

MENZSHED NZ 2023 CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Ian Wilmot

Ian has been the General Manager for the Rescue Helicopter since February 2011. His role involves the challenge of continuing to keep funds coming in for the \$2 million annual running costs of the Rescue Service, as well as overseeing relationships with major stakeholders and ensuring the Trust is compliant with regulatory changes and requirements.

Ian has considerable commercial experience and a personal interest in rescue and ambulance services.



Ian and his family moved from Australia to Hawke's Bay in 1997, when he took up the role of Managing Director of McCain Foods (NZ) Limited. For the last 10 years Ian has operated his own business consultancy, working with a broad cross section of small to medium sized Hawke's Bay businesses.

Ian's role at the Trust is part-time, which allows him to continue to work as a business consultant and mentor in the region.

Ian and his wife Elizabeth live in Havelock North and have one adult daughter and three grandchildren.

John 'Bertie' Cocking

The award-winning playwright John Cocking will tell you that despite his colourful alter ego "Bertie" becoming a staple of the Napier Art Deco Festival over the years, he's quite a private person himself.

Cocking, a former Napier councillor, received a Queen's Service Award as part of the 2022 New Year Honours for his services to theatre and the community.

Cocking is a well-known servant of the Art Deco Festival and Hawke's Bay theatre productions and is perhaps best known as Bertie, who comes out every year for the huge festival.

Cocking also has a long history entertaining and educating children about Napier's history and how it became the art deco city.

"It was a bit of a surprise," he said, of receiving a New Year Honour. "The first thing I thought of when it came through was someone was pulling my leg."

He said he first got involved with the Art Deco Festival in the early 1990s, a few years after it was established, and was a committee member of the Art Deco Trust Festival Events from 1994 to 2016.

He began wearing a costume and turning himself into Bertie for the festival in the early 1990s, which has now become a staple of the massive event.



"When I first did it, I thought I could be a sort of walking tourism officer who knows everything," he said. "People in the street could recognise me and ask me something. In a way I am a very private person but when you put the kit on or costume, as it were, like a lot of things, you change personalities."

Cocking, a retired accountant, has written a play for the festival every year for the past 20 years.

He has won awards for his work including for his 2014 play called Snap Time, which was based on his father's mining experiences in England.

He said one of the highlights of being involved in the Art Deco Festival over the years was establishing the free event in the Napier Sound Shell which had continued each year and was well loved.

WG CDR (Ret'd) Robert (Bob) Henderson



Bob Graduated as an RNZAF pilot in 1975 after completing a BSc in Psychology through the RNZAF University Cadet Scheme. Bob held positions as acting CO 42 Squadron and then Officer Commanding no 104 (VIP) Flight at Woodbourne before being posted to RAF Cranwell for the Aerosystems Course.

On return to New Zealand, he served in Air Staff as Director Air Force Staff Policy and Plans, where his projects included the 1988 Defence Pay Review and the establishment of No 2 Skyhawk Squadron at RAAF Base Nowra. He then held the position of CO of 40 Squadron from 1990, which included being the senior New Zealand Defence officer in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1991, in Gulf War 1. He retired from the Air Force after a 22-year career in 1993.

After leaving the Air Force Bob held a teaching position in the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Auckland for a period of time before being recruited as a simulator instructor at Air New Zealand on the B737. This eventuated in him becoming a B737 and A320 Captain, Flight Instructor and Flight Examiner with the airliner. His final position at Air New Zealand in his 21 -year career was as the A320 Training Manager.

While at Air New Zealand he became involved with health care in New Zealand, working on research projects at the Auckland School of Medicine, in their simulation department. This led to him being appointed, by the Minister of Health, to the board of the Health Quality and Safety Commission, a role he fulfilled for 6 years with the support of Air New Zealand.

In his recreational time Bob is a glider pilot and this pathway led him to becoming the President of the International Gliding body for 8 years, followed by 8 eight years as a board member of the World Air Sports Federation (the FAI) and in 2018 to 2020 he was President of that global body. Bob continues to represent New Zealand at both the world gliding body and the FAI.

In December last year (2022) he was elected as the President of the New Zealand Aviation Federation which represents some 10,000 members, of which more than 6,000 are licensed aviators with over 4,000 registered aircraft.

Bob has been made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for his services to aviation sport; he has been awarded an AFC for his service in Gulf War 1; and, he was awarded the Royal Abdul-Aziz medal for his services to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Gulf War 1.

Bob and his wife, Eileen, now live in the Coromandel and their two adult daughters are in Queenstown and Cairns, Queensland and they have 7 grandchildren.