

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

Secretary's Report for 2015–16

This is my second report as PHANZA's Secretary, having been first elected to the role at the 2014 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Committee meetings

PHANZA's Executive Committee has held eight ordinary meetings since the last AGM on 14 August 2015 to the end of the financial year. The average attendance was six 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 and associated facilities for our monthly ordinary meetings. This has continued in their new premises in the former Public Trust Building and we appreciate this support. Imelda Bargas was co-opted into the committee in December 2015 as the Ministry for Culture and Heritage representative.

Sub-committees/groups

- **Membership**

The membership sub-committee assesses applications and provides recommendations regarding additions to the membership list. This was established, in accordance with our Constitution, in September 2015. The sub-committee consisted of me, Lucy Mackintosh, Ewan Morris and David Young. With Ewan stepping down from the committee we will look at appointing another committee member in his place on the sub-committee. Between the previous AGM and the end of the financial year we added nine new members and reinstated one former member.

- **Website redevelopment**

At the 2013–14 AGM the members agreed the Committee should spend some of our surplus on redeveloping PHANZA's existing website. This redevelopment was necessary because our website's content management system had become obsolete. The sub-committee leading this project during the year has been me and Marguerite Hill.

At the previous AGM we noted the hope of launching the new website during the 2015–16 financial year. This was not achieved because of the desire to provide enhanced facilities, which required more time than initially anticipated. However, we did launch the website early in the 2016–17 financial year (September). The enhanced features included creating summaries for each of *Phanzine's* 64 issues, dating from 1995 to the present. This is designed to increase its accessibility and public reach through search engines and also within our own website.

During the 2015–16 financial year there were several helpers among the PHANZA committee for the task of refreshing all the page content on the website and creating the *Phanzine* summaries. The sub-committee would also like to thank Sarah Burgess and Tim Shoebridge from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage for contributing summaries, as well as David Green for editing much of the new website's content.

One aspect of the website which is a departure from the old site is we no longer have an integrated email system. WordPress, the platform we now use, does not support this. Therefore, we have had to also create a MailChimp account for our weekly news emails - this is a free service. However, since contact details are no longer automatically generated from website profile information we have to maintain separate lists. Whereas members could simply change their contact details in their

old website profiles and the various mailing lists would update, it is now important for members to contact me (secretary@phanza.org.nz) if their contact details change so they do not miss out on the email notices, *Phanzine* and other correspondence.

- **Wellington mini-conference organising group**

Tentative planning for the mini-conference on 8 October 2016, 'Piecing the together the jigsaw: Information and where to find it', began in early 2016. The group consists of committee member Eileen Barrett-Whitehead and members Georgie Crow and Jamie Jacobs. This event will be reported upon at the next AGM, but the committee would to take this opportunity to thank the group for their hard work getting the event together.

Filing

An issue discussed in previous AGM reports has been the challenge of dealing with electronic and hardcopy filing considering we have a dispersed committee and no office. As noted last year, the committee was consulting with the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, with the aim of depositing hardcopy archives there. The aim was to complete this process before the end of 2015 and this was achieved.

The committee continues using, adding to, and backing-up our Dropbox electronic filing system. This year Eileen Barrett-Whitehead completed the important task of creating electronic versions of *Phanzine* back-issues previously only stored in our remaining hardcopy archive. These are all now available on the website as well as electronically filed.

Correspondence

PHANZA received newsletters from the Australian professional historians' association branch in Victoria (*Pharos*) and the New Zealand Military Historical Society. We also routinely receive policy and other information from Heritage New Zealand, as well as notices about Stout Centre lectures, the UNESCO Memory of the World register and 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. Last year it was noted that questions from people undertaking family history research increased around ANZAC Day. The rate of genealogy-type research questions has lessened this year.

We have also received and added website notices about jobs and opportunities in the history and heritage communities, including TopShelf Productions' searches for contributors to their television programmes. Information was also passed onto members regarding calls for abstracts/papers, conferences, talks and events, awards, and newly available digital resources, such as the National Library's Beta version of its PaperPast site and other digital resources.

Our members want to know what is happening around the country, so please continue to send through job and event notices to secretary@phanza.org.nz.

Phanzine

Ewan Morris stepped down as *Phanzine* editor upon becoming President this year. Subsequently Margaret Pointer (guest editor, December issue) and Marguerite Hill and Margaret Tennant (*Phanzine* co-editors) continued the impressive work in producing this year's issues.

Anecdotal evidence is that the issues this year have been well-received. As always, we welcome your feedback and article contributions. Contact details are on the back page of *Phanzine*, or you can email editor@phanza.org.nz.

Social media

Our Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/phanzasecretary>) continues to be ably managed by Marguerite Hill and we currently have 170 followers.

I manage our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/profhistoriansnz), which has been up for over a year now. Our number of page 'likes' has increased to 76, up from 33 'likes' in last the report. I continue to post member notices and share posts from other pages of interest. Several posts have been shared on the ICOMOS New Zealand, Lincoln and District Historical Society and Old St Paul's New Zealand – A Biography of a Church Facebook pages and we've had comments from the Auckland Museum, increasing the visibility of our posts and PHANZA in general.

Karen Astwood
PHANZA Secretary
26 September 2016