

## **AGM 2022 PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

It gives me great pleasure to present my report to the Association for the period from October 2021 to September 2022. I think that much has been accomplished by your Council.

### **Communication:**

We have continued to move towards more electronic communication over the past year. The AJPA website has undergone substantial further development and is now indicating to the public that our Service Desks should be the first place to find a JP, and an appointment with an individual Justice should be an alternative used less often. Our website is an excellent source of up-to-date relevant information, providing a one-stop shop for our Justices and the public. The Sunday morning email update continues to be popular - the week when we did not send it resulted in a protest from members! Unfortunately there remains a group of Justices who do not respond to email, and are difficult to contact by phone. While some of these Justices give the appearance of service, they are actually blocking the potential appointment of new Justices who are prepared to be available and contactable to serve their communities.

### **Conduct & Ethics:**

Sadly we continue to receive complaints from the community that relate to a Justice's attitude and manner and on occasion the way in which some documentation has been administered. However it is also accepted that some of our clients have unrealistic expectations about what a Justice can and will do for them. Training has been provided where necessary to address some of these issues. It is pleasing to note that when approached, the majority of Justices admit their errors, accept the feedback on their performance and strive to do better.

### **Training:**

Training has moved on in leaps and bounds under the stewardship of Ginny Radford and Sue Furness. A complete review of the training team was conducted and new trainers were brought onboard where necessary to fill the gaps. Training materials have been revamped and nine HUB meetings, reaching almost 450 Justices, conducted throughout the year. Feedback from the HUBs indicate an improvement on previous education sessions. We have a large backlog of promising Justices to move through Induction and Refresher Training in the upcoming year. Again, long hours have been spent on new training material which has been developed and will continue to be refined as we move forward. Training is a very important aspect of Council's work, and considerable funding has been expended to update the technology to ensure we produce good JPs who can support our community.

The Accreditation Study Groups continue to provide good results with our average membership percentage climbing from two years ago at 34% to now over 60% of members being accredited. It is intended that work in this area will continue.

## **Technology:**

The Council's IT systems now better reflect good practice. All documents are centralised into a folder structure located in Google drive, access is controlled and reviewed. Both the G Drive and the website are independently backed up and all AJPA computers have quality anti virus software installed.

The website is built in a standard wordpress format and continues to be developed and resources added. The website is continually being reviewed, updated and enhanced in both content and navigation. A number of 'zoom around the web' sessions have been run to assist Justices to get more from the system.

In the year ahead Council will continue to consider wider cyber awareness to members to assist them in their duties as Justices of the Peace.

## **Membership:**

Our membership has decreased slightly and is hovering around 1250 with COVID taking its toll. A number of Justices decided this was an appropriate time to enjoy JP (Retired) status rather than continuing to be active. COVID-19 also created a large backlog of new Justices who are waiting to be trained and sworn in Court. It is intended that this backlog be reduced by the end of the year so hopefully there will be some new Justices available to assist on Service Desks throughout Auckland.

## **Centenary Celebrations:**

Almost three years ago a Centenary Subcommittee was formed to celebrate the one hundred years since the Auckland Justices of the Peace Association was formed in October 1922. A specially designed logo was created to be used on the many and varied projects to celebrate this historic event. We were delighted when the Governor General, Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro agreed to host an afternoon tea at Government House (Auckland) in recognition of this celebratory year. A plaque has been commissioned and will be installed on the former Auckland Magistrates' Court in Kitchener Street during October to celebrate the first meeting of the Association in that location in 1922.

During the year, a member of the committee (Ric Carlyon) has researched and composed historical highlights and these have appeared in the weekly posts. Specially designed barista coffee mugs with the Centenary Logo have been provided to each member who has attended an AJPA function/meeting during this centennial year as a memento of the occasion.

The final event for the year will be the Celebration Dinner at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron on Saturday, 15 October 2022 and District Court Judge Charles Blackie, QSO, VRD has agreed to be our Guest Speaker.

## **Service Desks:**

This year was another difficult one for Service Desks. Ongoing COVID restrictions impacted further on desk operations. However, since Christmas 2021 and following the move to the Government's traffic light management system and the introduction of widespread community vaccination, things have improved. Almost all our Service Desks have now re-opened and this is due to no small effort by your Council with changes having to be made on the fly.

Several Justices have elected to take JP Retired status through the COVID period and in addition we have been able to resolve some long standing issues at desk locations where we either struggled to roster the desk, or the desk was operating with non-accredited JPs. We now have a much tighter desk network and despite some ongoing challenges under the pandemic, our desks continue to perform well in meeting the requirements of our clients.

### **Support Groups:**

Almost all Support Group Meetings have now recommenced and this is great to see.

Support Groups continue to be busy assimilating newly sworn Justices and supporting their “start-up” through the mentoring process. It has been great to see the increasing diversity of cultures and ages represented among our new Justices and it is also great to see many of our more seasoned Justices engaging with accreditation and working actively to ensure they are “current” in terms of document handling procedures. If you are not a member of a Support Group, we strongly encourage you to get in touch and join one. This builds team capability and it is always great for Justices to know there is someone local that they can call for help or advice.

A number of topics were raised at the Support Group Co-ordinator and Rosterer’s Meeting held in late May, and these are now being considered and actions addressed by the incoming Council.

### **Registry & Finance:**

Financially the Association has had a very successful year which has been brought about by the receipt of grants by the New Zealand Lotteries Board. As a result your Council has been able to acknowledge the dedicated and voluntary work by our members and this has been expressed by the presentation of a Warehouse Stationery gift card.

The association has benefited greatly from one-time Lotteries Grants and funds have been able to be allocated to centennial celebrations, computer and audio visual equipment and further support of our members,

The proposed Budget for the 2022/2023 reflects the Council’s continuing emphasis on training, development and communications. The budgeted deficit comes about by unexpended amounts especially around Centennial Celebrations caused by COVID restrictions last year, being spent this year.

Finally a very special thank you to Geoff Pownall our treasurer for the professional way in which the association’s accounts are handled, this has been reflected by a very successful report by our Auditors. Thank you Geoff.

### **Specialist Functions:**

During this year we have held a meeting for Issuing Offices at the Manukau District Court.. Larry Robbins was co-opted onto the Council to conduct a review of Nominated Persons and Section 9 specialist functions. This review is now nearing completion and we expect training in both areas will be planned in the upcoming months.

I would like to thank all JPs who have made themselves available to serve in these areas. A special thanks to Roger Brooks who will be leaving Council after having served 6 years, and been the lead for the Specialist Functions Committee.

### **Judicial:**

The Judicial year for 2022 has provided the Court Management Team many hurdles, from being in lockdown from August 2021 and not resuming Remand Courts until December, to training our new Justices and having them successfully complete the Judicial Studies Course to finally sitting on the bench as Associate Justices.

Our success rate with our selection of new Judicial Justices this year has been 100% and we are very pleased to welcome the following Justices to our panel, Tara Robinson, Naomi Parker, Carly Gunn and Stephen Walker. In June we selected 2 new students to enter the Judicial Studies Course.

We have also welcomed Terry Holding back to our panel, Terry has also returned to the education area with Susan Walker.

Currently our panel numbers 19 plus 2 students, these numbers will change in 2023 when 3 of our very experienced members will be retiring. While our panel is largely new, we are very confident that our Judicial panel rebuild strategy is progressing extremely well.

### **Royal Federation Conference:**

Sadly due to Covid the 2021 Regional Conference was cancelled as was the 2022 Royal Federation Conference scheduled to be held in New Plymouth. Both dealt with statutory business by way of Zoom meetings.

### **Registrar:**

Bruce Kilmister replaced Janet Thompson who resigned from her position as Registrar in 2020. He had 3 months to settle into the position before COVID struck. Bruce has continued the good work and the Registry has also moved into the world of enhanced communications with many changes, sometimes daily, being implemented in the registry. Bruce continues to perform very well in the position and we thank him for the many hours he has spent in the office over and above the paid remuneration. This aspect has been addressed in the budget and on behalf of all members a special thanks to you Bruce for all your work which benefits of all members of the association.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the 2021-22 year has been a successful and very busy year for members of your Council. The greater use of technology and the increased communications to members via our website has stood us in good stead when having to deal with COVID on the run. This year we farewell two of our Council stalwarts Roger Brooks and Wallis Walker who have given many years of service to Council and the association. Thank you Roger and Wallis for your outstanding commitment and everything you have done for your association. I also wish to thank all members of your Council for their commitment and the many additional

hours they have all spent going the extra mile. It has been my privilege to have had a leadership role in these changes.

Frank Rands,

President