



*Helping our Nation to communicate*

**Chairman's Report  
Speech New Zealand Annual General Meeting  
Year ending 31 December 2020**

***Me akiaki tātau, kia whakapāpā a Aotearoa whānui.***  
**Helping our Nation communicate.**

I am pleased to present my first Annual Report as Chairman of *Speech New Zealand* in this our 56<sup>th</sup> year.

Speech New Zealand has continued to outreach and diversify in so many different areas. With the challenges of Covid-19, 2020 saw the emergence of a new syllabus, Flexi Speaking and Performing, which has been greeted by teachers and candidates with affirmation and high praise. Our grateful thanks and appreciation go to the Examination team of Karen Austin, Pam Logan, and Helen Balch who spent many weeks planning and creating this exciting document. It is a credit to you all. Sincere thanks to Jessica Rees who planned the layout for the online version of the syllabus.

Our thanks to our Patron, Her Excellency the Rt. Hon Dame Patsy Reddy GNZM QSO DStJ, Governor General of New Zealand, for her patronage and support of *Speech New Zealand*. We are very fortunate to have Dame Patsy as Patron.

Membership of the board of *Speech New Zealand* is voluntary. Board members work extremely hard and commit many hours to the organization. I acknowledge and thank board members one and all for their support, wisdom and loyalty which they bring to *Speech New Zealand*. This was especially the case in 2020, with learning how to teach and examine via zoom. To our credit we managed to offer our candidates examinations so they could continue to progress. Monthly Board meetings were held, instead of the usual three meetings per year.

During the year we farewelled a much loved and respected, long standing Board member, Claire Marsh. Claire's retirement function, in the Waikato, was organized by Lucinda Wightman and attended by several colleagues and friends. Claire made an enormous contribution to Speech New Zealand especially with her expertise in drama and poetry speaking.

Sadly, Ashleigh Gulliver has resigned, as with her new teaching position and a toddler to care for, she realized that she would not be able to commit to Board work.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Caterina Smith, our office manager for 2020. Caterina retired on February 5<sup>th</sup> 2021, after working on the audit. She initiated the updating of exam entries from paper based to online, and a new dashboard for the local secretaries, which has made the office processes more efficient. It was a very difficult year for the staff at NatO,

especially with working remotely. Our thanks to Tracey Van Rooyen, who resigned after seven years as our very competent office/examinations administrator. Tracey was farewelled at an office morning tea, with several teachers and local secretaries present. Maureen Gray retired [the final time] at the end of 2020. Maureen had continued to do the finances to assist Caterina. We are most appreciative of her ongoing work and advice.

Our thanks to Stephen Holdaway who has regularly updated the online system for NatO. Stephen will continue in 2021 to provide the office with IT support.

In mid –January we welcomed Catherine Champion to the office as a part-time exam administrator. Catherine will manage face to face exams and Claire Tanner will manage the zoom exams remotely from her home in Christchurch. Both are working 20 hours per week.

Our new Executive Officer, Emma Carpenter, began on February 5th after a short handover from Caterina. We welcome Emma who has a background in web design and office management. Kim Penman will continue to work with theory, badges, certificates and general administration.

We have a new role of finance officer. Welcome to Florence Lim, who is a qualified accountant. Florence will work ten hours per week, extending this if required at busy times. She will work from home but is based in Wellington, so can work in the office when necessary.

Our sincere thanks to Abby Carpenter, who worked as an office administrator during the University holidays. Abby's help was invaluable, especially during the change over time between staff leaving and new staff arriving.

Thank you to Jolene Simoes who set up several marketing strategies in the two months of her contract to Speech New Zealand. Her work has helped us move forward to become more efficient and organized.

Helen Balch initiated the idea of an online drama workshop which was planned and led by Gabrielle Thurston. This was very successful and of great help to all those who attended.

In 2020 it was with great sadness that we lost our esteemed colleague, Nerissa Moore. Nerissa had a long career as a highly experienced teacher, examiner and adjudicator. She was the voice coach at Toi Whakaari for several years. Many of us will remember her early morning voice work sessions at our accreditation seminars.

My personal and heartfelt thanks to everyone who is involved with *Speech New Zealand* who make this organization the success that it is. We greatly value the teachers, examiners and local secretaries throughout New Zealand who generously give so much time and personal commitment to the organization. We appreciate your resilience and fortitude in 2020 adapting to the challenges of Covid -19.

*Hei kona mai me te aroha*

**Pauline Prendergast**  
**Chairman**