

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

President's Report, 2020-21 Year

It is gratifying to report that the PHANZA committee has had something of a transformational year. This is down to the hard work and co-operative spirit of the committee.

Various initiatives should be recorded and first and foremost is our recruitment of our first executive assistant. Ivan Wilby joined us before last year's AGM, which approved the creation of his position. Ivan has picked up much of the work that our secretary used to do. This has also lifted a considerable burden off me and so I am personally grateful for Ivan's work. He has been diligent and dedicated and we are sorry he will be moving on after the AGM. We will recruit a post-graduate student from VUW to replace Ivan.

Danielle Campbell joined the committee at last year's AGM and has taken on the social media role. Again, she has transformed our presence in this area and we are indebted to her for taking this on. Anyone who engages with our Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts will know how much work Danielle is doing for PHANZA.

The contestable member fund is still not being used as we hoped it would be but it has had a bit more uptake this year than last. We will persist with the fund for a few more years and hope that members make more use of it.

We produced the usual three *Phanzines*, the last of Margaret Tennant's time as editor. As I have noted before, we have benefited enormously from Margaret's vision, interests and connections and this is evident in the consistently high quality of *Phanzine*. During her time we took the newsletter from hard copy to digital, a seamless move that has ended the folding and posting of hard copies, to general approval. We are going to miss the wisdom and commonsense that Margaret brings to the committee.

We have just launched our new website, built for us by Eleanor McIntyre and Ed Goode of Pixel Boom. This has been a collaborative effort but much of the work has been done by Lynette Townsend, who is regrettably also leaving the committee. Lynette's visual skills and eye for detail have been invaluable in making this process work so well. We are really pleased with the outcome and hope that members feel similarly.

We welcomed the arrival of the New Zealand Journal of Public History from its former home at Waikato University. Fiona McKergow has arranged this transfer and we feel PHANZA is a highly suitable home for the journal. We look forward to years of curation. Members are welcome to submit proposals for articles for the journal, which is entirely on-line. Fiona

continues to be our representative on the NZHA. Fiona has taken over as editor of *Phanzine* as well as managing the NZJPH, so we are all very grateful to her for taking on a significant workload.

I would like to thank our treasurer, Sandra Gorter, whose command of her portfolio gives the rest of us great confidence that our finances are in good shape. Sandra has done a great job of making sure that member subs are up to date, along with ensuring that we are able to cover off a range of large expenditure items, such as our executive assistant and the website.

Thank you too, to Jamie Jacobs and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga for providing a meeting room for Wellington-based members and for organising the Zoom meetings. It's still very useful to be able to hold meetings in person, if we can. Peter Cooke has run those meetings with marvellous efficiency and I thank him too for continuing to manage our initial response to new members.

As usual, we made submissions and gave feedback on matters relevant to our members and kept members up-to-date with industry-related news, jobs, exhibitions and the like. It is my observation that we are getting more job ads coming through and our level of membership has stayed buoyant.

As I mention every year, the business of recruiting members to serve on the PHANZA committee remains a challenge. I had hoped to end my term as president this year but that has not been possible. We need new members to keep the committee viable and, in particular, we need Wellington-based members to support our work and maintain our profile in the city. And on that note, I would like to express my gratitude to Monica Webb who has agreed to take over the secretary's role. Although most of the secretary's tasks are now handled by our executive assistant, Monica's presence will make a notable difference in our interface with members and the general public.

Finally, thank you to our members for your continued support. Here's hoping that 2022 brings more progress for professional historians.

Michael Kelly
President
20 August 2021