

REPORT TO NZAP COUNCIL, APRIL 2021

Professional Development and Conference Committee

Please read this in conjunction with the AGM report.

As mentioned in that report, Seán Manning has joined the committee, which we are very grateful about. We are still hoping more people are willing to join.

We have met once this year, and at some point we were joined by Gabriela Mercado, to plan the talk with Patrick Casement. This has been scheduled for 29 May. We decided to hold this as free event for NZAP members only. The wish is that this is going to be watched by the branches in person and maybe some Zoom connections. Each branch needs to organise a venue and a technical person, and Seán is helping with coordinating this side of things.

We are also following up a request about whether some training to become supervisors can be provided. This is looking very positive.

Several other requests are still being looked at and more information gathered.

An earlier decision by Council was to hold a Conference every two years. Before Covid became such a disruptive and unknown factor I had approached Auckland a few times. There has been no response, and we are unsure whether a Conference as we used to have is feasible in the short term.

We are wondering whether the decision to have Conference every two years, based on increasing difficulty securing commitment from Branches to host them, could be revisited. Alternative strategies might include using a professional conference organiser, a central committee with membership drawn from several regions, a permanent conference organising sub-committee, or any combination of these.

Conference design has become rigid over time, with a ritualistic format that has to include a series of mandatory events unconnected with any academic programme – Powhiri and Poroporoaki, the distribution of awards, members' Forum, AGM, and dinner. The effect is to make it rather daunting to take on the responsibility of running one. Conference design could fruitfully become more flexible, and Council can appoint someone to take responsibility for organising the non-academic events, working with the organisers of the academic programme.

It would be helpful to get Council feedback on this.

Marian Vlaar
Chair, Professional Development and Conference Committee