



New Zealand
Literacy
Association

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

11 June 2016

Tēnā Koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

A very warm welcome to all of you attending this 2016 Annual Meeting of the New Zealand Literacy Association. If this is the first time that you have been to our Annual Meeting, an especially warm welcome to you. This 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 second, and final, annual report as President.

I must begin my report acknowledging the life, work and friendship of Sharon Pond, who became an Executive member in June 2015. In November last year the Executive met for an extra meeting in Rotorua. It was a very productive meeting over two days where we lived, ate and worked together. I know I speak for the other executive members when I say that we all felt that it was at this time that we really began to get to know Sharon as the warm and generous person she was. We also began to appreciate how much she had to offer NZLA and we looked forward to working with her over the coming years. Sharon's sudden passing in January this year left a gap in the lives of many – her friends and colleagues who she worked with as an RTLit and on the Auckland Literacy Association and in the lives of her many contacts within the wider membership of NZLA. This year we plan to celebrate Sharon's contributions, her life and her work in a way we feel that she, and her family, would be proud of.

In July, I travelled to Canberra to the ALEA (Australian Literacy Educators' Association) conference. I was warmly welcomed by the President Robyn Ewing, the Executive and the Conference Committee. I was invited to attend their State Directors' dinner as well as ALEA's Annual Meeting and find that we are strengthening our ties with our Australian counterparts each time we meet. I was ALEA's guest at the conference dinner which celebrated 40 years of their association. 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 at the Australian War Memorial and as it was the special Anzac remembrance year this was particularly memorable. Grant Webb from Queensland is the new ALEA President and he will be attending our national conference at Waitangi in September and we are pleased to have the opportunity to reciprocate the great hospitality shown to me over the past two years.

Last September we gathered in Wellington for the “Words on Wellington” NZLA annual conference. The theme was a very appropriate one as we were in a capital city that is a rich, vibrant and energetic cultural centre. As an added bonus we had the chance to attend the “World of Wearable Arts” show – and it was certainly a fantastic experience. Throughout the conference we were inspired to reflect on our practice and explore new possibilities within a range of literacies, including visual, written, oral and digital literacies.

On behalf of NZLA I extend very sincere thanks to Jan Treeby and Margaret Paterson and their dedicated organising committee from the Wellington Literacy Association, who worked so hard to bring together the exciting and varied programme. Their attention to detail and their warm hospitality made it a truly fantastic conference.

Once again we were privileged to have the ILA President in attendance - Diane Barone from Reno, Nevada. It is always a pleasure to have the ILA President attend our conferences and their attendance helps to personalise the international organisation with which we are affiliated. From this year the ILA President will only attend our conference every second year. On the alternate years they will go to the ALEA conference.

I encourage you to attend the next NZLA conference in the beautiful Bay of Islands at Waitangi. “Navigating Literaseas” will be held from 25th - 28th September and our hosts, the Tai Tokerau Literacy Association are already working hard to provide another inspirational conference.

During the opening ceremony in Wellington 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 coming year.

We also congratulated eleven 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. Eleven of these scholarship winners attended the conference. These teachers exhibited their love and passion and enthusiasm for teaching literacy in their applications.

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

NZLA and local councils sponsored two teachers from Tonga to attend the Wellington conference. Ana and Mele thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were inspired by the professional learning that you all made possible for them through your generosity.

Our ‘Books for Oceania’ project was again very successful, resulting in quality children’s books being dispatched to Tonga. 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.

Christine Donnelly from the Otago Literacy Association and Heather Hardy from the Tokerau Literacy Association were awarded the two Marie Clay Literacy Trust travel scholarships for 2016.

Christine travelled to Oxford, England for a conference and Heather attended the Reading Recovery Institute in Vancouver, Canada. We had eight applications for the awards which is significantly more than in the past and we are pleased that our members are very keen to take up the opportunities that the Trust offer.

The 2016 regional leadership workshop was held in Palmerston North in March. Based on participant feedback we know this workshop was a great success. A huge thank you to Sarah McCord and Jan Watts and their team from the Manawatu council for organising the excellent venue and catering. Glenice, Gayl, 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 2017 Leadership Workshop will be for the councils in the northern areas of the North Island.

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 does as Editor.

Karen Hogg has done a fantastic job as Website Editor for a number of years and I'd like to acknowledge the support she receives from her husband Richard in this role too. Karen finishes as Website Editor at the end of this meeting and our grateful thanks go to her for the many hours she has spent updating the website, often organising conference registrations and helping others.

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 have felt honoured to work alongside you as President for the past two years.

A huge thank you goes to Gayl and Tricia, who so capably carry out their jobs as secretary and treasurer. Gayl ends her term as secretary tomorrow and it has been a huge advantage, and fun, for me to have a friend and colleague from Hawke's Bay beside me on the Executive. Tricia calmly carries out her treasurer role with an efficiency we are all in awe of. I have appreciated their help and support so much and they have both gone above and beyond for me, and the Association.

To Glenice – you have been a great support as President Elect and I know you will carry out the role of President so well. Along with Kath Corby as secretary and Sarah McCord as an Executive member, the future is in good hands. I enjoy working alongside you all, and feel that we have a team which works together productively, collegially and with a real sense of shared purpose. Thank you so much.

We are now looking forward to a very positive development for NZLA including the building of a new website with the capacity for online publication of *Literacy Forum NZ*. We are living in a time when online information and communication is crucial in most of our lives. Having a vibrant, up to date window into our organisation through the website will be a key factor in growing membership and keeping members involved in our activities.

We have a great subject association of which we can be very proud. 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. An on-going challenge for all councils is retaining committee membership as the lives of educators become increasingly busy.

It has been a privilege to hold the role of President. The opportunities to network with you as delegates and to work closely with some of your committees have been highlights for me personally. I thank you all most sincerely for your dedication 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 2016