

CENNZ CNM Network Report for 2026 AGM

A highlight of the year was the opportunity to meet face-to-face during the CENNZ Conference held in March 2026. The conference enabled Emergency Department (ED) Charge Nurse Managers / Nurse Managers from around the country to come together for a dedicated two-hour hui. This provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen professional relationships, discuss current challenges, and share innovation and ideas. Participants appreciated the opportunity to learn about current achievements, emerging strategies, and approaches to creating safer environments for both patients and staff.

One focus of discussion was the ongoing challenge of workforce sustainability and leadership development within ED. Participants reflected on the increasing complexity of leading teams through periods of sustained demand, staffing shortages, high patient acuity, and organisational change. There was rich discussion regarding how ED leaders continue to develop themselves and their emerging leaders while maintaining staff engagement, wellbeing, and resilience. We took the time to reflect on the role of the ED leader during challenging times. Participants acknowledged the increasing risk of fatigue and burnout amongst nursing leaders and explored strategies to support personal wellbeing while continuing to lead effectively. Discussions highlighted the importance of professional networks, self-care, and fostering psychologically safe workplaces that enable staff to thrive despite ongoing pressures.

A key concern across all represented departments was waiting room overcrowding and maintaining clinical safety, particularly in relation to the risk of patient deterioration. Local initiatives to improve waiting room safety were shared, these included enhanced surveillance processes, where to take observations, and escalation pathways. These discussions acknowledged the risk EDs are managing, along with the increase in presentations and challenging months that were to come.

Professionalism in practice was another important theme. Participants discussed the importance of embracing the Fundamentals of Care, fostering cultures of accountability, teamwork, and mutual respect, and ensuring patients remain at the centre of care delivery. There was also valuable reflection on leading diverse and intergenerational workforces, recognising the strengths and differing expectations that staff bring to the workplace.

We invited Kimberley Newman and the Violence Reduction Specialist Team Leads, to describe the Violence Reduction Programme. Objectives of the programme, progress made to date, and the positive impact of these initiatives within healthcare settings were demonstrated.

As we look ahead, the CENNZ CNM Network remains committed to supporting ED nursing leaders and to re-connect with face-to-face meetings. We are excited to host a one-day face-to-face hui in Christchurch on 3 December 2026. This will provide an opportunity for members to convene to create space for engagement, support, and collaborative problem-solving; strengthen professional connections; and continue to build a valuable cohesive national network. The hui will focus on topics of shared interest and concern, providing a forum to exchange ideas, discuss emerging challenges and learn from one another's experiences.

Jo Aston

CNM Network Portfolio