

SaRC's not about dating, all about the fun and friends

■ Andrew Bonallack

Meet mates, not dates, is the motto of Wellington's on-line friendship networking club, Singles are Really Cool (SaRC).

In early 2010, the *Cook Strait News* interviewed Hilary Combes, who created SaRC to offer something for single people looking for friendship and fun things to do in Wellington.

Ms Combes had arrived from England by herself, but when she found that most social networking sites were more about matchmaking, she decided to create something for finding friends.

A year ago, the membership was sitting at 300; today it is more than twice that, and still growing. She says the organisation is now more established, with people realising it is not a 'singles club'.

"We were getting people who wanted dates," she says.

"Now people know it is about friendships."

People can sign up for different levels of membership, from bronze to gold.

For example, the website describes a 'silver' membership for those on short-term stays to Wellington, who just want to pay for events they attend, rather than full membership.



FRIENDSHIPS: Hilary Combes, the director of Singles are Really Cool, says her website is for friendships and fun events for single people, and not about dating.

Photo: Andrew

Bonallack /
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A full 'gold' membership, for \$50 joining fee and an annual fee of \$130, has organised activities and events at discounted rates, news updates and full yearly calendar of events.

Ms Combes organises the events, which at this time of year are fun and outdoorsy.

"On Sunday I'm organising a scavenger hunt around Petone, we're doing Adrenalin Forest [High-Wire adventure park] in Porirua; on Boxing Day everyone's getting together for a

Teddy Bears Picnic."

Recently, a sub-group, GenS, has been set up for members under 40 who want to run separate activities.

"They do a couple of activities every month, in addition to the main calendar I do."

She says people tell her they are so glad it is just a friendship thing, and not a "date thing".

"It is a change of thinking, but it is something people are interested in.

"It's really worked."

Most members are Wellingtonians, but she has out-of-towners, particularly from Porirua and Kapiti.

You do have to be single to join, which begs the question: what if Ms Coombes hooks up one day?

Would she have to give it up? "Someone once asked me that question," she says.

"I will worry about it when the times comes."

■ More info: www.sarc.co.nz