

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

## **Secretary's Report for 2017–18**

This is my first report as PHANZA's Secretary after being elected to the role at the 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

### **Committee meetings**

PHANZA's Executive Committee has held seven ordinary meetings between the last AGM on 19 October 2017 and the end of the financial year. The average attendance was six committee members, either in person or via Skype.

Our meetings have continued to be hosted by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (MCH), for which the Committee is grateful.

David Young was co-opted onto the Committee at the November 2017 ordinary meeting and resigned from the Committee at the April 2018 ordinary meeting. Ryan Bodman was co-opted at the December 2017 ordinary meeting.

### **Sub-committees/working groups**

#### Membership sub-committee

The membership sub-committee assesses applications to join PHANZA and provides recommendations to the Committee regarding additions to the membership list. This year the sub-committee consisted of myself, Michael Kelly, Lucy Mackintosh, David Young (until April 2018) and Ryan Bodman (from July 2018). As Lucy Mackintosh is stepping down from the Committee at this AGM, the Committee will be looking to appoint another member to this sub-committee.

Between the 2017 AGM and the end of the financial year, four new members were added to the membership list.

### **Website**

The website is regularly updated and backed-up and on the whole continues to function well. We have experienced some issues with the display and functionality of the member directory and member profiles pages in recent weeks and are working to fix these issues. We have also been advised that a major upgrade to WordPress is forthcoming. Work will need to be undertaken to ensure the website remains compatible with this new version of WordPress. The Committee has sought advice about what this will encompass and how much it might cost.

Since the 2017 AGM, updated information on contracts and a guide to being a self-employed historian has been added to the website. Work is still being done on a revised Code of Ethics, but we expect to have a finalised Code added to the website in the coming months. A page dedicated to the upcoming 2019 conference has also been added to the website.

### **PHANZA Conference 2019, 'After the war – what's next?'**

Organisation for this event, to be held on 13–14 April 2019 at Old Government Buildings, Wellington, began in March 2018. The organising group consists of Kate Jordan, Michael Kelly, Martha van

Drunen, Karen Astwood (who, though not a Committee member, has kindly agreed to help out the organising committee), and myself.

The organising group has so far confirmed and booked a venue and sent out a call for papers to members and other groups and institutions who may be interested in attending. The organising group is also working to arrange a keynote speaker and panel session, and is looking at catering and locations for a conference dinner. We plan to open registrations for the conference at the start of February 2019. A dedicated conference page has been set up on the website which is to serve as the home for detailed information about the conference. So far the call for papers and basic conference details, such as the dates and venue, are available, with more to come over the next few months.

### **Correspondence**

PHANZA received regular newsletters from our counterparts at Professional Historians' Australia, Victoria (*Pharos*) and also regular newsletters from the New Zealand Military Historical Society. The latter was distributed to members who have opted to be on that mailing list.

We are also routinely sent notifications for the noticeboard about Alexander Turnbull and National Library events, Stout Research Centre lectures, UNESCO Memory of the World register updates and Archives New Zealand intentions to dispose.

We have continued to receive enquiries from members of the public and other clients seeking assistance with history projects.

We continue to use MailChimp for our weekly notices and other group emails. As this service provides us with reports about how many recipients open their email and whether or not they click on any links contained therein, we are able to gain valuable data on how our members engage with correspondence from PHANZA. Over the first six months of 2018, an average of 69% of members opened the weekly email notices, with an average of 32% clicking on content links. These figures are comparable to the same period last year, as reported in the 2016–17 Secretary's report. We anticipate that this will be a useful means of keeping an eye on how many among the membership read their *e-Phanzine*.

### ***Phanzine***

Following an indicative vote at the 2017 AGM about moving to an *e-Phanzine*, the Committee asked the membership to participate in an online survey on whether *Phanzine* should be an electronic publication. Members were also able to send in their vote and comments via post. The Committee determined that if any change was to be made, at least 65% of votes would need to be in favour of moving to an electronic format. The survey went live in December 2017 and closed at the beginning of February 2018. A majority of members (63%) responded to the survey and a majority of votes (76.7%) were in favour of moving to an electronic publication.

Based on the clear result, the Committee decided to implement the change and took steps to move to an *e-Phanzine*. The final hard copy *Phanzine* was the May 2018 issue and we have since sent out our first electronic copy, the August 2018 issue. Provision has been made for those members who are unable to receive an electronic copy and the Committee has also sought feedback from members on how the new format is working for them and how content could be improved now that we have the advantages of electronic publication at our disposal. In moving to an electronic publication the Committee also wrote a letter of thanks to our long time printers, NZ Print, for their wonderful work printing *Phanzine* over the years.

This year our *Phanzine* editors were Sandra Gorter and Margaret Tennant, who have continued the tradition of producing to a high standard an interesting and insightful PHANZA newsletter three times per year.

Before the switch to an electronic publication, a helpful team of Wellington-based PHANZA Committee members and MCH staff continued to volunteer to complete the enveloping for the *Phanzine* issue mail-out. Their assistance was much appreciated.

As per our standard practice, hardcopies of the three issues produced this past financial year (vol. 23:2, vol. 23:3 and vol.24:1) have been routinely sent to repositories, such as the National Library, and we maintain our own archive. We will continue to do so with the e-*Phanzine*. As ever, electronic versions of past issues are available on the website. When a new issue is produced the previous one is uploaded to the website.

### **Social media**

As agreed with Committee member Martha van Drunen, responsibility for PHANZA's social media accounts was handed over to her after the 2017 AGM. Martha has done a wonderful job with the social media accounts and I would like to thank her for taking on this task.

Currently we have 122 Facebook page followers, up 30 on last year. Our Twitter account follower numbers also continue to grow. We currently have 250 Twitter followers, an increase of 42 on last year's numbers.

Both accounts are mostly a vehicle for sharing news from other pages/accounts which followers and the general history community might find interesting and we particularly highlight events and news posts featuring our members.

**Sarah Burgess**  
PHANZA Secretary  
6 October 2018