Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa
NEW ZEALAND NURSES ORGANISATION

Professional Nursing Advisor Report

New Zealand Gastroenterology Nurses College (NZgNC) AGM

Friday 20th November 2026

Tēnā koutou katoa

I would like to first acknowledge and thank the committee members for their contribution to running the college over the last year. The committee continues to grow the profile of the college and ensure the speciality is recognised. Thank you to Emma Deere who recently resigned as Co-chair after changing specialty, I wish her the best of luck working in oncology. Caroline McCluthchie has also step down and I would like to thank her for her time on the committee. I want to also acknowledge the College specialty groups and the support and function they offer members within their specialties. These subgroups are vital to ensuring a voice is at the table for them and their interest.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Professional Nursing Advisor (PNA) for NZNO. Before joining NZNO I worked as a Senior Clinical Educator for Canterbury University in the Master of Nursing program. My primary nursing experience is surgical where I undertook many roles including charge nurse. I also have worked within gastroenterology so have a keen interest in the specialty, including a placement at Southern Endoscopy under Karen Gower as a student. Believe it or not one of the committee members Tricia was my first preceptor as a new graduate, which really demonstrates how full circle nursing can be.

This year there was a financial audit, and all colleges were included in this process, during this process it was identified that several colleges were running at a deficit which included NZgNC. As a result, the committee took time to review their operational finances, which has resulted in positive change in the direction of the college. A special focus was put on growth of the college and continued development of the specialty. Solid strategic plans were also put into place to future proof the finances of the college to benefit the members. A special thank you to Michelle Harman and Emma Deere for the extra time they put into this process.

The following is a snapshot of NZNO activities for 2025/2026:

Vote Health: This year NZNO did a big push on highlighting health as major concern for the election and advocacy around this. With current under funding the front line of health is being negatively affected with unsafe staffing and skill mix a constant concern. The campaign was a success with health being a major talking topic which was evident across all media. Health has become a top priority for the New Zealand public, and we plan to continue this movement.

Regulation - The Ministry of Health released a document called "Putting Patients First – modernising the health workforce." This document undermines the nurse's role, prioritising political mandates over public safety and replacing the profession's core values with government priorities. Additionally, the Minister introduced the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act Amendment Bill to the House of Parliament before the House closed for this election cycle. The changes proposed raise issues that will affect nurses and are seen as an overreach on health worker regulation. Again, please keep an eye on the fortnightly CEO to keep informed about any proposed changes following the election and how NZNO members can be involved.

Pay Equity: NZNO as the largest union in health with the largest female dominant workforce and the only union with PE claims is continuing it fight for these workers. NZNO's approach is to build national visibility, support organising in worksites, and progress claims in ways that pursue outcomes for members and the operation of the amended law.

Collective bargaining: Activity continues across the motu in all sectors with plans already under way for the next round of bargaining for Te Whatu Ora. Bargaining environments can shift quickly, members are encouraged to follow the CEO's fortnightly updates for the most current information.

NZNO Medico-Legal Forum: The 2026 Forums were held in July in Christchurch and Auckland (which was also hosted online). The forum offered essential legal and professional updates for nurses, featuring NZNO medicolegal experts, the Nursing Council, and the Health and Disability Commissioner. The programme covered unsafe staffing and professional obligations, whistleblowing and advocacy, AI in nursing, Code of Conduct updates, informed consent, and practical workshops led by Professional Nursing Advisors. With recent cases and regulatory insights presented directly by sector leaders, this forum provided a timely and highly relevant, practice-ready guidance.

Staffing Methodology: As per the settlements of MECA NZNO in partnership with Te Whatu Ora are exploring existing methodologies for nurse-to-patient ratios. We know this method to have result from other overseas countries successfully implementation of ratios.

Student Survey 2025: Occurs every two years, undertaken by the NZNO National Student Unit (NSU). Key implications and recommendations include financial hardship, placement poverty, bullying, incivility and unsafe learning environments, preceptor training concerns, graduates feeling under prepared, cultural safety and rainbow development, student mental wellbeing and engagement of delivery. As a result, the NSU is currently highlighting these issues via a social media campaign and NZNO together with NSU has just released a policy position on paid placement. Please view the annual report for further details from all parts of Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa NZNO Annual Report, 2025-2026.pdf

This is just a snapshot of the mahi that has been done across the motu over the last year. I encourage you all to please read all communication that comes out from NZNO to remain fully up to date. Again, thank you to the committee and all your hard work. I look forward to the year ahead and welcoming new committee members.

Rachel Russell

Professional Nursing Advisor

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