

Professional Historians' Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa (PHANZA)

President's report for 2015-16

Tēnā koutou e hoa mā. Anei ōku whakaaro e pā ana ki te tau kua pāhure ake nei.

It is my task as President to report on the activities of the PHANZA committee over the past year. But I want to start by recognising that PHANZA is not the committee: PHANZA is all of us, the members of the association.

PHANZA has a wonderfully diverse membership. Our members work in all areas of public history, including heritage, Treaty claims, museums, central and local government, commissioned histories, and more. We have members based all over the country. Some have many years of experience, others are recent graduates.

Over the past year, I have been part of PHANZA's membership sub-committee. It has been very pleasing to know not only that professional historians continue to see value in joining PHANZA but also that our new members bring a wide range of backgrounds and interests to the association.

The largest concentration of PHANZA members is in the Wellington region, and the committee is very aware of the danger of becoming Wellington-centric. Having committee members from other parts of the country helps to guard against this danger, so I am very glad that over the past year we have had on the committee two members from Auckland, one from Palmerston North, one from Christchurch, and one who divides his time between Wellington and Nelson, in addition to five Wellington-based members. The committee is keen to publicise events around the country through the website, Facebook page and *Phanzine*, and we encourage members to organise local get-togethers as Auckland members have done.

This issue of potential Wellington-centricity is also relevant to one of the committee's major activities this year, the review of PHANZA's constitution. I am very pleased that we have been able to present a set of proposed constitutional amendments for consideration by members at the Annual General Meeting. I would like to thank the previous President, Bronwyn Dalley; the 2015-16 committee; and those members who made submissions on the proposed changes, for their contributions to the review.

I believe the proposed amendments, if approved, will help to help to make the constitution clearer and easier to work with. I think the proposals also strike a reasonable balance, at least for the time being, between workability and providing greater scope for voting by members who are unable to attend PHANZA's general meetings (such members being, for the most part, those who live outside the Wellington region).

Another of the committee's major achievements over the past year has been the redevelopment of PHANZA's website. This has been completed in time for the AGM, and I hope members agree that the new website looks great and is easy to use. One major step forward is that all issues of *Phanzine* back to 1995 are now on the website, with a description of the contents of each one, and are all fully searchable. I would like to thank Karen Astwood and Marguerite Hill for leading the work on

redeveloping the website, Eileen Barrett-Whitehead for scanning old issues of *Phanzine*, committee members and others who provided website content, and David Green for editing that content.

The committee has also continued its advocacy role on behalf of members. Over the past year we have:

- made a submission on the draft Incorporated Societies Bill
- commented on draft records disposal schedules from Veterans Affairs and the Police
- participated in a National Library stakeholder interview
- met with Archives New Zealand to discuss issues of concern, with a particular focus on retention and disposal of records.

The proposed Incorporated Societies Bill, if it goes ahead, will mean we will need to make further changes to our constitution down the track, but there will be a long lead-in time in which to make such changes.

Another important development during the past year was that PHANZA's own historic hard-copy records were deposited with the Alexander Turnbull Library. In time, we may look to deposit our electronic records there as well.

I would like to conclude by saying a big thank you to the committee, each of whom has worked hard in support of PHANZA and its members over the past year. They deserve particular thanks as they soldiered on when their President scarpered off overseas! Karen Astwood continues to be a model of organisation and immaculate minute-keeping as Secretary. Eileen Barrett-Whitehead has done a sterling job in the unglamorous but all-important role of Treasurer. Margaret Pointer kindly agreed to edit the December 2015 issue of *Phanzine* when I moved from editorship to Presidency; then Margaret Tennant and Marguerite Hill took on the editorship in 2016, and are doing a fine job. Lucy Mackintosh, our newest committee member, has taken over from Marguerite Hill as PHANZA's representative on the New Zealand Historical Association Council.

Imelda Bargas agreed to be co-opted on to the committee when I went overseas, in order to maintain numbers and the link with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. Imelda, who has already put in a number of years on the committee and as President, is the only current committee member (apart from me) not standing for election at this AGM. I would like to thank her very much for stepping into the breach and once again making a great contribution to the committee.

As for me, I am stepping down as President because I will be living in Scotland for most of the coming year, but I know that I leave PHANZA in good hands and in good heart. Very best wishes to all PHANZA members for the year to come. Keep researching, keep writing, and keep advocating for the importance of history!

Ewan Morris
PHANZA President
22 September 2016