

New Zealand Historical Association

President's report 2025

For Annual General Meeting, 2 December 2025

Ngā mihi atu ki a tatou,

In a break from tradition, this year's AGM is being held on zoom after the conference. Further, the conference itself was organised by an Auckland/Waikato team, somewhat distinct from the executive. This is something of a departure now that we have moved to a 'national' executive that includes representatives from across the motu not all of whom are on the ground for conference-organising.

The conference organisers for 2025 shifted the focus of the conference in order to broaden the NZHA's agenda and advance the goal over our term of reaching out to associations and communities of historians and history teachers beyond academia, such as museum and gallery professionals, school teachers, and iwi.

We will have the opportunity to discuss these changes at the AGM. From the perspective of the current executive, the new model is working quite well and frees up some representatives to focus on other associational matters.

1. Membership

As the treasurer's report shows, the membership of the association is fairly steady, at around 200 members (roughly 150 of whom pay subscriptions). We had hoped to encourage academic historians from areas working outside of the history of these islands to join up to the NZHA, but that effort has not been as successful as we initially hoped. Many of those historians already belong to associations for their own fields.

2. Prizes

As is customary in conference year, the NZHA offered a suite of article and book prizes. The current executive created a new article prize, the Sekhar Bandyopadhyay Prize for the best article by a New Zealand-based scholar in any field, excluding the field of New Zealand history, published in the previous two years.

3. Advocacy

We continued our advocacy and lobbying work on a number of issues relating to history and historians in Aotearoa. Our biggest effort was in regard to the proposed cuts of historians and likely services at the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. Web Convenor Rebecca Lenihan led this effort and created a page on our website dedicated to advocacy in support of the important work that historians at the ministry undertake. This effort was supported by a wide range of associations. While some of the cuts went ahead, we understand that at least one position was retained, which is a demonstration that advocacy does matter.

No doubt this work will need to continue next year. The new social studies curriculum recently issued by the Ministry of Education is one area that we know members are concerned about. We

will be discussing this at the conference and some follow up actions may arise from those discussions. We trust that the incoming executive will pick up these important matters.

4. Associational connections

We continued to develop connections with other associations within Aotearoa and abroad. Charlotte Greenhalgh has been organizing a monthly drop-in zoom session for representatives from a wide range of like-minded associations, including archivists, heritage sector, museums, genealogists and others. These meetings have served to connect people and spread the word about upcoming lobbying and other issues.

We have worked closely with PHANZA in particular, which is the closest association to us in terms of shared goals, as well as an overlapping membership. We hope those ties will only strengthen in future.

5. NZJH

The issues with the NZJH regarding the editorial decision not to publish Kerry Pollocks' review of Linda Bryder's book proved particularly difficult for the executive in the first half of this year. There will be an update on new terms of reference for the governance and editorial team at the AGM and members will have the opportunity to discuss these in full then.

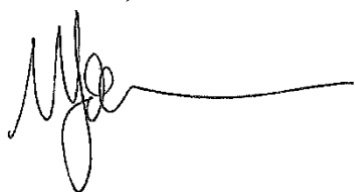
6. The future of NZHA

As I outlined in my previous president's report, the NZHA faces a number of headwinds, including declining numbers of academics who are available take up executive roles. The financial situation of the association is not as robust as it once was. We have found it difficult to elicit engagement from members on particular issues, for instance in regard to developing a values and identity statement for the association that we might include in the new constitution.

For these reasons, and because we have been collaborating with PHANZA quite closely this year, the current executive began a conversation with the PHANZA executive about reinforcing such collaborations in future. We ran a survey for members of both associations to gauge interest in collaboration or even the possibility of merging the two associations or creating a new association. The majority of members of both associations are keen to see further collaboration. Responses to the idea of a merger or new association are more mixed but may be worth revisiting in future. There is also a proposal to consider a federation of like-minded associations to increase our collective profile and improve shared advocacy and lobbying efforts. The outgoing executive team will be briefing the incoming executive extensively on these conversations.

Thank you all very much for your support over our term and we look forward to discussing many of these issues at the AGM.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Miranda Johnson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Miranda Johnson
17 November 2025