



Options for the future – NZNO's annual general meeting, conference and regional conventions

January 2013

Introduction

At the Board of Directors meeting, September 2011, an action was recorded that the management team prepare a paper on options for the annual general meeting and conference for 2013 and beyond inclusive of reviewing the purpose of the conference day. The rationale for this action from the minutes is noted below:

NZNO pays all the costs involved in delegates attending this day but its organisational purpose is unclear. Feedback on this day was very good but the number of delegates who didn't attend workshops was notable. Do we need a conference day? Should it be open to attendance on payment of a conference fee? Should they be held less frequently? How do we achieve a balance of industrial, professional and membership driven content? The AGM and Conference costs NZNO around \$250,000 per annum. If the conference day was less frequent then potentially interim AGM's could be held via videoconference.

The management team prepared an options paper for initial consideration by the Board of Directors prior to finalising a wider membership consultation paper. The Board was asked to select the options which should be developed further and put forward for membership consultation. The paper was presented to the Board in April 2012. A decision was made to defer any decision and have the paper re-presented at the October 2012 meeting.

At the October 2012 combined Board of Directors and Te Poari meeting preferred options for further development were identified and it was agreed that the proposed consultation paper should include options for the future of regional conventions also.

Purpose

The purpose of considering a range of options for future annual general meetings/ conferences, and regional conventions is to ensure that arrangements

- meet the constitutional requirements of the organization;
- best suit the strategic directions of the organization; and
- are fiscally prudent

Context

Annual general meeting and conference

The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) constitution requires that an annual general meeting is held each year, no later than six months after the close of the financial year. Section 25, Annual General Meeting, sets out the timetable and business of the conference. The business of the conference (25.3) is to

- a) *establish the policy of NZNO;*

- b) *consider and decide upon alterations to the Constitution and policy remits;*
- c) *received and consider the annual report, statement of income and expenditure, annual balance sheet and auditor's report;*
- d) *appoint an auditor;*
- e) *receive and consider the report of the chief executive officer; and*
- f) *discuss, receive and decide any other matter which conference agrees to put on the agenda by a majority vote to put on the agenda.*

Traditionally for the last two decades, NZNO has structured a two day annual conference with day one being devoted to the annual general meeting and membership awards followed by a conference day. The conference day has changed in structure and focus over time. Originally it was used to develop NZNO's policy or educate members on that policy. At times lengthy rule and policy remit lists have resulted in continuation of the AGM into the conference day disrupting the conference programme.

At present there is poor clarity of purpose for the conference day and so the focus changes on an annual basis depending on the organising committee ideas and any direction from the Board in a particular year. For example, during a general election year the focus has been on influencing political party policy, informing and activating members, whereas in other years there may be a mix of NZNO policy development workshops, speakers, member presentations about their practice and educational workshops.

At present the conference is an annual general delegate only conference for which there is no registration fee. It has also been noted that numbers of delegates absent themselves from a range of sessions on the conference day and others leave early indicating a lack of relevance of a particular programme for some annual general meeting delegates.

For the last decade the NZNO colleges and sections annual meeting, presentation of annual reports and policy development and the national student unit annual general meeting have been held on the day prior to the annual general meeting.

Regional conventions

The introduction of the annual Regional Conventions over the last decade has brought another factor into deliberation on the best option for the future. Regional conventions are inclusive by being open to all members of the region. At the time regional conventions were introduced there was considerable discussion as to whether the conventions would alternate with the annual general meeting/conference on a biennial cycle however this option was not progressed at the time. The Conventions, specified in Schedule 7, NZNO Structures, section 9, allow for voting and have the purpose of

- *considering and planning activity around identified priority issues at national or regional levels;*
- *discussion, education and/or deliberation on priority issues requiring national or regional engagement of members, and*
- *where the regional council has gone into recess, electing a management committee of regional members to run the affairs of the region for the period until the next regional convention.*

Currently Conventions tend to focus on NZNO's leadership, policy and campaigns.

Advancing technology

In the last decade technology has developed rapidly and has seen the introduction of new strategies of communication enabling alternative business, education and meeting options. A video-conferencing network throughout NZNO's regional and national offices has been

established. Many people are conversant with the use of Skype and other computer based software such as webinar and webex has enabled large numbers, geographically dispersed, to interact. Webex software will be introduced to NZNO during 2013. There is nothing in the constitution specifying that the conference or regional conventions require face-to-face meetings. Virtual annual general meetings and regional conventions are a possibility and the flexibility that technology enables offers new opportunities for different approaches to meeting the organisation's goals.

Cost

To ensure the future sustainability of NZNO, it is timely for the organization to review all current models of engagement in light of the new strategies now available. All face-to-face meetings incur a significant cost in terms of travel (air, mileage, taxi and shuttle), reimbursement of LWOP, accommodation, catering and not the least member time and staffing resources. The annual general meetings of NZNO, including the NZNO, NSU, Colleges and Sections, and Te Runanga AGH) involve large numbers attending for which NZNO pays in total; they are the greatest budgeted meeting costs within NZNO's annual budget.

NZNO pays all the costs associated with the annual general meetings and conference. A breakdown in the costs for the 2011 meetings showed the annual conference costs (\$213,171) and the colleges, sections and national student unit day costs (\$29,030), a total of \$242,201. In 2012 a decision has been made to commence the annual general meeting and the annual meetings of colleges, sections and the national student unit at a later start time to make significant savings in air travel and accommodation costs (\$29,364).

NZNO also pays total costs of the Regional Conventions (2011 - \$53,255). There is potential to mitigate some costs with an application for EREL funding however this is only possible if the programme meets the funding criteria, if funds are available and if NZNO's EREL allocations have not already been used for delegate training. Approval for new programmes is becoming increasingly difficult.

At the 2012 annual general meeting the financial position of NZNO was presented and member discussion reflected concern that NZNO review its processes to ensure financial viability into the future.

Options

A range of options to take NZNO forward in the future are outlined for member consideration and feedback. Any resulting proposals will be presented for member decision at the 2013 NZNO annual general meeting. Any change could not come into effect until 2014 at the earliest.

1. Maintain the status quo

Continue with the status quo of a pre conference day for the colleges and sections delegate annual meeting and the national student unit annual general meeting, a one day annual general meeting and one day conference. The later starting time introduced in 2012 would continue optimizing the savings and lessening the time commitment of members needing to fly in the night before with the earlier start time of previous years.

Annual regional conventions would also continue although the potential of moving them to a biennial schedule should be considered if the annual general meetings and conference continues in its current format.

The advantages of this option are that no constitutional change would be required however the issues regarding cost containment, access of a wider membership to the conference and relevance of the conference day to all delegates remain.

If the regional conventions were to move to a biennial schedule a constitutional change would be required with remits being presented to the 2013 annual general meeting. The advantage is that it is fiscally prudent with an estimated saving of \$53,000 every second year. The disadvantage is there is less opportunity for regional members to network however this may in part be mitigated by the introduction of Webex software and the opportunities this brings.

2. One day annual general meeting plus a two day registration only conference

Continue with the AGM day (with the colleges, sections and NSU meeting the day beforehand) and have an associated but independent, one to two day, high prestige, NZNO nursing conference. The AGM would need to revert to a commencement time of 0930 to enable the business of the day to be completed by 1400 with Awards then being presented followed by a high tea or similar function and delegates departures scheduled late afternoon/evening. The opportunity that virtual meetings technology provides can facilitate the completion of the AGM in this timeframe by enabling pre- and post-AGM discussion or even a special general meeting if required.

Delegates attending the NZNO AGM would have the option of registering for the conference at their own cost. A reduced registration fee for AGM delegates could be set. The conference would be open to other registrants and aim to run at a profit. Registration, accommodation, travel and other costs for the conference would become the attendee's responsibility, the exception being the destination travel cost for NZNO AGM delegates which would continue to be met by NZNO.

The preparation and planning for a prestigious conference such as that proposed would require establishing an independent organizing committee supported by a professional conference organizer. Generally the lead in time for such a conference would be an 18 month period and should this be the preferred option it is recommended that a phased introduction occurs with the change being introduced at the 2015 annual general meeting. Initially this model could be run biennially reverting to the status quo in the interim year. This would allow an evaluation of the model and adjustments to be made if required.

Regional conventions could continue either annually during the graduated introduction period and their frequency and purpose considered during the evaluation phase or it could be agreed that the regional conventions would move to a biennial arrangement post 2014.

The advantages of this model follow:

- The business of the AGM is completed
- No change to annual meetings of colleges, sections and NSU
- Increase in visibility and nursing leadership of NZNO with introduction of conference
- A registration conference provides professional development opportunities for wider membership

- Delegates can review the conference programme for its relevance and have the flexibility to register if they wish to do so with a reduced registration fee
- The conference would be run on an estimated modest profit basis of \$10,000
- It is fiscally prudent with estimated savings in the following areas
 - Venue hire – reduce by one day and not require breakout rooms - \$4,000
 - Catering – one day plus difference between dinner and high tea based on 280 delegates - \$18,500
 - Accommodation – one night for majority of AGM delegates at \$140 room share - \$15,400
 - Evening entertainment - \$2,000

The estimated savings and income is \$49,900 per annum

- Allows for a gradual transition so the model can be modified during the phase in
- Annual regional conventions would remain unchanged with further review at a later point during the evaluation phase

The disadvantages of this model follow:

- It would require constitutional change with remits presented at the 2013 AGM
- There is less time for delegates to network
- A number of delegates would be required to fly in the night before and leave the day after because of flight schedules
- The flight savings in moving to a later start time in 2012 would not continue
- Risk of conference sustaining a loss in an already crowded nursing conference calendar

3. *Move to biennial face to face annual general meeting alternating with biennial regional conventions*

Move the annual general meeting and the regional conventions to a biennial model. In this model the regional conventions would become biennial and the annual general meeting would continue but move to a model whereby every second year (the year of the regional conventions) it would be held virtually (used successfully for appointing returning officers for the constitutional vote), that is by videoconference, webinar or similar. The face to face annual general meeting on alternate years would have an associated conference day. The regional conventions would continue to focus on developing and explicating NZNO policy, the input of which would move through the normal NZNO processes for consultation and endorsement.

The advantages of this model follow:

- Is fiscally prudent with the following estimated savings
 - Continue face to face annual general meetings at the later start time introduced in 2012
 - Alternating annual budget savings – regional conventions year (\$53,255) and face-to-face annual general meeting year (\$213,171)
 - However attendance at virtual annual general meetings may require some delegate travel so that regional delegations can be in attendance together reducing the potential savings accordingly

The estimated savings and income is averaged at \$110,000 per annum

- Reduces member time commitment

- Frees staff time to develop/focus on other services to members

The disadvantages of this model follow:

- Less opportunity for members to network nationally
- Less opportunity to develop/inform NZNO policy
- Virtual meetings may be difficult for larger numbers of delegates

4. Reduced size of delegations to annual general meeting and conference

Review constitution clause 27, Representation at Conference. The current representation levels were established several decades ago when the organization membership sat at around 25,000. The growth to 46,000 in the interceding years has increased the size and consequential cost to the organization proportionally. A number of regions have not sent their full delegations to the last two AGMs. It is noted that the voting power based on member numbers they represent, would not change under this model.

The current representation is as follows

Structure	Representation	Other specifications	2012 eligibility	Potential change
Regions	1 delegate/250 members	No more than 20 No less than 5	135	86
Board	All	Not included in other delegation numbers (Board will reduce to 11 in 2013)	18	11 (from 2014)
National committees	Only if requirement	Not included in other delegation numbers (Membership committee established 2013)	10 (NMAC)	0 Membership Committee representation according to need
National Sections and Colleges	Two		40	40
National Student Unit	Two from each school	One NSU and non TRT representative	36	16
Te Runanga o Aotearoa	As determined by Te Poari	Te Runanga including kaumatua	23 (2012 AGM)	20
Staff	CEO, managers, new staff member orientation, co-editors, lawyer,		15-20	15

	communications and media adviser, administrators/conference organisers, others if required			
<i>Actual numbers for 2012 AGM</i>		<i>Registrants</i> <i>Attendees</i>	252 227	188

A change in the representation levels for regions, the national student unit and clarification by Te Poari of Te Runanga's representation would result in reduced numbers. As an example a model is presented to illustrate the potential impact of such a change. The example includes a change to regional representation one delegate/500 members with the minimum delegation reduced to four, a reduction to the NSU delegation to a maximum of 16 with an equitable representation of NSU and TRT members and a maximum of 20 Te Runanga representatives is shown highlighted on the table above.

The advantages of this model are:

- Remits continue to be discussed by NZNO structures prior to the annual general meeting and the delegation puts its constituent group's views to the vote
- It is fiscally prudent with estimated savings of \$20,000 based on 40 fewer delegates
- Reduces member time commitment
- A change in representation ratios can be implemented in conjunction with any of the other options within this paper

The disadvantages of this model are:

- Decrease in networking opportunities
- Requires constitutional change

Member input

Your membership group's feedback on this important options paper is critical in deciding the best way forward for NZNO. Any recommended change will require the preparation of remits by June for the 2013 annual general meeting. In particular, all membership groups are asked to discuss each option and provide feedback on their support or otherwise on them. A feedback form is appended for your use.

The deadline for feedback is 17 March 2013 with submissions to be sent to susannet@nzno.org.nz

Timeline

October 2012	Board of Directors consider options paper and determine which options to be further developed for a consultation paper
February 2013	Member consultation paper circulated
17 March 2013	Deadline for member feedback
April 2013	Board paper with proposed policy and/or constitution remits considered
May 2013	Remits finalised for 2013 annual general meeting
September 2013	Membership debates remits and votes

Submission form

Options for the future – NZNO’s annual general meeting, conference and regional conventions

Name of membership group _____

Contact person: Name _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Option 1: status quo

We **support/ reject/ support with amendment/ support in combination with option 4** this option (delete as appropriate).

Comment:

Option 2: one day AGM plus two day registration convergence

We **support/ reject/ support with amendment/ support in combination with option 4** this option (delete as appropriate).

Comment:

Option 3: biennial face-to-face AGM alternation with Biennial regional conventions (AGM virtual on RC year)

We **support/ reject/ support with amendment/ support in combination with option 4** this option (delete as appropriate).

Comment:

Option 4: reduced size of delegations to AGM/AGC

We **support/ reject/ support with amendment/ support in combination of one of the above** this option (delete as appropriate).

Comment:

Thank you for your submission. Send to susannet@nzno.org.nz – Deadline 17 March 2013