

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE 6TH AGM OF NZASID

I am pleased to present my report.

Our Council in 2008-2009 comprised 12 members. And again, my thanks again go to all the members of the Council, most of whom are present today.. To those who accepted these as Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, and Conference Convenor, on behalf of the other Council members, we thank you. To Christine Wilson and Anne Mathieson, who convened this event today many many thank you's. Brigit hosted an NZASID event in Dunedin in June, and Olive who is hosting a scheduled event in Wellington next month, these small events ensure that our activities get across the country.

To Olive yet again, as sounding board and chief steward of the Australasian Board of which we are a part, many thanks.

The Council met 5 times this year, all but one of these via teleconference. Our one face-to-face meeting was in February, where we planned our year's work. We tried to make our processes more inclusive for people with disabilities this year – on reflection, I draw on my background as a psychologist and observe we have made progress, but require a bit more shaping to meet the standards suggested to us the previous year by people First. More on that later.. At our meeting we agreed to repeat the model of the Council sharing the national conference planning roles, I believe with some success.

ASSID Board

I have attended one face-to-face meeting of the ASSID Board in Australia, and participated in 3 teleconference Board meetings to represent NZASID. These remain an important albeit clumsy vehicle to link with other regional presidents and executive Board members.

Key achievements of the Board this year were as follows:

- The very successful conference in Victoria Australia last November
- Pursuing strategies for the increasing the efficiency and capacity of ASSID through the appointment of an Executive Officer
- Planning is well underway for the 2010 Australasian conference hosted by Queensland
- Initiating work on changing the name of ASSID and freshening up its image
- Establishing contact with Northern and indigenous communities

Activities:

Last year's annual conference on the theme of "*Lifetime Health and Wellbeing - Knowledge and Practices*" was very successful - stimulating, entertaining and financially profitable.

Three events have been organised by this NZASID Council;

1. this conference,

2. a seminar by Professor Christine Bigby on the Challenges of Supporting People through their middle and older years. She led 2 sessions (Wellington and Dunedin) for providers, attended by 55 people, and also participated in a cross-sector discussion with government officials, hosted by the Health of older persons unit at Ministry of Health.
3. Promoting the use of the ASSID Code of Ethics. To that end, I have given 2 presentations, (to NRID, and NZ Care managers) and joined a meeting with NRID and the trade unions to consider a plan to host discussions for direct support workers. Its been interesting to see how quickly some providers have run with this resource as an opportunity to strengthen the framework their staff work from.
4. We ran an information stall at the NRID conference in Christchurch in July

These events served three purposes well:

- shared information based on sound research
- provided greater financial stability to enable our Council to operate
- strengthened the network and community of people in NZ committed to enhancing the knowledge base to guide our work.

Finances

In terms of financial reporting, this year's accounts will incorporate last year's conference, the Code of Ethics Launch and the Sigafos seminar. We have had a good year financially, generating a surplus of \$19,543. We have repaid all outstanding debts. Martyn will present his financial report later. Please feel free to encourage the many locals here ask him any questions.

Martyn has stewarded this Association into a much more robust position in terms of our responsibilities to manage our finances appropriately.

Membership.

Our membership remains steady at 52. We deliberately hosted our conference here in Hamilton for 2 reasons, one of which was that we had only one member here, Anne. She has well and truly acquitted herself, but may be feeling lonely. So lets see if we can increase the local membership by tomorrow close.

Our time resources for newsletters was again limited. I am very keen that the incoming Council should consider what is the best way to keep members informed, and to seek ideas from the membership as to what it wants. I would be personally willing to give some time to a newsletter if the new Council wanted it.

Current Status

This has been another positive year, in which our reputation as a group with a unique contribution to the sector in NZ has grown.

I'd like to be more assured of what our members want before declaring the success of the year with certainty.

We each year have spoken about the need to strengthen our links with universities across NZ. Our fledgling Student Award at this conference represents a small step. Noteworthy at this conference among our key note speakers are two respected and prolific researchers from NZ universities. The incoming Council will I hope continue with its small forward steps on bridging this gap. Given our healthier financial position, it may be appropriate timing to invest more directly in student support or research dissemination.

Across in Australia, a similar group (NDS) has become a significant player on matters of policy and research and ASSID Board is considering how to work collaboratively. Its unlikely that a NZ Peak Body would have resources for this degree of involvement, but it is a group that offers far more opportunity for collaboration than cause for concern. In partnership with regional member such as NZASID, we could collectively contribute very positively. I understand the Establishment Board will be making key decisions over the next few months. We should keep an interested eye on developments.

Future directions

The implications for NZASID of a Peak Body for service providers are still uncertain. But providers engaging with that Peak Body will likely also support conference initiatives hosted by that body. I sense the time is here to resubmit my question of a few years ago – would NZASID be better in the coming year to host regional events on a range of topics rather than compete in a crowded market by hosting a national conference. I would really like to consider how to take events to the regions, rather than relying on expensive investment in travel to a central conference.

With the recession chipping away at everyone's positivity if not their budgets, we need to be vigilant against poorly informed decisions being made out of financial necessity. Despite the hard times, this conference has seen record attendances for us. I attribute that force against the tide to the Council members whose backing of what we believe in extended late into the night and deep into our mailbox reserves. Gary, we thank you for your strident promotion of the work of the Conference organising committee. I hope your study grades and work sheet did not suffer too much for your terrific effort.

Whenever we hold regional events, people attend. We have found the same every year. Lets keep hosting events in provinces that otherwise find it challenging to get to conference.

My employer, IDEA Services, like many of those on the Council, actively supported my NZASID involvement. Let's acknowledge our continued reliance on them and our friends and family. They do not need to do it.

The individual efforts of Council members who have given their time and skill additional to their work, families and friends, assignments, and Swine Flu has made this a great year. I know I can be brusque and a tad dismissive – I truly have enjoyed it - most of it. And its been because of the Council members. Thank you

I am standing back from the president role this year, but wish to stand again for Council. In view of this, I am happy to chair the meeting for the purposes of Elections.

For the attention of the new President I note that this AGM must also nominate an auditor for our financial accounts. At this meeting's conclusion, the new Council must set a date for meetings, most particularly its first, which will be a face to face meeting,

I ask that my report be accepted.

Sharon Brandford
Outgoing President NZASID
August 26th 2009.