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# The New Zealand Association of Scientists

## Co-Presidents' Report 2017/18

Over the last year we have trialled a co-presidency model. As ratified at the 2017 AGM, it was instigated to job-share the tasks of the President, and also improve the odds that a Co-President would be available at short notice. Furthermore, it aided in expanding our capacity to represent diverse views. We would argue it worked well and enabled us to drive processes, like the conference, in a way that allowed us to perform our day-jobs. Saying that, the provision in the Association's rules describe it as an option for the presidency but not mandatory. In the present year we have opted for a single President.

The issue of speaking out and conduct in the media was a recurring theme during the year and the President's Column touches on this. There will be some associated measures taken by the *New Zealand Science Review* in that it will reduce the profile of the correspondence section as there are now many ways of communicating opinions in the present media landscape.

We were pleased with how well it worked combining the conference with the NZAS medal awards. It rounded out the day nicely. It was also a pleasure to award the recently named Hill Tinsley and Cranwell medals as part of the regular medal process. There was good coverage in the media of the awards too. It was a near-even split between the Universities of Otago and Auckland. The Hill Tinsley Medal was awarded to Associate Professor Siân Halcrow, University of Otago. This early career award was for her remarkable work in bioarchaeological science. The Cranwell Medal awarded was to Dr Judith Bateup of the University of Otago for her tireless efforts to inspire school-aged students discovering the wonders of biological science. The Shorland Medal was awarded to Professor Jadranka Travas-Sejdic of the University of Auckland and the MacDiarmid Institute for her outstanding contribution to the field of advanced polymeric and nanomaterials and their application in biomedicine and bioelectronics. Two Marsden Medals were awarded this year – with a nice anecdote from Graeme Wake (himself a Marsden medallist) on meeting Sir Earnest Marsden. Professor John Montgomery of the University of Auckland was awarded the Marsden Medal for his wide-ranging research exploring Antarctic fish biology, flow sensing in fish, bioacoustics, shark sensory biology and cerebellar evolution. The other Marsden Medal went to Professor Warren Tate from the University of Otago for his contributions to molecular biology and the understanding of human disease as well as his guidance developing science policy and protecting research investment. It was especially poignant as Professor Tate's late brother Kevin was also a medallist. Thank you to Peter Buchanan for the smooth organisation of the judging efforts behind the scenes.

It has been a busy year moving to a new membership management software, with its associated effect on tracking our finances. We are presently contacting members to review their membership options and to stay up-to-date with their membership prescriptions. We are now offering an eMember category, which allows members to receive NZSR in electronic format. Because of the need to co-sign cheques, we, as an organisation,

have not been the most agile of bill-payers. Internet banking has now advanced sufficiently to provide tools to maintain security, and we are pleased to say that we are now much better at paying our bills on-line. We thank Natalie Robinson for taking on the role of treasurer. Looking ahead, we aim to bring our membership database up-to-date, and continue to drive engagement with more than just the business-as-usual crowd. We are always looking at changing the way the Association works, and always welcome hearing from you on how we can help you and the science ecosystem in general. We will be in touch with you through a survey to better understand what we do well and where you think we should put effort in future.

We are having discussions on how we should go ahead with the *New Zealand Science Review* in this quick and fast-changing environment. We are looking at ways to modernise this important voice for the Association and for science, and big thanks go to Allen Petrey and Geoff Gregory along with the NZSR Editorial committee (Hamish Campbell, John Clare, and Mike Berridge) for working hard to keep up with demands, and providing a relevant outlet for reporting around science policy and ideas.

With the new government and appointment of a new Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, it has been a quiet year when it comes to new science initiatives. We maintained our media profile and contributed to discussions on the future of the National Science Challenges.

We thank retired Councillors Delphine Mitchell, Simon Lamb, and Neil Curtis for their contribution to Council over the years. At the AGM it was voted to discontinue with the Patron role, with a special motion passed thanking Neil Curtis for advocating for NZAS in his role as Patron. We welcome new Councillors Charlotte Toma, Kate Hannah, Naomi Fleming, Neil Broderick and Tumanako Fa'aui, who will be introduced in more detail in coming issues of the Review. Indeed, our sincere thanks, on behalf of membership, go to all of Council. Additionally we thank Fiona McDonald, who continues to do a stellar job keeping us on track with secretarial/organisational duties. It is a privilege to work with somebody as enthusiastic and full of ideas as Troy Baisden. Our past presidents Nicola Gaston and Shaun Hendy continue to provide well-received background support, and represent science issues in the media. Thanks also to Simon Granville, who regularly represents us at the Royal Society Te Apārangi's Constituent Organisation Forum and Speaker's Science Forum.

We also would like to thank Association members who helped out where needed. Craig will stay on Council and continue to be the main NZAS driver of a New Zealand version of 'Science Meets Parliament'. At the AGM, Heide was elected as the incoming President. We are looking forward to the New Year and seeing what we can achieve for New Zealand science.

**Craig Stevens and Heide Friedrich**  
Co-Presidents