



President's Report to the Annual Meeting of the New Zealand Literacy Association

6 June 2015

Tēnā Koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

A very warm welcome to all of you attending this 2015 Annual Meeting of the New Zealand Literacy Association. If this is the first time that you have been to an annual meeting, an especially warm welcome to you. Annual meeting gives you the opportunity to learn more about the association, and to also take part or be an observer in the decision making and discussions that take place over the next two days. It gives me great pleasure to present my first annual report as President.

In July, I travelled to Darwin to the ALEA (Australian Literacy Educators Association) conference. Both Wendy Carss, President of the IDOC committee, and I were warmly welcomed by the President Robyn Ewing, the Executive and the Conference Committee. We were invited to attend ALEA's Annual meeting and their Leadership Workshop, where we brought greetings from the NZLA. It was interesting to note that many of the issues facing their local committees are very similar to those we face in New Zealand. We are strengthening our ties with our Australian counterparts each time we meet. Quality plenary speakers from around the world, a wide range of workshops and the opportunities to make new connections and network were highlights of this conference. I attended a pre-conference workshop with the American writer and educator Ralph Fletcher and it was an inspiring day of quality professional learning.

In September we gathered in Tauranga at Bethlehem College for the 37th NZLA conference. I would like to acknowledge the hard working efforts of Convenor Diana Price and her team for organising such a great conference. Congratulations – you provided a conference that was noted for its warm hospitality and quality learning opportunities. The range of workshops at the conference focused on the multi-faceted approach involved in literacy learning and teaching today. They reflected up to date practices in the teaching of literacy across the curriculum, and gave attendees lots of ideas to motivate and challenge their thinking and teaching practice.

Once again we were privileged to have the ILA President Jill Lewis-Spector in attendance. It is always a pleasure to have the ILA President attend our conferences. They bring a wealth of expertise with them, and also personalise the international organisation with which we are affiliated.

Other plenary speakers; Ewan McIntosh, Brendan Spillane and Mere Berryman were also very stimulating. As one of the keynote speakers was ill and unable to attend, Rob Southam stepped in and presented a fantastic talk on some of the latest books and trends in publishing. To present a talk of such quality at such short notice was indeed a great feat – so thanks must go to Rob for once again showing fantastic support for NZLA. I know the conference committee was exceedingly grateful.

During the opening ceremony we celebrated those councils who achieved Honour Council status. They were Auckland, Waikato, Otago, Tai Tokerau and Hawke's Bay. Congratulations. It would be great to see more councils taking part in this over the following year. For the first time we gave special recognition to those councils who repeatedly met the required standards for consecutive years. Congratulations to these councils:

- Auckland and Waikato: Gold Awards (10 years) \$500
- Hawkes's Bay: Silver Award (5 years) \$250
- Otago: Bronze Award (3 years) \$100

We also congratulated 11 Marie Clay Literacy Trust 'early career' teachers from around New Zealand who attended the conference. It is a great opportunity for these early career teachers to develop their own literacy knowledge and pedagogy, see what resources are available, and to network with others.

The Marie Clay Literacy Trust generously gave NZLA additional funding so that an experienced teacher from local councils could attend the conference. Ten of these scholarship winners attended the conference. These teachers exhibited their love and passion and enthusiasm for teaching literacy in their applications.

The MCLT also gave us \$5,000 to fund five workshop presenters (who had papers accepted) to attend the NZLA conference in Tauranga. Their workshop papers were subsequently published in our journal *Literacy Forum NZ*.

NZLA and local councils sponsored two teachers from Samoa to attend the Tauranga conference. Debbie and Moli were enthusiastic participants in the conference and their good humour and charm won us all over. An article by Debbie published in the first Forum of this year summed up how much they both got out of the experience – and the generous support of NZLA members was acknowledged. All of us who met them were enriched by the experience. Along with the laughter, singing and dancing, there were tears as we said goodbye to these two inspiring teachers.

Our 'Books for Oceania' project was again very successful, resulting in quality children's books being dispatched to Samoa. A huge thank you goes to Rob Southam, and her colleagues who co-ordinate this at our conferences. We are so appreciative of this on-going partnership with Scholastic NZ. A huge thank you also goes to all conference attendees and councils for their generosity in purchasing books.

Our MCLT annual travel awards for 2014 went to Mal Thompson and Moira Newton. Mal who is Editor of *Literacy Forum NZ* is from the Otago Literacy Association, and she will attend the UK Literacy Association conference in Nottingham and the European Reading Congress in Austria in July this year. Moira is a member of the Auckland Literacy Association and will be attending the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction in Cyprus. Moira teaches in Otara and is a doctoral candidate at Auckland University studying children's writing. We look forward to reading their articles in *Literacy Forum NZ*.

I would like to acknowledge and give our warm congratulations to Rob Southam who won the 2014 Storylines Betty Gilderdale Award in October last year. Rob has worked tirelessly for both the Auckland Literacy Association as delegate and for NZLA. She has travelled around the country presenting workshops and keynote addresses to educators and many of our members. The award acknowledges Rob's lifetime commitment to promoting children's literacy, initially as a classroom teacher and for the past 20 years as sales manager for Scholastic New Zealand. Rob is a friend and inspiration to many of us and this award is so richly deserved. Congratulations Rob.

The 2015 regional leadership workshop was held in Christchurch in March. Based on participant feedback we know this workshop was a great success. A huge thank you to Joy Hawke, Carolyn Bolland and their team from the Canterbury council for organising the excellent venue and catering. Wendy Morgan, Joy and I shared the facilitation of various sessions. The feedback we received highlighted that it was great to have the time to plan strategically with committee members, share issues and ideas, work on job descriptions and network. Thank you to all who made it such a worthwhile day. The 2016 Leadership Workshop will be for councils in the lower and central North Island.

Our 2015 conference, 'Words on Wellington' is, of course, here in the capital from 30 September – 2 October. What a fantastic place to have a conference, with the added bonus of the Wearable Arts event to entertain us. Jan Treeby and her enthusiastic committee have been working very hard to bring us a great conference – with a wonderful line-up of plenaries and a great range of workshops and authors to inspire us. We hope you will all be joining us again in Wellington later in the year for the conference.

Congratulations to Sharon Pond from the Auckland Literacy Association who has been elected as the new Executive member for the next 3 years. Congratulations Sharon. You bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to this role, and we look forward to you joining us on the Executive.

There a number of people who I would like to acknowledge for their continuing support of NZLA and for the work they do.

I would like to thank Mal Thompson for her outstanding efforts in maintaining the high quality of our journal *Literacy Forum NZ* and all the hard work she has put into taking over as Editor from Joan Gibbons.

A huge thanks to all of you here and to your local committees. The people who work within local councils and give so freely of their time are the valued foundation of our association. It is great to be able to meet so many of you at our conferences, leadership workshops and here at Annual Meeting. You can be so proud of the work you do which is inspiring and appreciated by so many educators.

To the Executive – I feel honoured to work alongside you as President.

Wendy Morgan ends her time on Executive at the end of this meeting – a sincere thank you, Wendy, for all you've done during your time on NZLA – locally and internationally. I have so enjoyed working with you and learning from you. I have valued your knowledge, expertise, commitment and leadership and you were a great guide for me as I took on the president's role. You have kept the best interests of NZLA and literacy at the heart of all decisions. I have gained so much from working with you, as I'm sure we all have.

A huge thank you also goes to Gayl and Tricia, who have so efficiently and capably carried out their jobs as secretary and treasurer over the last 12 months. They have gone above and beyond for me, and the Association. I have appreciated your help and support so much. To Glenice – congratulations and thank you for taking on the role as President Elect for the next year. I know you will carry out that role so well. I

am enjoying working alongside you all, and value your knowledge, expertise and commitment. Thank you so much.

We have a great subject association of which we can be very proud of. We are a strong network of councils, all being passionate about Literacy, and spreading new ideas and pedagogy to our fellow teachers, parents and children. NZLA and local councils play a crucial role in providing professional learning with a literacy focus in our communities. In spite of the challenges we meet and the pressures we face in our professional lives, we need to continue to fulfil this role.

It is a privilege to hold the role as President and I am so enjoying the opportunities to network with you as delegates and to work more closely with some of your committees. I thank you all most sincerely for your friendship and support of the executive and our association.

*He kete korero
Nau te rourou
Naku te rourou
Ka ora ai tatou*

With your basket of knowledge and my basket of knowledge all will benefit.

Jane Taylor
NZLA President
June 2015