



OPINION

## The president comments

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BY TRACEY MORGAN

*July 1, 2021*

“Whāia te iti Kahurangi ki te tuohu koe me he maunga teitei” – Seek the treasure you value most dearly; if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain.

**Ko Hotere me Panehora ōku maunga  
Ko Pokaiwhenua me  
Mangawhero ōku awa  
Ko Ngāti Ahuru me Ngāti Te  
Apunga ōku hapū  
Ko Mangakaretu me  
Paparamu ōku marae  
Ko Tainui tōku waka  
Ko Raukawa tōku iwi  
Ko Tracey Morgan tōku ingoa**

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When I think of this whakataukī, *Whāia te iti Kahurangi*, and how it has been voiced and used many times throughout many conversations, it resonates for me personally with the journey I have taken to where I am today.

I am privileged and very honoured to be in the position

of acting president. I want to thank past president Heather Symes for allowing me to work alongside her again.

I also thank both tumu whakarae Titihuia Pakeho and especially our kaiwhakahaere Kerri Nuku for the continuous leadership they have provided through the past 12 months or so for our organisation.

I am a wife, a mum of four children and an even prouder nan of three grandsons.

And I am a nurse. Something which I am very proud to be, given the tumultuous times that NZNO has been through – with not only staff changes but having to deal with a worldwide pandemic.

Thankfully for nurses, both Kerri and NZNO acting manager, professional and nursing services, Kate Weston, were able to keep all of Aotearoa informed daily of updates.

COVID-19 alone has put a strain on our already stretched nursing workforce.

Also 2020 was the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, and national and international recognition of the workforce was planned. We should have been actively celebrating nurses and midwives, both past, present and future.

When COVID-19 arrived, the nursing workforce worldwide again stepped up to the plate and performed what we all know and do best.

The fundamental basis of NZNO is to support member voices and follow the lead of members.

## **NZNO built on hard work**

Over the past few months or more I have observed increasing tension, as anti-union propaganda about the stability and viability of NZNO appears on social media.

NZNO has been built on the hard work of those who have since passed on.



*Tracey Morgan*

They challenged and were politically astute enough to organise and represent the professional nursing voice.

Our influence has waxed and waned but we have always bounced back due to the resilience we continue to display as nurses.

Now more than ever is our time to fight. I have never backed away from the fight. I believe in human rights and I believe in justice.

**I believe nursing can be stronger if we are collective in our strength and united in our voice.**

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I am proud to be representing an organisation that stands in solidarity and believe now is the time to unify. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder, and let us not turn on ourselves in this pressured time.

I am proud of the hard work and dedication required to fulfil my professional role as a nurse. I am proud to be Māori.

I, like many, am not prepared to let anyone take away my mana.

Likewise, I am not prepared to sit by and see nursing eroded by the Government's inability to recognise our profession.

I am also not prepared to buy into propaganda that our organisation is failing or dysfunctional. I am here to work with you and continue to strengthen NZNO.

As [Māori rangatira] Sir James Henare states: *"We have come too far not to go further, we have done too much not to do more."*