

## **Public Issues Report to the NZAP Council**

**February 2022**

### **Introduction**

The Mental Health and Addictions Team has not met before this report was due, but our area has not remained quiet in the meantime. Consequently, I want to commend to the Council the hard work, and quality of engagement, this team brings to numerous tasks. All the more so with Claire Miranda's added presence in late 2021.

### **Ministry of Health**

Veronica Watt and I met with the Workforce Development Head of the Ministry, Sue Dashfield, in January. While it was a cordial meeting, we can only report little progress: the Ministry expects to release funds for training schemes this year but, I whilst I pressed them about this, they are committed to the complex, government-wide GETS bidding process. We outlined our Academy training proposals and they may take interest in this at a later stage. However, I think it's fair to say, in terms of results, that this continues to be an arduous relationship – but see below.

### **Academy Training**

The working party for this initiative, approved by the Council in November, had its first meeting in February. It was lively and productive at this early stage: its own report to the Council gives preliminary details.

### **AHANZ**

Again, I want to thank Victoria Smith for her continuing persistence on behalf of NZAP around often inscrutable Ministry messaging. It is invaluable and, in consultation with Paul Wilson, our assessment of the information we provide directly or indirectly to members has changed in line with the move to omicron management.

### **ACC**

ACC held an interface (online meeting) with Suppliers in the week before Christmas. A number of us on the Sexual Violence panel were asked to facilitate this. The aim was to assess what areas the Suppliers wished ACC staff to focus on. Looking to the future.

This involved 3 meetings for those of us on the panel: a pre-facilitation panel, actual meeting that we facilitated and a debrief meeting. The process was successful and the new team of ACC staff are keen to continue. With this in mind, there is another round of meetings that will be held in early March. Once again, the Sexual Violence Panel will assist in facilitating these. We also have our own Panel meeting on Monday 21st. The new team at ACC are engaged and enthusiastic, and it is a relief to see this.

They have also informed me in no uncertain terms that they view that the onus for sending in Password Protected documents to them is on the Supplier/Provider. I have yet to investigate any sophisticated programs for doing this. ACC were to get back to me with the names of some suitable ones that their system could accept. I expect that there are none and that the passing on of passwords needs to be done manually for each report sent. I shall report back on this.

## **Public Issues**

Two significant pieces of legislation and one other matter deserve comment.

**Mental Health Act:** Despite a direct appeal to NZAP members about changes to the Mental Health Act, we received no input and were, finally, unable to make any public comment ourselves despite a large public response. It is likely that with so many members in private practice, few of them directly confront issues around committal.

**Conversion Therapy Bill:** Meanwhile, the Select Committee on the Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill has reported back to Parliament. This renders moot, in effect, NZAP's internal attempt to resolve its own public position on the Bill, although a group made an oral submission on NZAP's behalf earlier in 2021.

Legislation aside, we have secured the presence of the Deputy Director-General, DHB Performance and Support and possibly the Deputy Director-General of Mental Health, to present on a panel at the Ka Mua Ka Muri conference. It comes from our relationship earlier developed with Robyn Shearer when she was Deputy Director-General of Mental Health and I am delighted she immediately responded.

## **Ora Taiao**

Claire Miranda's presence has greatly strengthened NZAP's potential contribution to issues of Climate Change and mental health through Ora Taio. (<https://www.orataiao.org.nz/>). It provides an opportunity for NZAP engagement and voice, and for building potential networks with a variety of allied communities.

## **Summary**

The diversity of Public Issues makes it difficult to summarise our work and interests. For example, we have discussed the very major changes with the portending shift from a DHB to a national health system. How we may engage with this is, as yet, unclear. What it highlights, as with other areas, such as legislation, is how under-resourced NZAP remains in terms of public engagement and visibility. It is a difficult problem to address: it reflects both the breadth and complexity of the mental health environment and the difficulty of mobilising our own membership. These will be continuing issues. In the light of that I want, again, to acknowledge the commitment and integrity of the Team in tackling these problems: Andrew Jones, Claire Miranda, Lynne Holdem, Roy Bowden, Veronica Watt and Victoria Smith.

John Farnsworth

Chair.