

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

Secretary's Report for 2014–15

This is my first report as PHANZA's Secretary, having been elected to the role at the 2013–14 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Meetings

PHANZA's Executive Committee has held nine ordinary meetings since the last AGM on 1 August 2014. The average attendance was seven Committee members, either in person or via Skype.

In early 2015 we confirmed the Ministry for Culture and Heritage's on-going generosity in allowing us to use one of their meeting spaces for our monthly ordinary meetings. This is set to carry on when they move to the former Public Trust Building soon.

Geoffrey Rice, one of the Committee's Christchurch representatives, retired from the Committee at the June meeting. Long-serving Committee member and former *Phanzine* editor, Margaret Pointer, is not standing for the 2015–16 Committee. Likewise, our President, Bronwyn Dalley, is not standing for the role again or as a member of the new Committee. The current Committee wishes to express its gratitude to Geoff, Margaret and Bronwyn for their conscientious service over the years.

Website redevelopment sub-committee

At the 2013–14 AGM the members agreed the Committee should spend some of our surplus on redeveloping PHANZA's existing website. This redevelopment is motivated by our current website content management system becoming obsolete. The Committee has sought expert advice and been labouring over which direction will provide the best service to members and long-term value for money.

A sub-committee has been appointed to carry the work forward. The sub-committee members are Elizabeth Cox and Marguerite Hill, and myself. The sub-committee will be working with a website developer to create a replacement website which provides members with all the elements they enjoy about the current website (i.e. profile pages and noticeboard emails), as well as new features such as making the website mobile-friendly. We hope to launch the new website during the 2015–16 financial year.

Correspondence

PHANZA received journals from Australian professional historians' associations in Victoria (*Pharos*) and South Australia (*PHA Newsletter*), and the New Zealand Military Historical Society. We also routinely receive policy and other information from Heritage New Zealand, as well as notices of Archives New Zealand's disposal schedules which are posted on our website's noticeboard.

PHANZA provided advice and assistance to a number of members during the year. We also fielded questions from non-members, including school students seeking help with assignments. Every year we get questions from people undertaking family history research and there was a notable increase around ANZAC Day.

We have also received and added website notices about jobs in the historical community and requests for assistance with research from New Zealand and England. Information was also passed onto members regarding calls for abstracts/papers, conferences, talks and events, awards, and newly available digital resources.

A reminder was sent to members about sending in content for the noticeboard. This has led to some diversification in the content which has been quite Wellington focused in the past. However, there is still room for improvement, so please contact secretary@phanza.org.nz if you have relevant noticeboard items.

Filing

Having a dispersed Committee and no office continues to make dealing with our electronic and physical filing a priority. The Committee has been consulting with the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, with the aim of depositing physical, and potentially some of our electronic, archives in the library. The Committee hopes to complete this process before the end of 2015.

The Committee continues using and adding to our Dropbox electronic filing system. Eileen Barrett-Whitehead has almost completed digitising back issues of *Phanzine* previously only held in hardcopy. This project was reported on in the previous Secretary's report. These back issues are uploaded to the website as the project progresses and filed.

Phanzine

This year *Phanzine* was edited by Ewan Morris. Three issues have been published since the last AGM (August, December and April), with another due out shortly.

Ewan is standing for the President role at this AGM. If he is elected the Committee will need to appoint a new editor/s, with Ewan and other Committee members potentially sharing the workload in the interim. As always, we welcome your articles and feedback. Contact details are on the back page of *Phanzine*, or you can email editor@phanza.org.nz.

Facebook

In addition to our Twitter account (managed by Marguerite Hill), in June PHANZA expanded its social media presence by creating a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/profhistoriansnz). This is another means of interacting with members, as well as others interested in PHANZA's activities. However, it will not replace the notice emails sent directly to members. I will continue to administer the page. Content suggestions can be sent using the page's messaging function or by emailing secretary@phanza.org.nz.

In mid-July the page had 33 "likes", consisting mostly of our members, and several posts have been shared on the ICOMOS New Zealand Facebook page, increasing their visibility as well as that of the PHANZA page in general.

Karen Astwood
PHANZA Secretary
26 July 2015