



## **AUCKLAND JUSTICES OF THE PEACE ASSOCIATION INC (since 1922)**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020**

Flexibility and adaptability have proven to be the strengths of individual members, support groups and the AJPA Council in the ever changing climate in which we find ourselves these past six months.

Twelve months ago when preparing this report, Covid-19 was not in our vocabulary but now this term determines our everyday lives, health, travel and work as a Justice of the Peace in our communities.

The responsiveness to this demonstrated by so many of our members has been outstanding and we are indebted to each and every one of you who have been able to meet the needs of the public in these challenging times. It has also meant that some of our members have reflected on their own health as well as that of their family and opted to take retired status which is very understandable. We take this opportunity to collectively extend our thanks to them for their willing service over countless years.

The Council and Committees have continued to meet regularly in-person wherever possible, but also using modern technology such as via Zoom during Levels 3 & 4 so the business of the Association can continue.

The safety of our members and the public resulted in the decision to provide Perspex screens together with hand and desk sanitizers at all our service desks early on in this pandemic and it is hoped these will continue to be used as the corona virus is not the only bug of which we must be aware.

One of the special highlights being the President is attending the Swearing in Ceremony of new Justices of the Peace, welcoming them and their diversity as well as their families who witness this special occasion. Their enthusiasm, willingness to learn and participate on our service desks has been exemplary. We are indebted to District Court Judge Cunningham and Judge Mathers for the personalized manner in which they lead these occasions.

Sadly there have been fewer ceremonies in the past twelve months due to the slowness of appointments being made as well as the restrictions of Covid-19.

At the beginning of this term of office, orientation sessions for new council members were initiated to support their induction to council and these have proven worthwhile.

Regular communication with members is a vital aspect of the role of Council and this continues via the growing membership of our Facebook Page, the AJPA website, the President's Quarterly Newsletters, as well as emails to the Support Group Coordinators or directly to members via Mailchimp. Gratitude is extended to the Coordinators for forwarding on the important news re Covid-19 from the AJPA or Royal Federation during these times when the Registry staff could not access our offices to send out news or updates to individual members.

Towards the end of 2019, our Registrar Janet Thompson indicated a desire to reduce her hours so procedures were put in place to seek an Administrative Assistant and we were delighted to appoint Karen Avery JP to this role.

Several members of Council and partners attended the successful Royal Federation Conference in Hawera in February. We were delighted that our very own Garry Nicholls was elected to the position of Vice President and less than three months later into the role of President due to the illness of Terry Byrne, whom we have wished a speedy recovery. As a result Terry Holding was appointed to the position of Auckland Regional Representative.

This year two special committees were established of which one was Strategic Planning and as a consequence the fourth draft was presented and adopted by the Council in July and is posted on the AJPA website. Council and Committees are now looking to incorporate those key strategies into actions for each year, to ensure month to month activities align with the longer purpose and plan. In the formative stage is the other committee, Centenary Planning, given this Association turns one hundred years in 2022.

The opportunity to meet with MPs, advising them the criteria the Council is seeking in new Justices to be nominated as well as to express our concern re the inactive Justices is appreciated. All have been receptive and have continued to communicate with us. The Council is concerned there are still too many members who are inactive, do not serve on service desks nor attend their support groups or regular training. This is an ongoing issue and we are in regular communication with Royal Federation and in turn with the Ministry of Justice.

Hon Justice Edwin Wylie QC has stepped down as our Patron after serving us well, and we are delighted that Hon Justice Simon Moore QC has accepted the invitation to be the Association's Patron.

Both Judge Philippa Cunningham and Judge Philip Recordon have agreed to be our Vice Patrons. These appointments will be formalized at the Annual General Meeting.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Membership – Frank Rands

Work has been carried out on a membership audit and a Google form has been developed to enable Support Group Coordinators to track their individual groups and provide some transparency to the membership. The implementation of this audit to Support Group Coordinators was held off due to Covid-19 but they should expect to be contacted in the upcoming year by their Council Liaison Personnel to commence this process.

Considerable effort has been made by the Treasurer and members of Council to advise members of their financial status. Although this work has netted great results in that only 11 of our current membership were non-financial, it has placed a considerable workload on the Treasurer and Council members who could well spend their time on more worthwhile projects for the Association. The membership is reminded that the final date for payment of subscriptions for 2020/21 is 31 December 2020. Invoices will be sent following the AGM when the subscription amount will be set.

On the whole our membership numbers remain fairly static with new Justices coming online and replacing those who are taking retirement after completing long service as Justices in the community. It is anticipated that some analytical work will be undertaken by Council during the upcoming year to determine by Auckland suburb where we are in need.

YE 30/6/19		YE 30/6/20
7	Life Memberships	8
47	New JPs Sworn	50
9	Transfers IN ex other Associations	8
12	Members re-joined	6
19	Deaths	26
31	Resignation or Retirement	53
6	Resignation from Association	3
14	Transfers OUT to other Associations	17
1,363	Total Membership	1,336

### Registry and Finance – Terry Holding

The 2019 -20 year sees the Association in a sound financial position and generating an excess. This is due to a number of factors. These include the Covid-19 situation meaning that budgets relating to some areas were not fully utilised and the successful NZ Lottery Grants Board application. This excess has meant the Association has sufficient reserves to recommend no increase in fees for next year. However, at the same time the Council has recommended a deficit budget to maintain our operations at the same level in the absence of a successful grant.

The Lottery Grant was instrumental in enabling a continuation of the stamps and badges scheme, the provision to service desks of personal safety equipment on re-opening, service desk banners and pavement boards, updating and reprinting the logbooks as well as funding for attendance at the Royal Federation Conference. The Association expresses its thanks to the NZ Lottery Grants Board for supporting the valuable services that Association members provide to the community.

A big thank you is due to the Registry staff in what has been a difficult year. Throughout the lock-down they found ways to ensure that the Association's business carried on and members were fully supported. Thanks to our Registrar, Janet Thompson and to our newly appointed Administrative Assistant, Karen Avery for their efforts and flexibility. Thanks also to Geoff Pownall, our Treasurer who continues to be timely, proactive, and thorough. He keeps the Committee and Council fully informed. These people are key to the success of the Association and the professional manner in which they carry out their tasks working far more than the hours for which they are remunerated.

### Support Groups and Service Desks – Sherry Wilson

During this year two Support Groups merged with others in their locale ie former Eden-Epsom members are attending one of the three local groups and Papatoetoe has remerged with Manukau/South bringing the total support groups to 24. All have been visited regularly by their AJPA Liaison Personnel and the President has visited almost all at least once as well. It is pleasing to note that most use these meetings for ongoing targeted training and utilize the skills and talents of our ministerial trainers, to whom we are very grateful.

Members can use these opportunities for Accreditation purposes also. These meetings are a means of information sharing, advising new strategies as well as networking.

In February the Association once again hosted the annual meeting for Support Group Coordinators and Rosterers, and all support groups were represented with very positive feedback and interaction. This year has seen five new leaders of Support Groups who have accepted the role of Coordinator.

The arrival of Covid-19 saw the closure of all service desks during Levels 3 & 4 and the relocation of some desks from a few venues where social distancing was impossible once these reopened under Level 2. Some venues did not open until Level 1 thus the public in some areas within the Association's geographic region could not access a Justice of the Peace at a service desk for many weeks. This puts a strain on individual members in these areas as well as the fact there have been different criteria operating so it is important to check the Royal Federation website for updates.

Our current 65 service desks under normal circumstances are becoming increasingly busy as more members of the public are aware of their existence. However we do need more members to uplift this opportunity to assist so the burden doesn't always fall on the willing few. Please contact your Rosterer if you can assist even if it is irregularly. If you do not feel confident, request another member sit with you for the first few sessions. An aspirational goal is that only accredited members will serve on our desks - already in some areas this has been achieved.

Significant inroads have been made to bring the service desk statistics that are gathered into the electronic age. These important figures are now collected electronically which has saved a considerable amount of time and effort on behalf of Council members and Registry staff.

The further introduction of electronic rosters and collection of statistics by services desks, has increased productivity and eased the burden on some Support Groups. It is hoped that many of the service desks which are currently still working on manual systems move to this electronic version which and reduce the workload of Rosterers and Coordinators.

These statistics gathered from each of our authorised service desks are collected, collated and form an important and vital function in reporting these to the Royal Federation as well as providing data when we make application for funding from institutions such as the NZ Lottery Grants Board. Whilst these have diminished substantially due to service desk closures in recent months, they are an indication of the dedication and commitment of our members who voluntarily serve on these authorised service desks.

HUB Professional Development Meetings had to be rescheduled once again due to Covid-19. Eight of the nine have been held at the time of writing and it is hoped the ninth can be held within the coming month. Topics covered were certifying documents and meeting requirements under the Anti Money Laundering (AML) Act as well as from electronic sources with particular reference to the Authority & Instruction (A&I) form, Foreign Documents, Statutory Declarations and use of social media. These have been well attended with members using these to update their Accreditation status.

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

Like most areas of our activities the professional development of members has been significantly impacted by Covid-19 particularly during the lockdown. However there were some highlights.

During the year 87 prospective Justices of the Peace were interviewed. Interviews are now held at both Auckland and Manukau District Courts. There has been an increase in the number of nominations coming through in recent months due to the release of the backlog caused by Covid-19 and the work done with local MPs by the AJPA Council and a number of Support Group Coordinators.

There were 61 provisionally appointed Justices who successfully completed Induction training. This included 5 who successfully completed their Induction on line during lockdown.

Refreshers were held for new Justices before they were sworn and 47 attended these refreshers throughout the year.

One of the highlights of the year was the Accreditation Study Group which resulted in 256 members achieving or renewing their Accreditation on line during the lockdown period. This was a very beneficial activity. A further session has been held in August with 35 participating and another is scheduled for November.

During the year the training team has also conducted a number of professional development sessions at Support Group sessions throughout the region. These sessions are a valuable part of Support Group Meetings.

The training team has contributed to the update of the Royal Federation Ministerial Manual which is due to be released shortly.

Lois Cuneen has assumed the role of AJPA Training Coordinator replacing Garry Nicholls following his appointment as Royal Federation President. During the year Amit Prasad, Bruce Kilmister and Geoff Polkinghorne have joined the training team. Steven Arnold has had to withdraw sadly from the team due to his increasing professional workload.

Earlier this year the team was saddened by the death of Rex Chandler. Rex had been part of the training team for many years and had been the AJPA Training Coordinator and in more recent years a mentor and technical support resource. Rex's contribution not only within the Auckland training team but also nationally was widely recognised.

### **Ministerial Conduct and Ethics– Ginny Radford**

Fortunately the majority of Justices of the Peace render service in a polite, helpful, friendly and accurate way. However some neglect courtesy and politeness in their dealings, resulting in several Conduct and Ethics complaints each month. All are followed up, and where possible, advice, professional development, and support is given to the Justice involved. Apologies are offered to the client involved.

A lack of competence also figures in Conduct and Ethics concerns - accreditation and professional development at HUB sessions is making some inroads into outdated procedures still in use.

### **Judicial – Susan Walker**

This year our panel has decreased in size to 19 members. Two panel members have retired: Neville Madden and Ken Graham, both stalwarts of the Manukau District Court. Neville has been sitting for 14 years and Ken for a massive 44 years, which will never again be repeated. He began sitting in 1976 soon after being sworn in. We thank them both for their many years of tireless service.

We anticipate a further tranche of retirements at the end of this year, as the Chief District Court Judge has issued a directive that no Justices over the age of 75 may sit on the bench. This will mean a great deal of change to our panel but we are heartened to have a number of excellent students currently undergoing the very difficult training course run by Royal Federation, whom we anticipate rostering from the end of this year. We have already selected a small group to undergo training in 2021. We shall make another general call for applicants next year.

Covid-19 has caused many interruptions to our year. As we went into Level 3, an order was made forbidding any Justices aged over 70 from sitting in the courts, and a few days later, as we entered Level 4, all Justices of the Peace were stood down. However, when we returned to Level 3, we were welcomed back into Remands Courts, and Judges regained their Saturdays with some relief. It took quite a lot longer for Minors courts to restart, and we are still dealing with the effects of Covid-19 some months later, as defendants whose cases have been adjourned many times finally get their moment in court.

Another impact of Covid-19 has been that we will have one fewer judicial seminar this year. However, the training team has been kept busy with the new students.

Gratitude is extended to all panel members who do their very best to ensure that the Auckland Association can meet the requirements of the four Auckland district courts for trained, competent, and available Judicial Justices.

### **Technology – Aston Moss**

The Technology Committee has been focussed on an assessment of existing resources and our current and future needs. This includes ensuring that the equipment we have, such as the Surface Pros, is allocated to optimise use.

Technology continues to evolve at a significant pace. We have identified ways in which to improve our use of technology across the board including through reassessing our website and database needs to provide effectiveness, efficiency and to optimise our costs. These will be focusses in the year ahead and we are progressing them in such a way as to limit risk through parallel databases.

What has been pleasing to see was the use of technology by some of the Professional Development Team, as well as Council throughout lockdown. These efforts resulted in a lift in the numbers of accredited Justices and the use of video-conferencing enabled Council members to attend meetings as planned and to ensure the organisation was able to continue to operate despite the limitations imposed across the various levels.

### **Social/Fellowship – Frank Rands**

Two activities were arranged during the reporting period which included a luncheon and an afternoon tea at Eden Gardens. Both events were considered a success although numbers were down on previous years. These social activities allow members to network and maintain important contacts and create an atmosphere of a convivial nature.

## **Communication – Ginny Radford**

The closed Facebook page is continuing to be a useful forum for celebration and testing of ideas. It is pleasing to note that an increasing number of members are opening emailed newsletters and announcements, thus staying up to date.

Efforts to maximise the currency of contact data on 'Find a JP' are continuing through discussions with Support Groups and Coordinators, whose knowledge of local Justice of the Peace is invaluable.

Several media spots have focused on individual Justices and their volunteer work which is good recognition of their service

The management of client services during Covid-19 was reliant on communication via Facebook, the AJPA website and email thus enabling good communication to be maintained with most members.

## **Specialist Functions – Neville Madden**

In mid-2019 the Police ran a Training Session on the new youth age which was very enlightening and well attended by Nominated Persons.

During February two Issuing Officer training sessions were held, one in the north and one in the south, chaired by Roger Brookes. Both were very well attended.

In March 2020 the Specialist Functions Committee held its first full Committee Meeting, those who attended were Sherryl Wilson (President), Frank Rands (Vice President), Rob Jay (Section 9 Coordinator), Roger Brookes (Issuing Officers Coordinator) and Neville Madden (Specialist Functions Coordinator).

Early 2020 was a trying time with Covid-19 which resulted in Issuing Officers and Section 9 JPs being classed as Essential Workers, however after consultation with the DAOs it was agreed to do Section 9 via Zoom; this was a great time saver. Nominated Persons were put on hold by the Police except in exceptional circumstances.

## **GRATITUDE**

It would be impossible for the Association to function well without the diligence and goodwill of the membership. On behalf of the Council we are most grateful for the positive role that each of you plays in providing this **outstanding voluntary service** to the community, be it at a service desk, in your home or place of work, especially during these unprecedented times brought about by Covid-19.

To our Registry Team – Registrar Janet Thompson, Treasurer Geoff Pownall and Administrative Assistant Karen Avery – our sincere appreciation for the professionalism, time and energy expended on the membership's behalf.

To our Support Group Coordinators and Rosterers we thank you for taking on the mantle of leadership and the extra duties these entail. We extend special thanks to those of you who support our committee structures outside of council especially the Ministerial Trainers willingly delivering professional development at Support Groups and HUB Meetings.

To Susan Walker who has served the maximum of three two-year terms on Council my sincere appreciation for her valuable contributions and leadership as Chairman of the Judicial Committee and previously also Chairman of the Ministerial Complaints (renamed Conduct and Ethics) Committee. Susan has a wealth of knowledge and experience both as a Ministerial and Judicial Justice of the Peace and willingly shares this.

To Garry Nicholls whose term as Immediate Past President has ended, my sincere appreciation for his support and guidance. As our Head Trainer, Garry has made a significant contribution to this Council and the membership over many years.

To all Council Members, I extend my grateful appreciation for your support and the commitment you each have given to your individual responsibilities.

It has been a great pleasure and an immense privilege to serve as your President these past two years and I offer my willing support and assistance to the incoming AJPA Council team. We have much to celebrate!

Sherryl Wilson  
**PRESIDENT**