

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

President's Report, 2021-22 Year

Although we have had another Covid-disrupted year and endured again the inevitable constraints on our activities, PHANZA has still accomplished a great deal. Again, this is the result of some hard work by the committee and the executive assistant.

We welcomed new committee member Julia Bradshaw, who with Danielle Campbell, gives us two members from the mainland. We also farewelled Peter Cooke, who served the committee with distinction for four years. We thank him very much for his work. The committee co-opted Wellington-based historian Reuben Daubé, who is working in the cultural heritage team for the Wellington City Council. The committee has had eight members most of the year, one short of the maximum of nine.

Our first executive assistant, Ivan Wilby, departed just after last year's AGM and we welcomed Libby Bowyer, who is writing a Phd thesis at Victoria University. Libby has picked up where Ivan left off and significantly expanded the role. We are grateful for her hard work and attention to detail. She has further reduced the workload on the president and secretary and is in the process of picking up some of the treasurer's tasks.

We once again thank Sandra Gorter, our treasurer, who maintains her command of the role of treasurer. Much is changing in this space, with new reporting requirements coming for incorporated societies and PHANZA hoping to be able to reduce our commitments in this area. We are, as Sandra explains in her report, moving to a Xero accounting package to further reduce the strain on the treasurer. We are very thankful for Sandra's dedication and attention to detail.

Monica Webb took over the secretary's role. This is a much different role from what it used be as a result of our decision to hire an executive assistant. Nevertheless, Monica has taken a keen interest in a wide range of our work and helped Sandra with her brief, particularly the shift to Xero.

Fiona McKergow has been very busy, with her role as editor of both *Phanzine* and the *New Zealand Journal of Public History*, which PHANZA took over last year from Waikato University. This has put a significant burden on Fiona and we are fortunate that someone with her contacts and breadth of interests is able to give these roles the attention they deserve. We have had very positive feedback on all three issues of *Phanzine*, which, freed from the shackles of 12 printed pages, continues to develop as a publication. We are designing a logo for the *NZJPH* and look forward to its first publication under PHANZA later this year.

Danielle Campbell continues her great work on social media. It is reassuring that we have a presence on a variety of platforms. Danielle also does a fine job in promoting our new members.

We continue to offer the contestable member fund, which could still be made more use of. I note that we are also able to fund conference fees as an alternative to travel. My message to members is, don't be shy in asking for assistance for local or international conferences or to undertake research.

Our new website went live just before last year's AGM and it has been functioning very well. Some members have indicated that they have had issues updating their profiles. Please let us know if you are having issues with this. And on the subject of profiles, we still need many more members to put up their profiles, particularly those who work free-lance. This will give the general public the opportunity to find a relevant practitioner or an expert they can ask for assistance from. It also demonstrates a level of engagement by members in their organisation.

Thank you too, to Jamie Jacobs and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga for providing a meeting room for Wellington-based members (when we met in person) and for organising the Zoom meetings. We don't know if and when we will return to in-person meetings but having everyone on-line is an equal opportunity experience and helps keep the committee running.

We were very pleased to award life membership to Dame Claudia Orange on 8 December 2021 for her work on the Treaty of Waitangi, and for her extraordinarily long and varied career in public history. This award took place straight after an Extraordinary General Meeting to adopt our new Code of Ethics and Professional Practice. We are grateful to Fiona McKergow and ex-committee member David Green for their long and dedicated work on the Code.

As ever, we made submissions and gave feedback on matters relevant to our members and kept members up-to-date with industry-related news, jobs, exhibitions and the like. We joined our industry partners in closely questioning Archives New Zealand's new finding aids and their opening hours. These are presenting major issues for the country's historians and researchers and Julia Bradshaw and I have both been involved in meetings with Archives. Unfortunately, decisions already made by Archives mean that it may take many years to get a satisfactory outcome. We will continue to take a close interest in this matter.

The business of recruiting members to serve on the PHANZA committee remains a perennial challenge. Several of us on the committee have served long terms and it is long past the time that we need to mix things up more and recruit new blood. If you want to serve on the committee, please let us know.

Finally, thank you to our PHANZA members for your continued support. We hope that 2023 is good to everyone despite the challenging times.

Michael Kelly
President
20 August 2021