

# Chief executive rejects petition for full elections

NZNO CHIEF executive Memo Musa has rejected a petition signed by 1038 NZNO members seeking full board elections as “unconstitutional and therefore not legally valid”.

In a statement on June 8, Musa said democratically elected board members cannot be removed “except in accordance with the process set out in NZNO’s constitution.”

“The petitions resolution does not meet these requirements and calling an SGM [special general meeting] to consider this resolution would break those rules.”

Musa said he had taken “expert legal advice” including from a Queen’s Counsel, who said he had “no option but to reject the resolution”.

Musa said he had put “my own professional judgement and integrity on the line” with the decision.

Two petitions were lodged after the resignations of Grant Brookes as NZNO president, and four board members.

The first, signed by 1038 members including three former NZNO presidents and lodged on May 12, expressed no confidence in the six remaining directors left on the board. It called for an SGM to hold fresh elections for all 11 places.

But a counter-petition was lodged by Naomi Waipouri and Awa Love, to “reject any SGM”, as members who signed the first petition “have not been fully informed”.

## By-election plans going ahead

Planning for August by-elections for the five vacant positions, including presidency, would continue, Musa said.

Grant Brookes resigned as president on April 23, citing ill-treatment, bullying and unethical behaviour.

Three newly-elected directors – Katrina Hopkinson, Sela Ikavuka and Anne Daniels – quit soon after, citing bullying, an “unsafe” environment and an inability to fulfil their campaign values of transparency, unity and action. Vice-president Cheryl Hanham had earlier resigned,

for “personal reasons”.

Simon Auty, Andrew Cunningham, Margaret Hand and Anamaria Watene remain as directors, alongside kaiwhakahaere Kerri Nuku and tumu whakarae Titihuia Pakeho.

Elected by Te Rūnanga o Aotearoa members, the kaiwhakahaere has no limits on her eligibility to stand for re-election every three years. The president has a two-term limit.

Waipouri and Love’s petition calls on Musa to reject any SGM or defer discussions to the next annual general meeting (AGM).

*“In this instance, the ‘proposed’ petition seeks to remove the existing board members who have been democratically elected, without evidence or effort to manage at a lower level,”* the petition states. This went “to the heart” of union and professional values.

SGMs were *“expensive and time-consuming for both staff and NZNO voluntary members, delegates and representatives and should only be called when there is evidence to support claims.”*

*“While the ability to call an SGM must be available to members, it should not be used to undermine the principles of biculturalism, democracy and professionalism or personal advantage.”*

Waipouri did not respond to *Kai Tiaki Nursing New Zealand’s* request for an interview.

The first petition was launched by Democracy Now, a group of members seeking to rectify the problems facing NZNO, according to former president Nano Tunnicliff, who served from 2009-2012.

Both petitions met the one per cent threshold of members’ signatures. Full details are on the NZNO website. •



Memo Musa

## Membership down by 693

NZNO MEMBERSHIP has dropped by a total of 693 to 50,950 in the two months to May 31, after 1033 members resigned and 680 joined over that period.

The 693 figure included a net figure of 340 people who lost their membership after not paying fees for three months, NZNO corporate services manager David Woltman said. This movement was similar to the same time last year, when a net decrease of 570 members occurred, he said.

A third gave no reason for their resignation. Of the remainder, the main three reasons were dissatisfaction with NZNO (155), retired (124) or no longer nursing (122), member support centre lead adviser Jo Stokker said.

Students and registered nurses made up most of the resignations, at 50 and 41 per cent respectively. That compared to 47 and 36 per cent for this time last year, Woltman said.

Over 50 per cent of resignations were from district health boards; 20 per cent from primary health and nine per cent from aged care.

Stokker said calls had dropped since last month, with about 16 over the past fortnight from members not happy with NZNO and wanting to resign.

Last month, there was an increase in members leaving, after the resignation of Grant Brookes from the NZNO presidency.

Woltman said membership fluctuated regularly, particularly when DHB multi-employer collective agreements (MECA) were being negotiated, as was the case this year. “In a typical year, we would have extraordinary growth in membership during the MECA – then some people quit after the MECA is signed,” Woltman said •