

REPORT TO NZAP AGM, MARCH 2018

From the President

This AGM will mark the end of my first year as President. I am pleased to report that we begin 2019 with the new Professional Development structure in operation and two significant PD events for members of our association taking place, last month on Waiheke Island and at the time of the AGM in Wellington. As we all know this has meant no NZAP Conference or face to face Forum this year, although we are holding two online forums before the AGM, at the end of February and in early March. We are also very nearly at the point of launching our new NZAP website with an improved members' register and search function for people seeking a psychotherapist, and a completely new structure and appearance. This month the Council Review group have completed their report on Council which includes feedback from over one hundred members. Council will be reviewing its findings at the upcoming Council meeting, and in particular its recommendations. We welcome a new Newsletter Editor, Paul Solomon, and farewell Sean Manning who has held the role so passionately. There are a number of other developments and points to discuss later in this report.

So what is important for me to report?

Firstly, that I am thrilled at the very high turn-out for both PD events, which have been booked to capacity and indicates the hunger for education, professional development and connection with colleagues in such a context. Both involved overseas speakers, and while they were quite different events, both were initiated by ordinary members of NZAP and supported by the new Professional Development and Conference Committee. These events largely came about because of the passion of small numbers of members in different centres who were able to apply for financial support and backing through the new PD structure. The PDC Committee is itself the result of the Critical Review Process, a careful examination of where we are at in NZAP and what is needed for us as an organisation to evolve. The challenge will be to maintain the momentum of these first two events, for the PDC Committee to be able to support other initiatives around the country in 2019 and 2020.

The new website development is continuing and you will have received a request to update your profile details so that the NZAP Register can become a more important search and source for members of the public to find a psychotherapist, in their area and for their needs. The Website Development Group have continued to work hard with the developers to complete the new structure and we envisage that the new website will be launched in the very near future. It is hard to over-estimate the amount of time and effort that has been put into this project by the team, another example of ordinary members going the extra mile on all our behalf. As I have written elsewhere, the most important work after the initial development will be in the maintenance, updating and growing of the website functions in the months and years to come after its launch. To remain relevant and functional it will need a good amount of attention by a dedicated group, as well as our own input.

By the time of the AGM, Council will have just had time to digest and discuss the detailed findings of the Council Review group chaired by our ex-President, Eileen Birch. This group has been meeting for over a year and made great efforts to gather feedback from NZAP members. The resulting document is largely very supportive of Council but has a number of important suggestions and these will be made available to membership once Council has had a chance to discuss them. It is noteworthy that a lot of the recommendations have arisen directly from the input of NZAP members through the survey that was conducted, and that the feedback on Council was largely very positive. Some of the recommendations Council have already undertaken or are thinking of doing so but an important part of the report notes the uncertainty among members as to whether NZAP is

still a regulatory body in some way or mainly now an Association to support members. This is something that Council has already noted and been reviewing, in terms of what its function now becomes.

As usual all Council members have been working hard in their various spheres on Council and I remain acutely conscious of the unsung efforts, the long hours, the worry, and the heartfelt commitment I experience from my fellow Council members. Council members are not always aligned with each other and with some of the decisions that are made. Working in a big group with such complex tasks will mean tensions, disappointments, frustrations and a lot of that good old fashioned 'holding', so highly valued in our profession, being required. This seems to me a sign of health in our Council and one that I believe our membership can feel proud about.

While I look forward to my second year of office and am grateful that Lynne Holdem, a person whose mind and heart I greatly admire will be coming into the office of President Elect, I am also acutely aware that we will no longer have Sheila Larsen on Council. Sheila has served NZAP to a huge degree, over many years, and her recent presidency is another act in a long line of committed service she has given to all of us. As she leaves, I am aware of the gap around the table, the knowledge, wisdom, insight and experience that goes with her. We thank you Sheila and wish you a hugely rewarding increase in your space to get onto other matters – perhaps those more personal and family oriented.

Gerald Maclaurin