



Presidents Report 2023

As I look back on the past year, I acknowledge the difficult circumstances you have all faced, including the changing landscape of the health system, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and regional natural disasters. I want to express mine, and the Auckland School Nurses Group executive committees' sincere gratitude for the exceptional mahi you have done in the youth health field. Your unwavering commitment and professionalism in providing care, support, and advocacy for our rangatahi, despite the challenges you have encountered, is truly commendable. Your dedication is highly valued and deeply appreciated.

I acknowledge that these events have had a significant impact, not only on our rangatahi and their whanau, but also on our nurses. The prolonged duration of the pandemic has resulted in overwhelming workloads, increased levels of stress, and exhaustion among many of our school nurses. Additionally, the disruptions caused by the Auckland anniversary weekend flooding, and cyclone Gabrielle have added further pressure. A number of you sustained damage to school health clinics, homes, and properties, which resulted in displacement from your communities. I can only imagine how difficult this must have been for you, and continues to be so as the effects of these events continue to impact you and your families.

Over the last year we have continued to notice that recruitment of nurses to schools has become increasingly challenging. The growing pay gap between Te Whatu Ora employed nurses has further compounded this issue. We continue to receive emails from members seeking Auckland School Nurses Group assistance in addressing these pay disparities. While our executive committee acknowledges the ongoing importance of this issue for school nursing, we would like to clarify that we are a group of volunteers who support school nurses, and sadly not a union. The Auckland School Nurses Group is committed to empowering nurses in schools through professional development and supervision. While we

will continue to advocate for school nursing, we encourage you to engage with relevant unions to further address the pay parity issues.

On the 1st of July 2022, New Zealand moved to a new national health system. Although at first it looks and feels the same, I am encouraged and hopeful about the mahi being undertaken to enhance School Based Health Services, exploring service delivery, funding and model of care. One key area of focus is workforce development. Currently there are inconsistencies in the provision of workforce development and supervision across School Based Health Services and limited career progression opportunities for those working in this field. This aspect of the project aims to enhance the sustainability of this specialised workforce that is often overlooked. The project started with an analysis of the existing SBHS workforce characteristics, which many of you will have been involved in. Followed by defining the desired state of the workforce, mapping existing opportunities, identifying training and workforce gaps, and developing and implementing a workforce plan that aligns with the required skills, knowledge and diversity for this workforce. I am hopeful as this review progresses we will see positive changes and development in the SBHS space.

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the executive committee for their invaluable contributions to the Auckland School Nurses Group. Their tireless work behind the scenes, particularly in organising our study days, is greatly appreciated. I would like to extend my acknowledgement and heartfelt thanks to the executive members who are stepping down today, Sue Iles from Franklin, Alexis Purvis from Northern and Laura Williams who has been our treasurer. Your dedication and service to the Auckland School Nurses Group has been invaluable, and your contributions are sincerely appreciated.

As you will no doubt be aware I am stepping down from my role as president. This decision has been made due to the need to support two family members who are currently very unwell. It has been an honour to serve as the President of ASNG, but I believe it is time for me to pass on the torch to someone else.

The ASNG organisation's success relies heavily on the active involvement of its members and their willingness to volunteer their time. While we have successfully had representatives from every cluster on certain occasions, it has taken some effort to persuade individuals to take on these roles. Unfortunately, as we enter the 2023/24 year, we will not achieve full representation.

What I have gained from my participation in ASNG has been invaluable and I would encourage you all to consider getting involved, it can be an incredibly rewarding experience that allows you to contribute to meaningful projects and make a positive impact within the school nursing space. By joining the committee, you have the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded individuals, learn new skills, and broaden your network. Your unique perspectives and ideas can help shape the direction of the ASNG and its initiatives. So, please consider getting involved, share your talents and expertise, and be part of a team that drives positive change in the youth health space.