

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

## **President's report for 2014–15**

Nga mihi nui ki a koutou

It gives me great pleasure to present the President's Report for the 2014-15 year.

This has been a significant year for PHANZA, marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary since we got in the business of representing the interests of professional historians. We noted this important milestone in several ways. Groups in various centres gathered late in the year to toast the organisation. A very active Auckland group, ably led by Committee member Sandra Gorter, organised a one-day symposium for members and interested folk. Around 30 people attended the event, kindly hosted by the Torpedo Bay Navy Museum.

Perhaps most significantly, PHANZA made its first Life Membership award to a member who has made an outstanding contribution to the history profession. This award was, as the saying goes, a no-brainer: Jock Phillips has been the outstanding public historian in this country for many years, not only in the work he has led and produced, but the opportunities he has created for generations of public historians.

The PHANZA Committee has become increasingly representative of the public history community. This year, its members included historians from government (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Waitangi Tribunal), professional organisations (IPENZ), museums (Canterbury Museum), and freelance historians and heritage consultants. Members come from Wellington, Palmerston North, Auckland, Christchurch and (sometimes) Nelson. This good regional and professional spread gives the Committee a greater understanding of the issues of concern to a broad range of members.

The Committee held monthly meetings through the year and responded to a number of issues on behalf of the membership. These included: submissions on archival disposal schedules (the retention and disposal of historical records from the Ministry of Social Development); and raising concerns about the sudden increase in fees from National Library and Archives New Zealand. A fair degree of unsexy work has also been completed: many years of PHANZA files have been correctly catalogued in preparation for deposit with the Alexander Turnbull Library; back copies of Phanzine have been digitised; new systems for managing fees and finance have been introduced; reassessment has begun of PHANZA's official documents (rules, constitution, code of ethics).

Planning for website redevelopment has been a large task. Last year's AGM supported moves to spend funds to make the website more useable for the Committee. The Committee investigated a number of options for reworking the site using the current system, all of which were too expensive (and rather too over-spec'd for our needs and membership base). We are now liaising with a web developer to assist us with a site more workable and cost-efficient in the long run.

Once again, I want to acknowledge the hard (and voluntary) work of Committee members in keeping the organisation running, providing ideas, bringing in new members and everything else besides. We welcomed new faces to the Committee this year – Paul Husbands, Elizabeth Cox, Sandra Gorter – all of whom have made a big contribution. Two members step down this year – Geoff Rice and Margaret Pointer – and I thank them both for their efforts and energy. Special mention to our Secretary Karen Astwood who is hugely efficient, gets things done without fuss, and continues to keep members up to date with issues and events. Eileen Barrett-Whitehead has made a great job of the always-unwanted position of Treasurer. Once again, Ewan Morris has led the work on *Phanzine*, and his assembly of our special anniversary issue was especially fine. I am stepping down from the Committee this year as I move to Northland, but I am pleased to leave such a strong group in charge!

Finally, I acknowledge our PHANZA members – a big group of hard-working and dedicated professional historians who add so much to the intellectual life of this country by continuing to produce excellent public history in many varied forms.

**Bronwyn Dalley**  
**PHANZA President**  
**19 July 2015**