



Chairpersons report for the BGM 2025

It is a pleasure to present the chairperson's report for 2025 during our conference.

The past 2 years have been busy with conference planning, updating and refreshing our Knowledge and Skills framework that we are delighted to be launching at this year's conference. With the change in government and the many challenges within the health sector the College has been busy on your behalf making submissions on proposed health policy, attending the Beehive to make an oral submission and being part of the Age Safe campaign.

I would like to acknowledge all the current committee members; Anna Carey (outgoing Treasurer), Aloha Sisson (Incoming Treasurer and Website / social media) Gayleen Watkins (outgoing Secretary), Regan Gilchrist (incoming Secretary), Christy Reedy (member), Sarah McIntosh (member), Rosie Winters (member) and our PNA Marg Bigsby.

All of the committee members have worked tirelessly to ensure that the College provided information that remains relevant, current, and forward thinking.

Thank you for all your hard work and commitment. I would also like to acknowledge the families / whanau of our committee members who have supported them to attend meetings, review and respond to submissions and complete additional hours over and above their day jobs to ensure that we are representing our members and sector with current, relevant knowledge.

At our last BGM we passed a remit to enable students to join the College. The integration of students and healthcare assistants (HCAs) into the college is a strategic move to amplify the collective voice in the health sector, covering a spectrum from primary to acute care, and extending to aged and home care services. This inclusive approach not only enriches the dialogue across various health services but also fortifies the advocacy for workforce issues, particularly in aged care. The college's proactive stance in providing feedback on policy documents and addressing the challenges faced by internationally qualified nurses (IQNs) in New Zealand reflects a commitment to supporting healthcare professionals at all levels.

By identifying key concerns and encouraging union membership, the college fosters a supportive network that advocates for fair working conditions and addresses issues like aggression and violence towards nurses. The involvement in campaigns such as Maranga Mai and collaboration with the industrial arm of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) highlights a dedication to addressing pay inequities and improving workplace conditions. Furthermore, the college's readiness to engage with national issues through transparent and honest communication channels underscores its role as a pivotal contributor to initiatives like NZNO's AgeSafe plan, aiming to enhance safety and standards in aged care.

Some of the submissions we have made since our last BGM include:

1. aged care sector's current and future capacity to provide support services for people experiencing neurological cognitive disorders
2. Review of End of Life Care Act
3. Future of Aged Care Service and Funding Models - Engagement Survey
4. Therapeutic Products Act Repeal Bill
5. Targeted consultation on Cremation Regulations
6. Review of Health Regulation of Professions
7. Second Covid Enquiry

The college was also invited to present a submission to the Health Select Committee at Parliament to discuss the enquiry into the aged care sector's current and future capacity to provide support services for people experiencing neurological cognitive disorders following our written submission. Bridget Richards, Marg Bigsby and Suzanne Rolls attended to represent the College.

We have 3 vacancies on the committee with 2 members reaching the end of their terms at our BGM.

We offered the opportunity for our members to attend a committee meeting to understand the work we do and to allow them to consider whether joining the national committee would be something they would wish to commit to. We had 4 members join our November committee meeting and we are hopeful we will have a full committee membership after the BGM/conference.

A membership survey was completed last year and we gained some great feedback and were fortunate to have a group of people who indicated they would be available to support college work on submissions, campaigns etc. We would like to hear from members in rural areas and across the motu to diversify our current membership, acknowledge and recognise the diversity of our communities and variances in delivery of care and understand how we can as a college best support other regions.

Our newsletter has been warmly received and we thank Regan for his hard work in formatting this for us 3 times a year. Aloha is busy keeping our social media up to date and active. If there are any activities in your area that you feel College members would be interested in please let us know via our email – nznogerontology@gmail.com.

The College of Gerontology is privileged to have Margaret Bigsby - our Professional Nursing Advisor. Marg has been very supportive and instrumental over the past years providing some excellent strategic advice. Marg's clear sound reasoning has allowed us as a college to grow and have greater knowledge and understanding of overarching legislation that can impact on how the College responds to submissions, requests to participate in external working groups and remits.

BGM will be held at our conference on 19th May at the Wapiuna Conference Centre, Auckland. The conference is running for 2 days and we have Professor Victoria Traynor from Sunshine Coast attending as well as a number of NZ based speakers. I urge you to have a look at the website and register – www.gerontologynursing.org.nz.

I ask all of you to talk with a colleague and suggest they are part of a union - remind them as NZNO members they can belong to up to 3 colleges and sections – join them up to the College of Gerontology Nursing – no charge.

Age Safe – NZNO is currently recruiting nurses for a survey if you work in aged care. Check out the Age safe webpage at NZNO for details.

Conclusion

Over the past year or 3 we have become recognised increasingly as the foremost organisation for nurses working with older adults across all sectors in New Zealand. We want to continue to grow and enhance our reputation across all areas.

Thank you to all our members for your support over the past few years and don't forget to tell a friend to join us.

Bridget

Bridget Richards, Chair

College of Gerontology Nursing NZNO