

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

President's Report, 2022-23 Year

PHANZA has had another year where we made important changes to the way the organisation functions. It was also our first year largely free of Covid-related restrictions since 2019.

We welcomed new committee member Dan Bartlett, Senior Advisor at the Ministry of Social Development. This means that the committee has had nine members most of the year.

Libby Bowyer, our executive assistant, has somehow managed to complete most of her PhD thesis and look after PHANZA's administration at the same time. This year she has added a large part of the treasurer's role to her responsibilities. In tandem with the shift to Xero, this has streamlined that part of our work so much that it has made the treasurer's position significantly simpler. We remain grateful for her hard work and extraordinary attention to detail. The administrator's role has grown enormously since she came on board, so her shoes will be hard to fill when she leaves next year.

Sandra Gorter, our treasurer, is stepping down at this AGM, but not from the committee. It would be fair to say that Sandra has transformed PHANZA's financial reporting, not only to meet the ever increasing demands of the Companies Office, but also because it took quite a lot of work by her to nail down exactly what we ought to be doing (and what was unnecessary). The move to a Xero accounting package, once all the preliminaries were completed, has been a complete success. Sandra's work as treasurer has given a big boost to PHANZA's viability and we thank her for all she has done.

Monica Webb has continued as secretary, although the role is, as described at last year's AGM, hugely different from what it used to be. Our executive assistant does pretty much all of the job but Monica has kept a watching eye over the role and has been really helpful with our shift to Xero.

Fiona McKergow has again been busy, with her role as editor of both *Phanzine* and the *New Zealand Journal of Public History*. This arrangement has proved overly onerous and Fiona has now given up editing *Phanzine*, with the committee's support. A new arrangement will be put in place. I must thank Reuben Daubé for taking over the editing of the August issue of *Phanzine* and Julia Bradshaw for her editorial assistance to Fiona. Despite the work it entails, all three issues of *Phanzine* were excellent. The same can be said of the *NZJPH*, which Fiona and copy editor David Green have poured so much effort into. The *NZJPH* is an excellent fit for PHANZA and we all hope we can keep it going for as long as possible.

Danielle Campbell is finishing up on the committee and, with that, her wonderful work on social media. We did not really have a presence in these spaces until she took it on, so we are greatly indebted to her. PHANZA will continue to keep her work going next year and beyond.

Thank you to Jamie Jacobs and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga for providing our Zoom meetings. As I alluded earlier, we have met entirely on-line, which has its limitations of course, but it does make meetings equal opportunity experiences and stops a group of people in a room dominating proceedings.

As I did last year in my report, I have to mention our website, which continues to function very well but is sadly lacking completed profiles by members. If you are a free-lance historian, there is really no excuse for not having your profile filled out. I cannot emphasise enough that it is through the profiles that we give the general public the opportunity to find the historian or relevant expert they need. It also demonstrates that our members are engaged with PHANZA. If anyone is still having issues with filling out their profile, please let us know.

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. In that vein, I want to thank Chris Bourke for being our voice on the National Library's advisory group, which was consulted on the preparation of its Removal and Disposal Policy. We thank the National Library for including us in that group. The draft policy has now been completed, although it is not clear when it will be finalised.

We remain engaged with our industry partners in watching Archives New Zealand's progress in sorting out its finding aids and advocating for longer opening hours.

As this is my last AGM as president, I want to thank all the committee members who have supported PHANZA's work since I took the role on in 2017. It hasn't always been easy keeping the organisation ticking along but I am enthused by the progress we have made and the fact that we now have more members than we have ever had. Some of the changes we have made have been transformational. I am grateful to our two in-coming presidents for giving me the opportunity to step away. Renewal is important – for bringing energy and new ideas to the committee.

Finally, thank you to our PHANZA members for your continued support. We hope that next year is a successful one for everyone.

Michael Kelly
President
5 September 2023