

REPORT TO NZAP AGM, MARCH 2020

From the President

As we start this new decade in the middle of the longest drought recorded in the top half of the North Island, record-breaking fires in Australia, and a new virus emerging out of China, I am sobered and cautious about the future. Closer to home in NZAP we are also struggling to fill leadership positions, particularly for convenors in some branches and certain positions on Council such as our Public Issues portfolio. One could be forgiven for feeling gloomy.

However, it is also true that the issue of a climate crisis is now taking much more centre stage in the global mind (the founder of Amazon pledging 10 billion dollars of his wealth to make a difference, for example) and we know so much about this new virus because of the hugely coordinated knowledge available to us now. Humans often do well in a crisis, finding depths of cooperation seemingly in short supply elsewhere. And such is true in our own organisation where untold hours of voluntary work continue in all areas of NZAP by people of quiet dedication and good will. As an aside, Council has also been looking at the ways we need to respond to the climate crisis, both in terms of members' needs and how Council operates.

This last year has seen the Critical Review of all NZAP organs continue with new Review Groups formed (for the Te Tiriti and Bicultural Advisory Committee, and the Ethics and Professional Standards Committee), and Council dedicating a section of each meeting to keep addressing the extensive recommendations from its own review.

Our Biannual Conference is about to take place in Wellington as planned and this has involved the usual huge commitment of time and planning from the organising group. I am excited by what they have set up for us and am looking forward to the meeting which has become more precious now that it only occurs every two years. Already the Auckland branch is looking to host the next conference in 2022 and for me this continuity seems to reflect something deeply gratifying about NZAP, our willingness to keep on keeping on with the business, thoughtful and questioning yes, but keeping on.

Perhaps this brings me to the other side of the equation – when we are no longer keeping on. More of us are reaching seniority and beginning to reduce or cease practice. At the same time many new graduates are still emerging from courses. It is a high priority for us on Council to support and encourage student members and to have those more recently entering the profession to take up positions, roles and leadership in NZAP. It is gratifying that we have such people now on Council and I have been struck by their energy and awareness, often challenging some aspects of how we do things.

One of the challenges for all of us at the upcoming AGM is a remit to change the name of NZAP to more accurately reflect the bicultural spirit of our times. My sense is that the membership is divided rather evenly on this matter, with a silent cohort of perhaps older members who would hold to the history of the current name, and a higher proportion of newer (younger) members supporting change. I read recently of Canada's vote to change their flag in 1965, how it polarised the country and seemed an impossibly difficult decision, and how quickly that debate disappeared, how iconic their flag became. I look forward to seeing how we vote. (It is noteworthy that the Canadian flag change discussion had been going on for 40 years prior to the change!)

This is my last Annual Report and I will be stepping down from the Presidency at the AGM. I am tremendously grateful for Lynne Holdem picking up the role and greatly look forward to seeing how she steers the ship. This year we have also had a number of key people leaving roles and big spaces to be filled. Stephanie Forde stepped down as Chair of the Ethics and Professional Standards Committee after many years of completely dedicated service to Council and NZAP. Wiremu Woodard, representing Waka Oranga, has also left Council, again after many years of leadership caring for our bicultural relationship. Both Stephanie and Wiremu could always be counted on to speak up with wisdom and aroha, frequently challenging a drift in the conversation.

At the AGM, Council will be saying farewell to Sue Jones, our Honorary Secretary, after this AGM. Sue combines a particular blend of warm-hearted sensitivity to others with a great clarity of purpose, and her depth of appreciation for how things need to run in our organisation will be very difficult to replace.

These precious and senior members have moved or will be moving on, leaving us with great shoes to fill. We are of course sad to see them go, while also excited for them that space will open in their lives. We who are left (I remain for another year as Past President) have faced their leaving and now gather ourselves together for the coming year. It may seem strange, but it is also an exciting time with new faces at the table, energy, challenge and capability aplenty. Your Council is in good heart.

Tihei mauri ora!

Gerald Maclaurin