

New Zealand Historical Association 2020 AGM

Held via Zoom at 11am on Thursday 10 December

Present: Michael Belgrave, Carol Neill, Geoff Watson, David Littlewood, Jessica McLean, Mark Dunick, Monica Webb, Suzanne Manning, Peter Meihana, Hayden Thorne, Fiona McKergow, Charlotte Macdonald, Charlotte Greenhalgh, Neill Atkinson, Delwyn Blondell, Sue McCliskie, Aroha Harris, Safua Amaama, Rosemary Goodyear, Katie Pickles.

1. Welcome

Peter Meihana opened the AGM with a mihi.

Michael Belgrave then welcomed attendees as NZHA President.

2. Apologies

Apologies were accepted from **Bronwyn Labrum, Jim McAloon, Marguerite Hill, Rebecca Lenihan, Cybèle Locke, Lyndon Fraser, John Stenhouse, and Eileen Barrett-Whitehead.**

3. Minutes of 2019 AGM

Michael Belgrave moved, and Geoff Watson seconded, that the 2019 AGM Minutes be accepted – PASSED.

4. President's Annual Report

Michael Belgrave read the President's Annual Report.

Charlotte Macdonald requested an amendment to the report, noting that the 2019 NZHA Conference had been organised by a committee that extended beyond Victoria University of Wellington staff.

Michael Belgrave accepted that this amendment should be made.

Geoff Watson requested **Michael Belgrave** to elaborate on the progress made in developing the new History in Schools Curriculum.

Michael Belgrave stated that the development of the curriculum had thus far been marked by a high degree of consensus over key issues, particularly the centrality of Māori perspectives and the need to acknowledge the process and legacies of colonisation. He further noted that this consensus will be tested when the curriculum is made public and asserted that the NZHA should play an active role in any ensuing debates.

Aroha Harris contended that the NZHA should not only participate in debates but take a proactive role in preparing and making comments. She suggested that NZHA contributions should focus on 'high-level' matters, such as the value of historical skills to students and the overall importance of having a New Zealand history curriculum. She

further noted that the curriculum is being trialed in schools and that the response has been generally positive, although with some concerns expressed over specific details.

Michael Belgrave noted that the new curriculum will put history in a privileged position in relation to other social studies subjects. While history teachers view it as a boon, others view it as a challenge. The idea of having a cohesive curriculum for history will set it apart from other social studies subjects. One major challenge will be situating a national curriculum in local contexts – this is an area in which the NZHA could assist.

Michael Belgrave moved, and Charlotte Macdonald seconded, that the President's Annual Report as amended be accepted – PASSED.

5. Treasurer's Annual Report

Carol Neill presented the Treasurer's Annual Report and explained its format. She noted that the overall balance is looking very healthy.

Charlotte Macdonald noted that the income from subscriptions seemed relatively low over the past year and suggested this may indicate a decline in membership.

David Littlewood noted that students had had their subscription fees waived in 2020.

Charlotte Macdonald requested information on current membership numbers.

Jessica McLean suggested that several students had joined the Association due to their subscription fees being waived. She undertook to provide further information on current membership numbers.

Michael Belgrave raised the possibility of instituting a discounted two-year membership, as a way of leveraging the fact NZHA membership is required to present at the biennial conference.

Carol Neill moved, and Peter Meihana seconded, that the Treasurer's Annual Report be accepted – PASSED.

6. Change to NZHA's Financial Year

Carol Neill explained that discussions had been underway for some time about changing the Association's financial year. A motion had previously been put to make this 1 November to 30 October. However, after further discussions with Council, she now proposed that the financial year be change to 1 July to 30 June. This would allow membership and conference expenditure to be fully reported on in the Treasurer's Annual Report. She further noted that the Constitution will need to be amended to change the financial year but that the membership subscription year should remain fixed to the calendar year.

Geoff Watson voiced his support for this proposal.

Suzanne Manning also recorded her support, while noting that the Government's financial year also ends on 30 June.

Aroha Harris supported the proposal, particularly in helping to meet the NZHA's obligations as an incorporated society. She did, however, note that it will require a timely transition of financial authority and details from one executive to the next.

Carol Neill moved, and Aroha Harris seconded, that the NZHA's financial year be changed to 1 July to 30 June, but that the membership subscription year remains fixed to the calendar year. This question to be put to electronic vote by the NZHA membership – PASSED.

7. Notice of Intention to Undertake a Review of NZHA Constitution

Michael Belgrave presented the document *Reviewing the NZHA Constitution: A Proposal for Change*. He spoke to its main points, while also acknowledging the work already done in this area by previous executives.

Suzanne Manning indicated her support for a review and welcomed the idea of a steering group to drive the project.

Charlotte Macdonald welcomed the general idea of a review but noted that the proposal was something of a mixture between matters that require constitutional change and wider questions around the purpose of the NZHA. She further asserted that the NZHA is now an organisation for people studying New Zealand history in its broadest sense, whereas it had been founded more as an organisation for academic historians working in New Zealand. She voiced some concerns over the extent to which connections are being maintained with the wider NZHA membership.

Michael Belgrave acknowledged that the proposed review would need to be extensively discussed with the wider membership and asserted that the overall purpose of the NZHA should be the first matter examined.

Monica Webb emphasized the importance of the NZHA broadening and deepening its connections with other organisations.

Fiona McKergow further emphasized the need for a better flow of information between the NZHA and other organisations. In response to a request from **Michael Belgrave**, she then detailed the work being undertaken by PHANZA to develop a code of ethics and professional practice.

Hayden Thorne identified the importance of the practical issues that confront the NZHA, particular the need for more regular communication with the wider membership.

Aroha Harris suggested that the process should not just be a constitutional review, but a review into the whole ethos and purpose of the NZHA. She asserted that the 'big questions' need to be answered first, before the practical issues and updating of the constitution takes place. She further suggested a catchier title than 'constitutional review' be formulated to encourage wider engagement in the process.

Michael Belgrave moved, and Mark Dunick seconded, that subject to an acknowledgment that the proposed changes encompass both the overall purpose of the NZHA as well as constitutional matters, and that the wider membership be invited to fully participate and comment on the process, the document Reviewing the NZHA Constitution: A Proposal for Change be accepted as a basis on which to proceed – PASSED.

8. NZHA 2021 Conference Planning

David Littlewood outlined the decisions made to date regarding the 2021 Conference:

- Planning will proceed on the basis of an ‘in person’ event, but contingencies will be made for a ‘virtual’ alternative.
- Venue: Massey University’s Palmerston North Campus.
- Dates: Tuesday 23 November to Friday 26 November (the Tuesday to be a postgraduate day with a keynote address in the evening).
- Theme: Ako: Learning from History?
- A call for papers will be issued in the new year, with a rolling date of 28 February to 30 June for submissions.

Charlotte Macdonald outlined her experiences at recent conferences. She described how a purely Zoom-based event had left attendees feeling somewhat isolated and made it difficult to establish connections. In contrast, the recent New Historians Conference, which combined ‘virtual’ elements with a substantial ‘in person’ element, had been a great success. She strongly supported the idea of having a postgraduate day as part of the 2021 conference and suggested that events such as the recent Gender History Seminar Series could be rolled into the event.

Charlotte Greenhalgh spoke further on the great success of the Gender History seminars.

Charlotte Macdonald emphasised that the conference is the showpiece occasion of the NZHA, and that the executive should not be afraid to utilise the Association’s funds to make it the best event possible.

Aroha Harris noted that the Auckland University executive had made extensive efforts to source outside funding and support for the 2017 conference.

9. Archives New Zealand and National Library

Michael Belgrave outlined the discussions he has held with senior staff at both institutions, and how Richard Foy and Rachel Essen had attended an NZHA Council-Executive meeting earlier in the year. He noted the appointment of a new Chief Archivist at Archives New Zealand and undertook to remind him of his predecessor’s commitment to arrange induction sessions for postgraduate students.

Hayden Thorne outlined some of the efforts that had occurred at Victoria University of Wellington to lobby against the National Library’s disposal of its overseas book collections. He further recommended that the NZHA arrange a meeting with the new Minister of Internal Affairs.

Aroha Harris advocated a wider process of encouraging individuals from other organisations or institutions to attend NZHA meetings, and that the NZHA should also seek to attend meetings held by others.

Charlotte Macdonald supported the idea of arranging a meeting with the new minister.

Michael Belgrave acknowledged that arranging such a meeting would be a desirable course.

10. General Business

Charlotte Macdonald spoke to the desirability of collaborating between the various university history departments to resist further retrenchment measures.

Geoff Watson commented on past discussions regarding the relationship between the NZHA and the *New Zealand Journal of History*. He suggested that some people were deterred from publishing in the *NZJH* because the most recent issues are subscription-only online – this is a particular concern given the pressures imposed by PBRF.

Carol Neill noted that several of the teachers interviewed relating to the new history curriculum had also voiced concerns over the pay-walling of journals.

11. Close

At 12:20pm **Michael Belgrave** thanked everyone for attending and wished them an enjoyable festive season. He expressed the hope that 2021 will prove to be a better year than 2020.