

REPORT TO NZAP AGM, JUNE 2024

From the President

This is my last report as your President. I will remain on Council for another year as Past President, supporting Council in any way that is required.

Aspiration for more association

I joined Council in 2017 and have witnessed the changes brought about by the pandemic. The lockdowns affected each of us differently, creating somehow a sense of diss-Association. For many, meeting others in person - and sometimes even online - became very difficult for various reasons. As President, my aspiration for our Association was to create opportunities for us to reconnect in real-time, whether in the same place or online.

That is why welcoming all the conference attendees in Rotorua last May was so heartening; a big thank you to the conference organisers who worked hard to make it happen. We need to keep creating more occasions to gather, think, discuss, and feel in the same space.

This year has seen the emergence of an online endeavour: Mind Fields; Thinking Spaces. My hope is that this initiative continues and evolves. Mind Fields is a series of online monthly meetings where our members can connect with colleagues from around the country. It has an open agenda, allowing members to bring any topic relevant to them. Sometimes, we may have someone presenting briefly, giving us a starting point to explore together. Other times, topics will be explored as they arise in the group. Members can join each month, forming a new group at each encounter, just like with any regional Branch meeting.

An annual celebration of Psychotherapy Day is also taking shape. Each year, we have an online presentation – so far Patrick Casement and Prof. Desa Markovic have been our guests – and we gather in each region to attend the presentation. This event is subsidized by Council and regional branches to promote in-person gathering, psychotherapy, and collegiality.

Reflections on Council

We are an organization that functions thanks to the voluntary work of its members. The complexities of our current times require many hands to attend to all aspects of our Association: the journal, the newsletter, the website, ethics, public issues, our bicultural relationship, ACC, finances, pastoral care – to name just a few. An organization run on a voluntary basis has both advantages and disadvantages, as shown in the findings presented in the Council Review 2019 document (the full document can be found here: [Council Review 2019](#)).

Among the advantages, we have a group of fully committed members who work hard to make things happen. While this is gratifying, it comes at a cost. The extra hours of work sometimes limit what members can offer. Among other recommendations, the Council Review 2019 includes: ‘That Council consider some form of payment or honorarium to Council members.’ Interestingly, this comment was echoed by several members at the latest Council-membership conversation held at the NZAP Conference 2024 in Rotorua. I believe it is time for our Association to consider some form of honorarium for Council members. I

know this will require various considerations, including modifications to our Constitution, but it may be a more realistic way forward given our current financial realities.

Most importantly: Gracias

My journey has been marked by personal and professional challenges. I am deeply grateful to Council for their support and aroha throughout this past year. The work of the President requires a collective effort, and I am thankful to have had an intelligent, thoughtful, and supportive team around the table.

I thank all and each of the members of our Council for their care, their hard work, their patience and their great heart.

Gracias de todo corazón.

Gabriela Mercado

NZAP President