over. However, by 1936, 10.4% of the population were aged over 60 years, and 3.6% over 70. A desperate shortage of housing after servicemen came back from WWII, from post-war immigration and growth in Auckland meant some elderly were under pressure.

### Finding the money

The Government encouraged voluntary and charitable organisations to provide social solutions, but the going was hard. Money was tight and an appeal was launched in 1949. Then Douglas Caswell approached Sir Robert Kerridge, the Managing Director of Kerridge Odeon Cinemas throughout New Zealand. Sir Robert gave five thousand pounds, and an enduring relationship between Sir Robert and Selwyn Village was formed. He later funded a documentary entitled “Indictment” which looked at the squalid housing conditions in Auckland at the time, and was shown throughout his cinemas, touching a chord with audiences and helping to raise funds.



**Above:** Reverend Douglas Caswell moving resident into Selwyn Village



**Above:** Freeman Bay Slums  
**Below:** Sir Robert Kerridge



Soon, the Mission was considering sites for development, one of which was a parcel of land in Point Chevalier that was leased as a market garden. Bounded by a swimmable beach, private, yet adjacent to a housing and shopping area, the site immediately appealed. By 1950, although the Mission was still short of funds, a permanent architect had been appointed with a brief to design “an aged people’s settlement” with the majority of residents living in cottages. The Mission began to lobby the Government for funding, using the plans, and in 1952 the then Minister of Health J R Marshall granted £53,575.

Autumn 1952 saw the site bulldozed, but still not enough money in the coffers to meet the rapidly expanding vision for Selwyn Village. The public’s interest was soon fired, supported by stories in the press, and a display in Queen Street of the architect’s model – including cottages. Sir Robert stepped in again when the Queen came to visit in 1953, providing the gross takings of the Royal Command Cinema performance attended by Queen Elizabeth on Boxing Day to Selwyn Village. It was the princely sum of £10,650 and gave Selwyn the impetus needed.

Selwyn Village was finally opened by the Minister of Social Welfare, Hilda Ross, on 22 May 1954 before a crowd of 2,000 people.



*Queen Elizabeth II on her 1953-54 tour of New Zealand*



*First residents arriving at Selwyn Village 1954*



**Right:** *Hilda Ross, Minister of Social Welfare 1954*



## Growth & development

In the ensuing years, the site developed to offer care and accommodation to a greater number of residents. The 1960s heralded the Village's greatest period of building, with the village concept also expanding beyond the Auckland City boundaries to include a site in Whangarei - Selwyn Park.

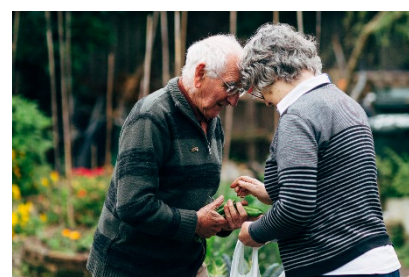
In 1966, due to the size and complexity of the Selwyn operation, it was agreed that a reorganisation of all related activities and responsibilities should be undertaken. Therefore, on 1 January 1967, an organisation separate from the Auckland City Mission was incorporated under the Charitable Trusts Act of 1957 – to be known as 'The Selwyn Foundation', with a sum of approximately \$2million being settled on Selwyn Village. Thereafter, the Foundation, with Canon Caswell as its first Director, was to control all work concerned with care of the aged (with all other social work to remain in the hands of the continuing Auckland City Mission). The reorganisation of the Foundation's affairs in this way provided the basis for growth in the 1970s.

## Expanding charitable outreach

With the number of people in New Zealand aged 65+ set to increase dramatically in the coming years, the Foundation's charitable mission today is focussed on promoting the welfare of older people in general – beyond the boundaries of Selwyn's traditional village environments – and helping those who are vulnerable or in greatest need. The most challenging social issues facing older people now are the shortage of affordable, good quality housing and the scourge of loneliness, both of which have their own implications for health and wellbeing.

Our commercial ventures and social enterprises raise funds for all our initiatives in charitable outreach.

Initiatives like our 40 Selwyn Centres – drop-in centres held throughout the country to offer friendship, fun, support and advocacy to over 65s. Or our hardship support funds, which provide elderly people with health-related essentials that may be beyond their means. Maybe that's dental, podiatry, or counselling services; or perhaps it's a set of hearing aids, or a new pair of glasses.



**Top:** Selwyn Park  
**Others:** Selwyn Centres



# At the end of the day, it's about care performance, not share performance.

In addition to the work we do around social isolation, loneliness and hardship support, The Selwyn Foundation distributes much of its annual operating surplus to charitable and not-for-profit groups. It goes to organisations working with or for the elderly at both the community and national level, including research projects in gerontology.

Ultimately everything we do, we do to help elderly people in our community who are vulnerable or in need – just as our founders first envisaged.

In 2014, the Foundation began a revitalised programme to redevelop many of our villages and renew our ageing facilities. As part of that wider 10 year Growth Plan to further develop Selwyn's offering to the communities we serve, we have built and continue to develop more independent living accommodation and industry-leading care facilities. Through these contemporary new environments, modernised styles of care and sustainable growth, we will continue to resonate with residents of today and tomorrow, so that we may take forward into the future the mission first envisioned by our founders over sixty years ago.

You won't find The Selwyn Foundation listed on the share market. As a charitable organisation we're here to enrich the lives of older people, reinvesting surpluses back into our charitable outreach rather than distributing profits to shareholders. For over 60 years, kindness and caring have been paramount at Selwyn. We provide residential care and independent retirement living founded on holistic care and clinical excellence.

Outside our villages, we undertake significant charitable activities in the community and lead learning initiatives around ageing. And recently, The Selwyn Foundation was named as Auckland Council's preferred partner for its Housing for Older People portfolio. It's all the result of caring about older people, not just for them.

For more information, please visit [selwyncare.org.nz](http://selwyncare.org.nz)



# Celebration of Founders' Day

Selwyn Village remains to this day an iconic site, well known and held in great affection by the people of Auckland whose family members have lived in the Village community over the years and been cared for in their latter years.

Since marking sixty years of service and operation of the Village back in 2014, each year on 22 May, we continue to observe 'Founders' Day' to honour the courage and foresight of Selwyn's founding fathers in establishing a dedicated service for the welfare of ageing people.

On the same day, we acknowledge and thank all our Life Members, Companions and Friends of Selwyn who have provided visionary leadership and given so generously of their skills, time, and resources and in many other ways to make Selwyn the respected name it is today.

As a token of our gratitude, they are presented with commemorative medals hewn in bronze specially commissioned, with an enduring symbol depicting the Foundation's heritage – the images of Bishop and Sarah Selwyn.



*Bishop and Sarah Selwyn*



*Life member medal hewn of bronze*

“Not only is Bishop Selwyn our namesake, but both Bishop and Sarah Selwyn gave much of their time and resources to aid the impoverished. Sarah was perhaps less recognised at the time, but spent considerable time holding down the fort for the Bishop, whilst he travelled. For this reason, we felt they were the perfect symbols to represent the outstanding service given to the Selwyn community by those who have since followed.

“Along with the image of Bishop and Sarah Selwyn is an inscription: ‘For service of Heart, Hand and Mind’. For this, we must thank Warren Limbrick for his outstanding research. Warren discovered that this was Bishop Selwyn’s mantra used in many of his sermons and speeches over the years. We felt this had special meaning from both the historic perspective and the work of those who have followed in the Bishop’s footsteps serving those in their community.”

*Chair of The Selwyn Foundation Trust Board,  
Kay Hawk (2007 – 2019)*

# For service of Heart, Hand and Mind

## Life Members and Companions

### Honours awarded in 2020

(medals to be received at next year's commemoration service)

- Dr Kay Hawk awarded the honour of Life Member.
- And Lorraine Sobotka and Dr Bart Nuysink awarded the honour of Companion.

### Current Life Members:

- Mrs Sally Naulls, 2015
- Mr Richard Caughey, 2014
- The Reverend Peter Coughlan, 2014
- The Reverend Duncan Macdonald, 2013
- The Right Reverend Richard Randerson, 2013



**Left:** Bishop Ross Bay, Sally Naulls, Chair, The Selwyn Foundation Trust Board, Dr Kay Hawk, 2015



**Mr Richard Caughey**



**Above:** life member and companion medals  
**Bottom right:** The Right Reverend Richard Randerson, The Reverend Duncan Macdonald, Mrs Margaret Dunn and The Reverend Peter Coughlan





# For service of Heart, Hand and Mind

## Current Companions:

- Mrs Monica Huch
- Ms Mary Lehmann
- Archbishop Emeritus Sir David Moxon <sup>KNZM</sup>
- Mr John Avery
- Mrs Katie Borobokas
- Mr Colin Bowring
- The Reverend Stephen Brooker
- Mr John Cameron
- Mr John Cockcroft
- Mrs Lois Cossey
- Mrs Jan Culpan
- Mrs Raewyn Fitzsimons
- Mr Russell Florence
- Mr Jim Frater
- Dr Sue Hancock
- The Very Reverend Geoffrey Hickman
- Miss Dawn Jones
- The Reverend John Marcon
- The Right Reverend John Paterson
- Dr Rod Perkins
- Dr Chris Perkins
- Joanna Pidgeon
- Dr Gillian Reid
- Professor David Richmond
- Dame Diane Robertson
- Professor Russell Stone
- Mr Graeme Stormont
- Mr John Whitehead
- The Reverend Frank Wright
- Mrs Beverley Yakas

## We remember and give thanks for the work of former Life Members and Companions:

- Miss Betty Pyatt MBE
- Mr Ross Gregory
- Mr George Langton
- Mrs Margaret Dunn
- Reverend Canon Ron Bambury
- Miss Phyllis Goode
- Reverend Canon Kenneth R. Small
- Dr N C Baskett
- Canon Douglas Caswell
- Mr C K Harrison
- Sir Bob Kerridge
- Captain Stanley Banyard
- Mr S R English
- Mr Noel Herries
- Mrs Shirley Lees



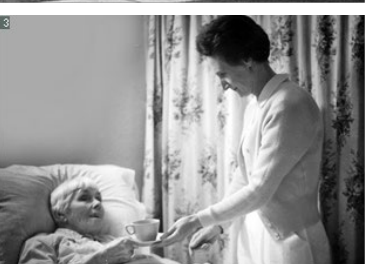
Residents and staff of both Selwyn Village and all of the Foundation's villages continue to celebrate 'Founders' Day', marking long-lasting traditions that preserve the Foundation's history and commemorate those who have shaped and enriched it through the ages, so that they may be remembered long into the future.

Alas, here in 2020 we find ourselves in a new world, one where celebrations are put on hold or celebrated within our own bubbles.

On 22 May 2020, we ask that you take the time to think back to our Founders and to those who came after who have continued to work tirelessly towards the love and care of New Zealand's older people. Next year we hope to bring the Selwyn family together as we have done other years to celebrate this special day and honour new life members and companions and those passed.



# Celebrating 66 years



- 1954 Block A (Kerridge) at Selwyn Village opens offering 22 single bedroom units.
- 1959 Government approval granted to build 11 blocks of cottages to house 38 residents.
- 1967 The Selwyn Foundation is established.  
First residents move into Selwyn Park, Whangarei..
- 1970 Selwyn Oaks opens in Papakura.
- 1983 First 'own-your-own' units completed at Bambury Close.
- 1992 First residents move into Hansen Close.
- 1993 Lavender Cottage Dementia Day Care at Selwyn Village established.
- 2000 First of the Selwyn Centres opens in Papakura.
- 2005 Management contract signed for Gracedale Home and Hospital.  
Selwyn St Andrew's, Cambridge, comes under the care of The Selwyn Foundation.  
Roskill Masonic Village, Hillsborough, purchased and renamed Selwyn Heights.
- 2008 Wilson Carlile, Hamilton, becomes part of The Selwyn Foundation.  
The Selwyn Centre for Ageing and Spirituality established, now known as The Selwyn Institute.

1. The first residents arriving at the Village, 1954.
2. Cottages built to house 38 residents, 1959.
3. Nursing care in the sick-bay, 1961.
4. Consecration of Christ the King Chapel, 1961.
5. A first visit of the mobile post office, 1962
6. Lichfield Towers under construction, 1963.
7. Canon Caswell assists one of the first Lichfield residents to her room, 1965.
8. Governor-General, Sir Arthur Porritt, in the craft room after the opening of the Community Centre, 1972.



# Celebrating 66 years

- 2009      Randerson and McElroy apartments opened at Selwyn Village and Selwyn Heights.
- 2010      Sunningdale Rest Home, Hamilton, becomes part of The Selwyn Foundation.
- 2011      Selwyn Heights opens the Gilbert Apartments and Macdonald Centre
- 2012      Group Office moves to new premises in Grafton.
- 2013      Selwyn House Community Living, Birkenhead, opens.  
  
Gowing and Kay Hawk apartments open at Selwyn Heights and Newman-Reid at Selwyn Village.
- 2014      Selwyn Village celebrates 60 years and Reeves apartments open.
- 2016      Betty Pyatt apartments opens at Selwyn Village and Caughey apartments at Selwyn Heights.
- 2017      Haumaru Housing JV with Auckland Council launches.  
  
Moxon Centre opens at Selwyn St Andrew's. The first manifestation of a new model of care.
- 2018      Selwyn acquires Sprott House in Wellington and opens the Lees and Ivan Ward Centres.
- 2019      Closing of Selwyn Sunningdale Rest Home in Hamilton.



1. Randerson apartment, Selwyn Village, 2009
2. RSA Sunningdale Rest home acquired 2010
3. Selwyn House opens 2013
4. Inaugural Founders Day celebrations, 2014

6. Caughey apartments opening 2016
7. Haumaru Housing Powhiri, 2017
8. Moxon Centre opening, 2017
9. Sprott House welcomed to the Selwyn family

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[www.selwynfoundation.org.nz](http://www.selwynfoundation.org.nz)