

New president calls for unity

The need for unity and respect was the clear message of newly-elected NZNO president Heather Symes at NZNO's annual general meeting (AGM) on September 17.

"There is no room on this board for insults or putting people down or working against each other – we are going to work in union," Symes told just over 100 NZNO members, staff and representatives on the organisation's first AGM held via Zoom.

As the country's biggest health union, NZNO must speak with "one voice", said Symes, a forensic mental health nurse based in Canterbury. "We have to work together. We're on the same journey. We're all going in the same direction. We all have the same aims."

Symes promised to be an honest and collaborative leader, and only communicate via official NZNO channels – "I'm not a keyboard warrior".

"We're going to work in harmony, we have a lot of mahi to do and we're going forward as a group, as a union."

She was "thrilled" to be working with vice-president Tracey Morgan (see p44), whom Symes had met at her first NZNO board meeting in 2009. Morgan, and many other Te Rūnanga members seemed "shy" back then, Symes said. "But I'm glad to say they have found their voice and are not afraid to speak out now."

All NZNO members had the right to use their democratic voice, she added, thanking those who voted. Just 6.32 per cent (3185) of NZNO's 50,418 eligible members voted in the by-election to replace former president Grant Brookes, who resigned in April. Of those, 2140 voted for Symes and 974 for the other presidential candidate, Canterbury nurse manager Brenda Close. Three Auckland nurses, Geraldine Kirkwood, Noleen Dayal and Diane McCulloch, were elected to fill the three vacancies left when Katrina Hopkinson, Anne Daniels and Sela Ika-vuka resigned in April.

Symes said she hoped to reach as



Heather Symes: 'We are going to work in harmony.'

many members as possible during her year in office, and acknowledged Te Tiriti o Waitangi as New Zealand's founding document.

Te Rūnanga's Midlands representative Tracey Morgan, who took up the vice-president's role unopposed, agreed. "We are moving forward, we are on a journey together." Both are only in the roles until September 2021, having filled vacancies left by two resignations during a three-year term. Morgan said both she and kaiwhakahaere Kerri Nuku had endured "ridicule" and nasty remarks on

social media, but she wanted to stand up and be "freed to care, proud to nurse".

Kaiwhakahaere Kerri Nuku said Aotearoa and NZNO had been through a difficult year. But there were opportunities for "moving past the raruraru [commotion] that we've had and we've got right now". NZNO's whakapapa had seen members rise up and confront challenges "head on". From "maintaining the voice of nurses and, back then, midwives," to developing the supply of students, NZNO "also gave us a place to stand." Nuku said. "The important part of this is solidarity. Staying together, working things out together."

Chief executive Memo Musa said it had been a "challenging" year but there had been much good work done by nurses and NZNO to support members and strengthen relationships. Investment was needed to grow the public health nursing workforce, the system's "backbone".

While membership had dropped by 0.9 per cent over the year to 51,634, the trajectory still pointed to growth. NZNO was "lucky" compared to other unions, many of which were seeing a decrease or "stunted" growth, he said. College and section membership also remained strong, and was seeing some growth.

NZNO had ended the financial year with a net deficit of just over \$570,000 after adjustment, mainly due to the drop in its investment portfolio in the final quarter largely due to COVID-19. Financial reserves remained "healthy".

Musa said: "We are one profession with many different roles and many different voices. Each voice is important. We are a collective and together we can continue to make a massive influence." •

Fuller account of 2019 AGM sought

MEMBER GROUPS were given a second opportunity to raise issues over the 2019 AGM minutes, after technical challenges prevented discussions when the minutes were earlier accepted. Te Tai Tonga/Southern regional council chair Linda Smillie said the 2019 minutes were only a summary, rather than a "full account" of the event and its discussions. It was the history of NZNO to learn from and "own" and should be available to members.

Chief executive Memo Musa said generally minutes were only a summary of AGM decisions rather than capturing the "full body" of discussions. He could not release the 2019 AGM recording due to privacy concerns. However, NZNO would release the draft 2020 minutes as early as possible and consider including a fuller summary in future, Musa said. •

Te poari ‘distracted’ from goals for Māori

TE POARI would prefer to focus on building flourishing Māori communities for a just and healthy society, ensuring Māori had a voice.

However, its efforts were being “distracted” by the need to defend what it had, kaiwhakahaere Kerri Nuku told the NZNO AGM. Predominantly female, nurses knew what it was like not to be listened to or have others define their needs. “We know what it’s like to have our mana diminished by a sexist system that devalues us and what we do.”

The same thing was happening at

Toputanga Tapuhi Kai-tiaki o Aotearoa, with the foundation of its bicultural relationship being “sharply attacked,” she said. “Our elders fought to have Te Rūnanga established and pushed even harder to ensure that we have a governance structure where equity shares power.”

Te Rūnanga had been accused of being “hungry for power and resources”, she said, which was “just untrue”.

There were no Māori-specific roles or funding for Māori-centred projects. “There is no real action plan to tackle the 25 per cent pay gap between Māori and iwi providers and DHBs that is informed by the Rūnanga”.

Bicultural relationship

“We do not have unfettered powers or funds,” she said. “I am personally saddened by the repeated personal attacks on Māori and the fabric of our bicultural relationship. The insinuations and accusations are designed to take away our voice and our presence and replace it with fear, disappointment, pain, loss and hate.”

Te Tiriti expert and constitutional lawyer Moana Jackson has said Te Tiriti-compliant organisations required good

faith, compromise and a reasonable balancing of interests. “But we know at the end of the day that equity does not look like anyone other than us to define what we need to do and how we need to operate.”

This did not mean Te Rūnanga wanted to impose its needs onto the rest of NZNO, but it was currently facing a threat to autonomy over its own matters.

There were many shared aspirations on the pathway forward – raising a healthy society, advancing the profession of nursing and ensuring “us and our col-

leagues get the pay and conditions we deserve”.

To ensure change, Māori must be persistent to bring about structural and legislative change and to ensure a presence and voice. Te Rūnanga members had provided evidence for the Kaupapa Māori services inquiry, Wai 2575, and Te Rūnanga was involved with the legal challenge against

Oranga Tamariki and the mana wahine Waitangi Tribunal inquiry “to name a few”.

Nuku shared an excerpt from American poet and activist Maya Angelou’s poem, *Still I Rise*:

*Out of the huts of history’s shame
I rise
Up from a past that’s rooted in pain
I rise
I’m a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.*



Kerri Nuku

Anti-violence in strategic plan

NZNO WILL restore mention of its work on violence and aggression against nurses to its strategic plan 2021-25, at members’ request during the AGM.

College of emergency nurses New Zealand (CENNZ) chair Sandy Richardson told the AGM it was “really disappointing to see it had been left out”.

She was backed by the cancer nurses college, enrolled nurses section and other representatives.

“It’s a little disturbing to see that violence and aggression isn’t considered at that highest level, because I think it really does need to be acknowledged at that point,” Richardson said.

Chief executive Memo Musa acknowledged it was “an important piece of work”, included in an earlier draft but removed during board decision-making. It was part of NZNO’s work plan. Given the strength of opinion, he was prepared, with the board’s approval, to return it. Richardson thanked him for the “responsiveness”.

Te Tai Tonga/Southern regional chair Linda Smillie said ensuring NZNO was an “effective and sustainable organisation” should be the plan’s first pillar, as “without this the other pillars cannot be attained”. Musa agreed, subject to the board’s approval.

On that basis, the strategic plan was accepted by 93 per cent of voting members.

The strategy focuses on three pillars: Ensuring an effective, sustainable and bicultural NZNO; a skilled, strong workforce; and influencing improved health outcomes.

On the health workforce, NZNO will work to increase the number of Māori and Pacific nurses, ensure they get a fair deal, and safe and fair working conditions for all members.

On health outcomes, NZNO plans to lobby for a well-funded health system with equity of access and culturally appropriate services that reduce health disparities. •

Constitution to undergo independent review

A FULL and independent review of the NZNO constitution will go ahead after all 10 constitutional and policy remits were passed at this year's online annual general meeting (AGM), heralding a raft of changes within NZNO's governance and management.

Overall, 3185 votes were received – 6.32 per cent of NZNO's 50,418 eligible membership – chief executive Memo Musa told the AGM.

A non-nurse can now be employed as NZNO's chief executive. While a nurse may still be the preferred option, the board should be able to draw on the "widest range of potential candidates", according to its rationale. This was agreed to by 2096 to 832 votes received, a 66 per cent majority.

An independent professional director can be appointed to the NZNO board, to "provide expertise in specific areas that may be of benefit to the BOD (board of directors) and organisational functioning". This was agreed by 77 per cent of voting members – 2464.

An independent evaluation of NZNO's safe staffing strategies must also be carried out, including care capacity demand management (CCDM), with options for other approaches including nurse to patient ratios to be considered. Opinion had remained divided on the benefits of CCDM and with the agreed date for its full implementation approaching on June 30, 2021, it was "timely" to review its outcomes, according to the NZNO board

rationale. This passed by 2738 votes to 148, an 87 per cent majority.

A joint policy remit from the mental health nurses' section and college of cancer nurses for the constitution to be "independently reviewed in its entirety" by an external constitutional expert was accepted by 85 per cent of voting members – 2694 out of 3185 votes received. Any proposed changes would then be subject to the one-member-one-vote process at next year's AGM.

The current constitution's requirements had led to division within NZNO over the past year, the member groups said in their rationale. For example, two special general meetings (SGMs) over the former president were linked to the constitution. "We believe accountability will be better achieved by an external, independent review which identifies the obstacles to an effective organisation which may be embedded within a constitution."

They wanted any recommended changes to "support the practice of leaders and members, to enhance the mana of our members and organisation. This requires an examination of how democratic processes for individual members can work within a bicultural partnership".

It was essential any review was not "limited in its scope", as had been proposed by the board. The reviewer should have strong knowledge of constitutional law and bicultural partnerships.

The board had developed its own terms

of reference (TOR) for a constitutional review, excluding any changes which would alter the bicultural partnership (unless ratified by Te Rūnanga) and NZNO's vision, mission and name.

However, as members had voted to accept the joint policy remit, the board's TOR were superseded, chief executive Memo Musa advised members at the AGM. The board was responsible for implementing the review as per the joint policy remit.

Members also agreed to several constitutional amendments to ensure remits which compromised Te Rūnanga or its constitution Ngā Ture would not be subject to the one-member, one-vote process. This was agreed by 2314 to 572 votes, a 73 per cent majority.

In another change, board candidates, including president, vice-president, kai-whakahaere and tumu whakarae, no longer need to be endorsed by their regional council, te poari or national college or section to stand. Instead, their involvement in NZNO activities must merely be confirmed. The intent was to encourage members to be active, rather than needing endorsement.

Musa told *Kai Tiaki Nursing New Zealand* the board would be discussing the planned constitutional review and other remit decisions at its next meeting, likely to be held late October or early November. Voting online during the AGM eventually went smoothly, after glitches were sorted out, Musa said. •

NZNO goes into deficit due to less revenue and more spending

NZNO RECEIVED \$500,000 less membership revenue over 2019/20, as NZNO membership growth did not meet projections, NZNO corporate services manager David Woltman told the annual general meeting.

NZNO ended the financial year with an after-tax deficit of \$842,000. That was the result of \$700,000 less revenue and \$480,000 more spending across a range of areas including consultancy, legal fees, staffing, travel and member insurance. Further investment gains adjusted the net deficit to \$571,000.

A board overspend of \$119,000 related mostly to legal fees of \$130,000. The kaiwhakahaere budget overspend of \$47,000 related to annual leave buyout and travel internationally and locally (including the United Nations forum on indigenous

issues in New York and a Global Nurses' United meeting in the Dominican Republic, also attended by the former president). A membership committee overspend of \$7000 related to travel.

Overall members' funds dropped to \$12.6 million, a \$570,000 drop. Colleges and sections funds remained stable at \$1.692 million, a slight increase. The board's hardship fund established in 2018 sat at \$103,000. NZNO's investment portfolio ended the year up \$229,000 despite an earlier economic downturn.

Consultancy fees of \$349,372 – nearly \$100,000 over budget – included a strategic plan review (\$16,000); district health board multi-employer collective agreement (\$25,000); board elections (\$42,000); digital membership database (\$50,000), among other things, Woltman said in response to a member query. •