



## AUCKLAND JUSTICES OF THE PEACE ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

*Established 1922*

### **2018 Presidents Report**

The past year has been one of considerable changes for our Association. While we have made significant progress there are still challenges ahead and goals to be accomplished.

Diversity is one of the popular catch phrases commonly used in the community. We can all feel really proud that our Association is a leader with our members reflecting the multi ethnic mix of New Zealand's population.

It is always great to welcome new Justices of the Peace to our ranks. Not only do they bring new ideas and enthusiasm but they also help replace the members who leave or retire. The abnormally elongated 2017 General Election process significantly disrupted the procedure of appointing new Justices of the Peace and only recently have we seen signs that the process is returning to normal.

Unfortunately the relatively high number of Justices who choose to remain inactive rather than retire or resign is continuing to cause problems particularly with Service Desk rosters. Not having enough people available to support Service Desks directly impacts our ability to provide service to the public as well as placing additional workloads on those Justices willing to work on the rosters. This is an issue that is being felt by other Associations throughout New Zealand. We are aware that the Royal Federation Board is in ongoing discussions with the Minister to determine solutions to this problem. During the year I and other Council members and Support Group Coordinators have met with a number of local Members of Parliament. The objective of these meetings has been to enlist the MP's assistance in encouraging non active Justices to become active or resign. This has had a moderate amount of success and several MP's have held gatherings to honour Justices of the Peace who have elected to retire. The meeting with MPS have also been useful by providing us with the opportunity to remind them of the attributes that our Association looks for in new Justices of the Peace.

### **2018 Council**

I want to express my appreciation to the hard work that the members of this year's Council have put in to their role. It has not been easy and we have faced a number of challenges. Most importantly we have made great progress. This year has seen an increasing focus from Council on our members particularly those who provide front line service to the public that we serve. I am confident that this focus will continue in future

### **Key Council Committees**

#### **Membership – Sherryl Wilson**

Thanks to the diligence and efforts of our Registrar, Janet Thompson, very regular contact is made and maintained with members via telephone, email, and recently our Facebook Page.

Ric Carlyon has maintained contact also for many years via the AJPA website and this will be enhanced even further with the new website.

Our database of members is kept updated by the Registrar as she tracks the details of new members, transfers in and out, as well as those that uplift the opportunity to convert their status to that of retired or resigned.

It is vital that members remain updated in terms of their knowledge, skills and education, especially with the ever increasing use of electronic documentation. Also members must ensure they are readily available to serve the public as per the oath of office taken. If members feel unable to meet any of these duties and obligations then resignation or retired (having served a minimum of ten years) status are options.

The Association expresses its appreciation and gratitude to those members who so willingly and generously give of their time and talents to serve the public of Auckland.

### **Support Groups / Service Desks – Sherryl Wilson**

This committee has had three leaders in the past twelve months due to the resignation from Council of Dawn Jones, the very hard working first chair for over two years. Ric Carlyon held this position for some months in 2018 before being appointed the Auckland Regional Representative to the Royal Federation Board with Sherryl Wilson taking over this role.

Having established the HUB Education Sessions early last year, it was resolved to continue this structure as a means of disseminating training, given the local Hub Managers being very responsible and organized and working well with their AJPA Liaison Personnel. Members have taken the opportunity to attend the Hub Meeting Session that suits them and their calendar. Two HUB Sessions have been held during March-May and June-September 2018 in nine different locations, covering the following topics:

- Statutory Declarations, Private Citizenship Ceremonies and a Quiz
- Affidavits and Dissolution of Marriage

The interactive approach to learning taken by the Training Team has been positively received by those attending. This committee extends its appreciation to the trainers who have listened to feedback and amended the model of delivery. However it is disappointing to note that only 33% of the members (approximately) take advantage of these education sessions.

Training is still undertaken in many of the Support Groups as well and this is pleasing to note although most groups have reduced their meetings around the timing of the HUB Sessions.

In February, Service Desk Kits were distributed to all Support Groups for the use of desks operating in the AJPA region, containing forms with accompanying notes, the Ministerial Manual, some stamps, forms for recording client services, stationery and for those that requested, a Surface Pro Tablet with which to access the internet. It is envisaged in the coming months that statistics will be able to be sent directly from these tablets to the Registrar for collating the necessary returns. At this date there are 70 authorized Service Desks operating in the region manned by dedicated, responsible and trained Justices of the Peace from this Association. It is an aspirational goal that all members working on these desks will be active, current and accredited.

### **Judicial Group – Susan Walker**

This year has seen the retirement of four long-standing Judicial Justices of the Peace, Eddie Stark, Angela Siu, Mark Sinclair and Allan Spence. We are enormously indebted to them all for so many years of unstinting service. We hope to recognise them later in the year, or early next year, with a Special Sitting of the District Court presided over by the Chief District Court Judge.

Four candidates have been selected to undergo training next year to become Judicial Justices. The course is demanding and time-consuming, and students grapple with new terminology and unfamiliar concepts. We wish our candidates well. They will be ready to sit on the bench by the end of next year, but it will be a few years before they have the skills and knowledge to be confident as lead Justices.

Our workload continues to decrease for a number of reasons, including traffic policing policies, police diversion, and loss of work to Registrars and Community Magistrates. Nevertheless, we continue to give hours of work to the community, freeing up judges for more serious matters. Over this last year we sat for 2,251 hours in the four Auckland courts, dealing with 3983 traffic matters, and 12,650 charges in the Remand Court.

The panel members attend four training seminars a year, and sometimes additional training in order to be as up-to-date and competent as possible. Thank you to everyone on the panel for your continuing good-will and service.

### **Complaints Committee – Susan Walker**

From the end of June 2017 to the end of June 2018, the Association received 28 complaints about its members. We also have one matter held from the year before awaiting the results of a Commerce Commission Investigation.

Of the 28 complaints, 3 were referred to the Ministry of Justice, and of those one has resigned after a criminal conviction, and another after admitting to bankruptcy. We await the Ministry's decision on the third matter.

Of the complaints dealt with by the Association, all have been resolved. 14 complaints involved a complaint that the Justice had made a mistake of some sort in their Ministerial work. 7 complaints involved an accusation of rudeness, racism or insensitivity. Some complaints alleged both. 3 complaints alleged misuse of the letters JP, or using the position of Justice of the Peace to secure some personal advantage. 7 complaints were of conduct unbecoming a Justice of the Peace in the JP's private or personal life. These involved some very serious issues, such as those referred to the Ministry, and less serious ones such as intemperate use of social media.

Generally the complaints are dealt with by advising of best correct procedure or usage. Sometimes extra training is given.

### **Ministerial Training Team – Garry Nicholls**

I am extremely grateful to the members of the Training Team for the commitment in delivering and facilitating training for our members. The way you have freely given up your weekends and evenings to ensure our members deliver an informed service to the public is much appreciated. The introduction of Hub Sessions that have been more interactive than previously have proven very popular. Even with a serious topic like Marriage Dissolution most groups appeared to have lots of fun while engaging in a learning experience at the same time.

Increasing the number of members who are accredited is always a challenge particularly with early Accreditation adopters seeking to renew. Increasing the number of accredited members will be a key objective in 2018 / 2019. It is pleasing to note that the Royal Federation is currently reviewing the questions. Hopefully most of the ambiguity will be removed.

## **Finance and Registry – Selwyn Howarth**

Part of the 2017 Lottery grant was used to upgrade our website and membership database as well as subsidise attendees at the Royal Federation conference which was held in Christchurch in March.

We have continued to supplement our income from member's subscriptions with applications to Lotteries and Auckland Council. These grants are important in assisting us to hold membership subscriptions at current levels. We also want to continue to assist our Service Desks which continue to be a key part of the service that we deliver to our customers the public of Auckland.

We are fortunate to have both an outstanding Registrar and an outstanding Treasurer. Our Registrar delivers a high quality, responsive service for our members and is continually going the 'extra mile' well beyond what her role requires. For the third year in a row our Treasurer has ensured that our financial statements gained an unconditional review. His focus on the financial management and particularly members subscriptions have been very important factors in maintaining our Associations financial health.

## **Moving Forward**

The coming year 2018 / 2019 will be another busy year for our Association. We have recently applied to Lotteries for a further grant. We will learn the results of our application in October. The key targets for the grant will be:

- Making the finishing touches to our website / members database. The website update team led by Selwyn Haworth and Owen Goodwin have done a great job to get us to where we are but there are still finishing touches that need to be made.
- Providing assistance to Service Desks and in particular the members working on the busy Service Desks. We recognise that stamps wear out and the cost of replacement is significant.

We will continue to deal with the issue of non-active Justices of the Peace through direct engagement, encouraging JP retirement where appropriate, working with local Members of Parliament, and initiating and supporting initiatives at Royal Federation Annual Conference.

The training programme for 2018 / 2019 will include initiatives targeted at helping members gain accreditation. There will also be a greater focus on training at Support Group meetings.

## **Thank You**

Our success will continue on the efforts of our members as they continue to provide an outstanding service to the public of New Zealand. Thank you to those of you who are Support Group Coordinators, Service Desk rosterers and particularly those of you who see people at your home as well as work on Service Desk rosters.

We are all part of a professional volunteer organisation that is widely regarded and respected in the community.

**Garry Nicholls, President**