



Chairperson's Report Annual General Meeting 2014

It is my pleasure to in Gisborne this AGM as we share our knowledge and ideas about our gifted learners. Working with our colleagues at Tairāwhiti REAP and, particularly, the local principals, who have worked together as a cluster for over a decade now, furthers our strategic plan and the need to connect with regional groups, supporting and working together towards our shared goal. Thank you especially to Sunny Bush for leading this collaborative adventure, as a Board member of giftEDnz, as well as the champion for gifted learners in this region, working with REAP and the local cluster.

This report highlights the work undertaken by the Board since our last Annual General Meeting. I am happy to take any questions from the floor at meeting.

Governance

This year has been a year of change for the Board. Following last year's election, we welcomed Sunny Bush to the Board. Initially Sunny was going to work in the role of Treasurer, but on reflection, and given our strategic focus, it made much more sense for Sunny to work with us in 2013 and 2014 to support taking giftEDnz to the regions through both this AGM event and the conference planned for Nelson in November. Sunny's commitment to meeting the needs of rural gifted learners and the professionals who support them is critical to the ongoing implementation of our strategic plan.

To enable this change, the Board employed Jan Missen who is now managing our books and finances. Jan worked primarily with me, as Acting Treasurer, for the latter half of 2013. I would like to thank Susan Hassall and Ann Easter for their ongoing support of this aspect of our governance in 2013 to date.

At last year's AGM we voted to change the Constitution, which would enable the election of the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as four elected members. Today we have the nominations for the Secretary and Treasurer positions and the Board is delighted to have the passion, skills and expertise of Andi Deluane and Janna Wardman being put forward. These two positions increase our overall size as a Board, but also ensure some stability in the

important roles related to membership and finances, as well as some succession planning as we move into the final year of several Board members' terms of office.

The longevity and sustainability of our association is reliant upon our members, and as our webpage has always said, "You need us! We need YOU!" I want to signal that in 2015 there will be elections for the position of Chairperson, as well as three elected positions. Please consider putting yourself forward to serve on the Board of giftEDnz, as your contribution would be **greatly** appreciated and is certainly needed to move us forward!

Membership

Currently giftEDnz has 178 financial members:

- 60 schools/institutions with 125 members in total
- 50 individual members
- 8 student members

This is a decrease in membership by 30%, but it is one the Board is working hard to resurrect through:

- greater publicity at recent events like the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children conference and the Wellington Festival of Education,
- a one-off reduction in membership fees for attendees to the Working Together Symposium who also want to join giftEDnz,
- an opportunity for those who refer members to our association to receive a complementary set of gifted characteristics bookmarks designed by Sue Breen, as a member of our Early Years Special Interest Group
- keeping the conference rates for giftEDnz members at the 2012 rate! This is a fantastic incentive to join!

Please do encourage your colleagues to join our association by completing a membership application on our webpage: www.giftednz.org.nz/membership.

Membership renewals for 2013/2014 will be sent out in May.

Strategic Planning and Development

The Board met in April and reviewed the strategic plans for 2012-14. Our priority areas for development – in 2013 to now – included:

- Strengthening our regional presence
- Maintain and establish Special Interest Groups

- Supporting Gifted Awareness Week
- Facilitating face-to-face networking opportunities
- Promoting and supporting quality professional learning and development

This is an ambitious set of priorities for a volunteer organisation, but I am pleased to say that our association has developed in each of these areas.

Today is evidence of the ongoing work to develop and strengthen a regional presence. The Board is well aware that there are varying levels of professional networking and support available across New Zealand, and, yet, we also know that the provisions for gifted and talented learners exist throughout NZ. We also know that many of these provisions are down to the commitment and hard work of groups like the local principals cluster working with REAP in the East Coast! We have made a commitment to supporting regions that report an increasing sense of isolation in gifted and talented education and yet a growing effort to develop local talents. In addition to today's symposium, we are working with the Ministry of Inspiration to co-host our biennial conference in November and we are aiming to work with a willing and able organization way down south for our 2015 AGM event.

I want to thank Anna Meuli, Louise Tapper and Sunny Bush for their work on this aspect of our strategic plan. Another way forward has been through the recent development of a Speakers Bureau of national (and international) leaders in the field. Under the leadership of Louise Tapper, giftEDnz members who have served on the steering committee, inaugural board, current board and special interest groups have gifted us with their professional time and expertise to go into the regions to work with professional groups – centres, schools, clusters, private providers, regional groups. I want to acknowledge our members who have agreed to act as speakers: Ann Easter, Anna Meuli, Anne Sturgess, Deb Clark, Janna Wardman, Jenny Smith, Jo Dean, Mary St George, Melinda Webber, Rosemary Cathcart, Sue Breen, and Susan Hassall. (Members can apply online [here](#).)

We currently have three active Special Interest Groups: Twice-Exceptional, Maori and Early Years. While each of these groups brings together small numbers of professionals, their work is far reaching and growing through the publications, presentations and other resources they continue to share and develop. The Early Years group is, for example, in the editing stages of a book on young gifted children, written for a professional audience, and led by Dr Valerie Margrain. Susan Barriball and I will also be working with these groups in the coming months to develop position statements on key issues for these groups of learners. The

Board remains committed to these three areas, again, in recognition of what we perceive to be a lack of adequate support nationally. We are always keen to see other groups develop and have allocated funding for these groups, as well as any others that our members design. (Members can apply for funding online [here](#).)

Another way we have been supporting our members is through providing small grants for attendance at conferences as presenters. This past year the Board was pleased to support these member presenters:

- Mary St George – *Building a Culture of Meaningful Reflection Among Self-Directed Learners who are Gifted* presented at the World Conference for Gifted and Talented Children, Louisville, Kentucky
- Amy Cornelisen – *Gathering Data in the Maths Classroom* presented at New Zealand Association of Mathematics Teachers
- Carola Sampson – *Young Gifted Children: Assessing and Supporting Competent but Misunderstood Learners* to be presented at the 2014 Early Childhood Conference, Together We Grow, in Victoria, Australia

The range of topics and audiences these three members addressed is so exciting and helps reach our goal to infuse more gifted education into mainstream education! If you are keen to apply to be a presenter at a conference, please go [here](#).

Gifted Awareness Week continues to be a highlight of the year in terms of our advocacy, and particularly with the Government and Ministry of Education. It is unfortunate that the response from both the Ministry and Government has been minimal these last couple of years and that the Advisory Group appears to be disbanded. Our involvement in the Blog Tour, promoting local and regional activities with ideas we share online, and our letter writing campaign continue to make a difference. We worked with NZAGC last year, writing a shared letter. I want to publicly thank Mary St George for her sterling work facilitating and supporting the Blog Tour – not just for our Board, but for others throughout New Zealand and the world!

However, this is an election year, and (not surprisingly) the politicians are more than willing to listen to us! So we are working with NZAGC, Gifted Kids and the Gifted Education Centre to host two political panels this year during Gifted Awareness Week. On June 17 in Wellington and June 19 in Auckland our members will have the opportunity to hear each party speak on their platform and plans for gifted and talented education. Be sure to save the date and if you are in these

regions, please attend, and encourage your gifted children, their parents and whanau, and other teachers to also come along! I want to thank Rose Blackett, President of NZAGC, Deb Clark, CEO of Gifted Kids, and Sue Breen, Director of Gifted Education Centre, for working so collaboratively in planning this year's GAW events! Mark your calendars and get yourselves *fired up* to make a noise!

The Board also continues to support our members with ongoing communication and information through our newsletter, *giftEDnewz*. Many thanks to Sue Barriball who produces a timely and professional newsletter each term. We also have been blogging on our website and I want to thank Mary St George for her online work. Our social media presence is growing through our engagement with the tki mailing list and events pages, as well as Facebook! I want to especially thank Kate Neiderer for her support of our association by enabling us to share our work, as well as in her role as co-editor of *APEX* which will issue a special edition of published conference papers following IgnitED 2014.

Looking Ahead

As I prepared this report, I reviewed the strategic plan and was astounded by the progress the association continues to make. There are other goals the Board would like to pursue in the remaining year of my second term as Chairperson and I feel confident we will meet those goals. These include increasing our membership, seeking financial support for our Special Interest Groups, developing partnerships with other organisations, and developing relationships with other groups like the Education Review Office and special education.

Importantly, we are co-hosting a national conference at which we will present Professor Roger Moltzen with the Te Mana Kotuku award in recognition of his outstanding service to gifted education. We are working with the Ministry of Inspiration in Nelson planning what is going to be a fantastic conference on 14-15 November. Prof June Maker, one of the early developers of content, process, and product differentiation through the Maker Model, will be another keynote speaker. And Two Bit Circus promises to be an innovative and inspiring "amusement idea factory"! Be sure to submit a proposal online by 1 August (see www.eenz/ignited14).

I am personally also very keen to see giftEDnz work more collaboratively with the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children, as one way of increasing the likelihood that both of our volunteer organisations will continue to be viable and sustainable. I believe that the goals we share can be better met through a balanced approach to providing for the needs of gifted learners, their parents and

families, and the professionals who work with both. By working together, we can not only combine our strengths, but actually further develop and enhance these.

Building our sustainability is a personal goal for me in the position of Chairperson, because I will be stepping down at the end of my term next year. I will not be running for election again, but, I am willing to stay on the Board to work alongside a new Chairperson through his or her first year in office. I feel I have served the gifted and talented community well for the last seven years as both a steering committee member and Chairperson. It is time to move on, but I am most willing to mentor, guide and support those who follow.

I am confident that the work of giftEDnz continues to make a difference to gifted and talented learners in New Zealand. But our association goals cannot be achieved without the hard work, volunteer hours, and sheer commitment to the common good that is required to turn visions into realities. It will be through the efforts of all of us, working together, that we will achieve great things for gifted and talented learners and the professionals who support them. *We need you, you need us!*



Tracy Riley, Chairperson
5 April 2014