



Chairperson's Report

Annual General Meeting 2011

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of our association. Today I would like to share with you the work undertaken by the Board and our members during 2010, highlighting our achievements and signalling our future plans. At the end of my report, I am more than happy to take any questions from the floor.

My final words at the end of last year's report were:

*It is now time to empower you, our members, making this **your** professional association for gifted and talented education. I look forward to working both **with** and **for** you over this next year.*

I am delighted to begin my report by acknowledging the active involvement and engagement of our members in a wide range of initiatives. The responsiveness of our members to our requests and invitations to partake in and contribute to professional opportunities has been overwhelming. Your passion and enthusiasm, fuelled by your commitment to ensuring equitable educational outcomes for our gifted and talented students, are inspirational. I especially want to thank the members of our Board for their ongoing commitment, untiring and relentless involvement, and ongoing personal and professional support for me in my role as Chairperson. Our Board and our members have certainly enabled the realisation of my final challenge to you a year ago. I'd now like to outline how you, our members, took up my challenge, and began shaping giftEDnz as your professional association for gifted and talented education.

Membership and Governance

Our membership continues to grow, with 218 current financial members: 87 institutions; 75 individuals; and 14 students. We also have approximately 25 members pending (awaiting payment of subscriptions).

The Board held three full-day meetings in Hamilton last year, and recently held a two-day strategic planning retreat in Whakatane. I would like to acknowledge the Todd Foundation, the University of Waikato School of Education, and EastBay REAP for their support for these meetings.

Each Board member has at least one portfolio with responsibilities for which she reports regularly, and the Board maintains ongoing communication between meetings. The governance structures, as outlined in our constitution, work well, but to enable greater flexibility and opportunities for the co-option of Board members, a proposed motion for change will be discussed later this afternoon.

Key achievements of the Board, in relation to governance, include:

- *Development and management of our membership database.* I would like to thank Mike and Ann Easter for the many hours they have voluntarily invested in this work.

- *Registration with the Charities Commission as a charitable trust.* I would like to thank Rosemary Cathcart for her diligence in completing this process.
- *Ongoing implementation, evaluation and development of our Strategic Plans.* I would like to thank Anne Sturgess for her facilitation of this process.

I'd also like to acknowledge the in-kind contributions of each of our employers, and, especially, the secretarial staff of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Marti Robinson and Gabrielle Funnel, at Massey University who do any number of tasks so willingly for me! I'd also like to thank Tina Sheehan, who works in Graphic Design and Web Publishing in the College of Education at Massey, for her support in helping maintain our web page and designing publicity materials.

As our Board enters its final year of our three-year cycle, I want to encourage members to begin thinking about standing for the 2012 elections. The ongoing governance of our association is vital and we require committed volunteers with new energy and ideas as we move towards the future!

Highlights 2010

There are a number of 'highlights' for 2010, all of which relate directly to the goals of our association. Firstly, the Board has been successful in acquiring external funding to support initiatives in gifted and talented education:

- A grant from the Todd Foundation has enabled the establishment of two Special Interest Groups to facilitate the development of resources and ongoing networking amongst professionals working with Maori gifted and talented students and young gifted learners. He Kahui Pumanawa and the Early Years Special Interest Group have made significant progress, along different pathways, towards our goal of fostering and facilitating communities of practice. More details about the progress of both groups are available on our website, our most recent newsletter, and in the March 2011 issue of *Tall Poppies* magazine. I would like to thank Leeana Herewini, Laura Hawksworth, Angus MacFarlane, Melinda Webber, Vivienne Russell, Charlene Barnett, and Iwingaro Dunn for their commitment to our Maori group, and Deb Clark, Valerie Margrain, Sue Breen, and Jo Dean for their work with the Early Years group.
- The Todd Foundation grant also provides seed funding for our first national conference, being planned for 2012. The conference theme, *Giftedness Unfurled: Fostering Best Practices in Aotearoa New Zealand*, reflects the goals of giftEDnz and promises to provide opportunities for networking, support, sharing of practices, and advocacy. The conference subcommittee is chaired by Jeanette Christensen and includes Jenny Smith, Louise Tapper, Sunny Bush, and Sue Breen. This group of members deserve special thanks for their work – especially in light of the recent events in Christchurch, the conference's proposed 'home'. The Board and Subcommittee are working together, along with e-events, our professional conference organiser, to make decisions regarding the conference location and venue. Bookmark the website so you can follow the conference plans as they unfold (www.eenz.com/giftednz12/).

Our association has also worked collaboratively with other national and international organisations in gifted and talented education, including:

- Board members have presented at national events hosted by Cognition, EastBay REAP, and the recent Learning@School conference hosted by CORE Education. I was also pleased to present a session about the development of giftEDnz at the Asia-Pacific Federation's Biennial Conference in Sydney last year. I also met with key groups in London and have been supporting them in the establishment of Gifted Voice, a new advocacy group in the UK which is modelling their association after ours. Through our newsletter, we aim to keep our

members informed of upcoming conferences and events, encourage your participation as presenters and attendees, and enable sharing of your experiences.

- giftEDnz was represented by me last year on the Ministerial Advisory Group and the Todd Foundation's Strategic Planning Day, and with Ann Easter at Cognition's tki gifted and talented community redevelopment meeting. Most recently, I have been asked to represent our association on the Ministry of Education's 2011 Gifted and Talented Policy Advisory Group.
- Gifted Awareness Week has provided a good opportunity to collaborate with other groups and to demonstrate the effectiveness of giftEDnz as a central point of communication and/or catalyst for a wide range of professionals working in this field.
- giftEDnz has collaborated with the Ministry of Education's preferred providers in gifted and talented education, pro-actively giving constructive criticism and feedback, but, more importantly, providing a platform for sharing their work with others and facilitating the representation of professionals in working and advisory groups.
- Our Board also worked with CORE Education and CWA New Media, in response to their invitational approaches to giftEDnz, to prepare and submit proposals for the Ministry of Education's request for the development of an online resource to support the implementation of National Standards with gifted and talented students, self-review processes, and regional cluster approaches. The Ministry processes for securing and contracting the preferred proposers is still underway.

Our Board continues to advocate to Government and the Ministry of Education for equitable educational opportunities for gifted and talented children and young people in New Zealand, as evidenced by:

- Ongoing communication with Ministers responsible for gifted and talented education, including face to face meetings, emails and written letters, was initiated and our members have been invited to contribute questions or feedback on issues. Through the newsletter and email alerts we aimed to provide information and responses to the Ministers' initiatives (e.g., reports on the Ministerial Advisory meetings).
- Members have made contributions to political blogs, either formally or informally.
- Templates for a letter writing campaign were developed and shared during Gifted Awareness Week, and letters were sent to all parties on behalf of our organisation and in collaboration with other groups.
- The Board continuously seeks information and clarification from the Ministry of Education regarding its initiatives, proactively seeking transparency, inclusivity, collaboration, and informed decision-making to support gifted and talented learners.
- Through the newsletter and email alerts we keep members informed of current issues in gifted and talented education, especially those at governmental and ministry levels.

Future Directions

In addition to the ongoing activities initiated in 2010 and 2011, the Board is also working on several new initiatives, as indicated in the recent member survey. The survey specifically seeks member involvement and input in the following:

1. *Regional Points of Contact:* The Board would like to appoint Regional Points of Contact to assist with queries from potential members. We are developing a membership kit with brochures, bookmarks, and a PowerPoint presentation. Regional Points of Contact will be featured on our web page, and also supported and encouraged in sharing information about our association with regional groups, events, and so on.

2. *Networking with Like-Minded Professionals:* The Board has received requests from members who are interested in making direct contact with other professionals working in their sectors or areas of expertise, and we are developing a web page to feature member details (with their permission).
3. *Research Interests and Expertise:* Similarly, we are creating a web page-based 'directory' of New Zealand researchers in the field.
4. *Working Party: Online Presence:* This group is being established to investigate the online presence of giftEDnz and ways we might use the Internet to reach our organisational goals. The Working Group will be tasked with investigating possible online opportunities, including technical implications and costs for the organisation, and presenting a report with recommendations to the Board by August 2011.
5. *Scholarships, Study Awards and Funding for Professional Learning and Development:* The Board would like to appoint a member to source, collate and update information on scholarships, study awards and funding to support professional learning and development, across education, but also specifically related to gifted and talented education.
6. *Sharing Best Practices:* The Board is exploring optimal and preferred means of sharing best practices amongst our members, regionally, nationally and internationally.
7. *Regional Cluster Groups:* The Board is collecting details of existing regional cluster groups in New Zealand, including those being established in 2011 by Cognition, and looking at the possibilities for supporting or providing affiliations for these groups.

If you haven't yet completed the member survey could you please do so soon! It is available online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/giftEDnzMemberSurvey2011>.

It has been a great honour for me to continue serving as the Chairperson of giftEDnz: The Professional Association for Gifted Education, and I have been humbled by the opportunities to work with and serve you, our members. I believe as a Board, we have established ways of working together that reflect the goals of our association and we strive to ensure that our processes are inclusive, transparent, responsive, and always centred on the needs of our gifted and talented children and young people.

I'd like to close this year with a whakatauki, or proverb, adopted by our Special Interest Groups: *Iti noa ana, he pito mata*. This roughly translates as "With care, a small kumara will produce a harvest." Thank you for the professional care you each give so willingly to support gifted and talented children and young people in New Zealand to realise and discover their potential.