

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

Secretary's report for 2018–19

This is my last report as PHANZA's Secretary after first 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 1 November 2018 and the end of the financial year. The average attendance was five committee members, either in person or via Skype.

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

Peter Cooke was co-opted onto the Committee at the November 2018 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, Ryan Bodman and Monica Webb.

Over the 2018–19 financial year, 8 new members were added to the membership list and 3 past members rejoined.

Code of Practice revision

Ryan Bodman has taken the lead in revising the PHANZA Code of Practice. He is working with Sonja Mitchell who has volunteered her time and knowledge to assist PHANZA to incorporate a Te Ao Māori worldview into the code. I would like to offer my thanks to both Ryan and Sonja for their efforts to advance this work.

Website

The website is regularly updated and backed-up and on the whole continues to function well. We are currently working to resolve issues with the display and functionality of the member directory and member profiles pages arising from last year's upgrade to WordPress 5.0. Members will be notified as soon as the issue is remedied.

The Committee is looking to undertake some work on the website over the next year or two. We would like to improve the search function so that anyone using the website to find a historian could search by speciality or subject matter expertise. In addition, any

implementation of the proposed mentor scheme would potentially rely on the website as a means of making initial contact between mentor and mentee, and may require changes to the website. Before undertaking any upgrade work the Committee intends to seek member feedback to see what, if any, additional improvements could be made to the website.

The Committee is continuing to work on revising the Code of Practice. Once this work has been presented to the membership and the revised code approved, this will be added to the website.

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

Over the weekend of 13–14 April 2019 PHANZA hosted a two-day conference at Massey University in Wellington. A total of 56 attended the conference which featured 20 papers as well as a keynote from Steve Watters, tours of Government House, Te Papa and Mount Cook, and a panel of past and present PHANZA members reflecting on the past 25 years of PHANZA and where the association might go in the future. We also celebrated PHANZA's 25th birthday with cake to close the conference.

Feedback on the conference has been overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting on the quality of the papers presented, the lack of technical problems, and the smaller size of the conference which allowed for in depth conversations with fellow historians.

I would like to offer my thanks to those who joined me on the organising committee (Karen Astwood, Kate Jordan and Michael Kelly). Without their help and many volunteer hours the conference could not have succeeded.

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 later 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, employment opportunities, Archives New Zealand intentions to dispose, and, recently, events at public libraries in Auckland and Dunedin.

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. This service provides us with reports about how many recipients open their email and whether or not they click on any links contained therein, providing us with valuable data on how our members engage with correspondence from PHANZA. Over the 2018–19 financial year, an average of 72% of members opened the weekly email notices, with an average of 33%

clicking on content links. These figures are comparable to the same period last year, as reported in the 2017–18 Secretary's report. The figures for the *Phanzine* mail list are as follows: an average of 80% of members opened the email and 61% clicked the link to read the issue.

Phanzine

Following the decision to shift to an electronic newsletter, PHANZA has sent out three e-*Phanzines*, the first being the August 2018 issue. Those members who are unable to receive an electronic copy can apply to the Secretary to receive a printed hard copy via the post as per the old system. The Committee is keen for feedback from members on the electronic format and how content could be improved to suit the new format.

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

As per our standard practice, copies of the three issues produced this past financial year (vol. 24:2, vol. 24:3 and vol. 25:1) have been routinely sent to repositories, including the National Library. 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 Ryan Bodman, responsibility for PHANZA's social media accounts was handed over to him following the 2018 AGM. Ryan has done a wonderful job with the social media accounts and I would like to thank him for taking on this task.

Currently we have 147 Facebook page followers, up 25 on last year. Our Twitter account follower numbers also continue to grow. We currently have 264 Twitter followers, an increase of 14 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

Secretary

28 July 2019