

Chief Executive's Report AGM 2015

Kia ora tatou

NZSA continues to grow and change. In 2014 we accomplished the restructure of the National Office, delivered our professional development programme, offered 7 research grants, the Janet Frame Memorial Award, the Peter & Dianne Beatson Fellowship and administered and promoted the Waitangi Day Honours. The Mentorship Programme, CompleteMS and StartWrite allowed 20 writers to be mentored and 41 writers to have either their full manuscript or part of their manuscript assessed. Our mentors and assessors are helping to create excellence in writing and a diverse range of high quality work, much of which goes on to be published. Feedback is excellent.

New to the literary sector, and as your representative, I met with CLNZ, PANZ, Book Council, Booksellers, Creative New Zealand, the Writers Guild, Playmarket, Michael King Writers Centre, Auckland Writers Festival, Story lines and other organisations involved with writing, publishing, reading and selling books. I immersed myself in New Zealand's literary culture by attending readers and writers festivals, book launches, branch meetings and book fairs slowly building a sense of the society, its role within the sector and how it is perceived. I also have the privilege of being the writers voice on two boards, We Create (previously the Copyright Council) and Book Week.

Alongside this I endeavoured to maintain the kaupapa of the organisation while trying to solve financial issues that came about at the end of 2013, following the loss of one of our regular funders. We can be a strategic organisation that increases its infrastructure and capability in order to offer more resources for New Zealand's diverse writer communities. In doing so we stay vital as the sector changes. The challenge for national office is to find the funds that allow us to set up exciting new activities that generate income.

We have applied to Creative New Zealand's Toi Uru Kahikatea investment programme for funding for 2016 and 2017 and we have started the process of seeking sponsorship to put on an annual National Writers Forum starting in 2016. In the coming year we will also be seeking donors interested in offering awards to writers, similar to the NZSA Lilian Ida Smith award.

During 2014 National Office administered Governance Structural Reform, including a new Strategic Plan. We reimagined how to administer consolidated accounts and will

be bringing all Branch bank accounts under the one bank so the office can manage all GST.

Communications were fine-tuned; the *NZ Author* became a quarterly magazine, the e-news bulletin had a facelift and is now delivered fortnightly rather than weekly and media releases are now sent out via Mailchimp. We were able to update computer software, purchase a new computer and start building a new website all thanks to funding from Lottery grants.

All of this could not have happened without our Operations Manager Claire Hill. Claire increased membership benefits during the year and we now offer much more than the existing bookshop discounts. She achieves an outstanding amount administering our programmes, awards and membership.

NZSA's strength is our membership. Thank you to all of the office holders giving their time on a voluntary basis. Early in May when we paid capitations, total membership was 1387 compared to 1379 in 2014. Branches play a big part in maintaining and growing membership - one of the two main reasons writers join is to meet other writers (the other is the Professional Development opportunities). The new website will be a support to Branches, bringing their activities to the front page thereby making it easier for writers to find Branch meetings and Hubs to attend. It will also offer simpler but more effective Author Profiles so our writers can promote themselves and their books.

Jackie Dennis