



**Chairperson's Report
Annual General Meeting 2012
Amora Hotel, Wellington
30 March 2012**

It is my 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 2011, 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.

The Board held three full-day meetings in Hamilton last year, including a special meeting to discuss the conference. One of the key focuses of the Board has been the implementation and review of the Strategic Plan developed in 2010. The plan aligns activities of the Board with each of the association's goals and I am pleased to say that most of what was intended as a three to five year plan has been accomplished in half that time! This strategic planning will drive and influence the work of the incoming Board, so I have used it as a framework for the rest of my report.

Our first goal as an association is

To advocate for equitable educational opportunities for gifted and talented students.

Numbers speak, so our advocacy work is strengthened by growth in membership numbers, and the Board is always seeking ways to target members through conferences and events, as well as publicity through the media, magazines, and journals. Our membership continues to grow, with 269 current financial members: 174 institutions; 80 individuals; and 15 students. We have doubled the number of institutional memberships over this past year: this is exciting institutional growth for giftEDnz!

This growth may be attributable to our conference, but another targeted membership push has been through our Special Interest Groups. In 2011, we also established regional contacts and part of our future plans are to develop membership kits with powerpoint presentations and brochures for Board members and regional contacts, to support further growth. We also need to ensure regional contacts across the country.

Of course, we also advocate to our politicians and government leaders, as well as the Ministry of Education and their preferred providers in gifted education. A related goal of the Board has been to ensure transparency, equity and accountability around funding decisions for gifted and talented students. We raise issues, ask questions, and aim to "keep 'em honest!"

In 2011, I represented our association on the Ministry of Education's Gifted and Talented Policy Advisory Group and shared this work with other members of our association. Following the development of a vision, principles, and recommendations for gifted and talented education, as signalled at our AGM last year by the former Associate Minister of Education, Rodney Hide, our members were given an opportunity for consultation, along with other advocates throughout New Zealand. We had a fantastic 240 survey responses! I worked with other Advisory Group members and the Ministry of Education to finalise the document for consideration as part of the Ministry's wider work programme and priorities. A letter to the Ministry of Education, co-signed by the president of the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children, Rose Blackett, has recently been sent to the Ministry seeking an 'update' to be shared with our members. (Watch this space!) An area for future relationship development is the Education Review Office, as well as other areas of the Ministry, like Special Education.

Through our email and newsletter communications, we have been able to keep members informed of the ongoing work of the Advisory Group, as well as opportunities to participate in the initiatives of the Ministry's preferred providers. For example, in 2010, giftEDnz members contributed to the Regional Strategy Groups developed by Cognition Education. Relationships with regional groups, such as the Christchurch Association for Gifted Educators and the Secondary Auckland Gifted Education, as well as local principals' associations, NZAGC groups, and subject associations, need to be strengthened and developed through more pro-active engagement with regional initiatives.

We continue to advocate to Government through meetings and communications with those responsible for gifted and talented education. While this is ongoing, a major thrust of activity takes place during Gifted Awareness Week, which we participated in last year with a letter writing campaign. We also had great representation during the Blog Tour organised by Mary St George of the Gifted Education Centre – an event featuring some 50+ blogs and sparking some blogging on the [Virtual Learning Network site for giftEDnz](#) (currently with 41 members). Our involvement with Gifted Awareness Week needs to be better strategically planned and organised in future for optimal results.

An area of advocacy that needs future development is relations with the media, including being able to make quick responses to policies and issues in education which impact upon gifted and talented learners. A media and public relations portfolio needs to be developed, with some expertise in this area sought externally, or from our membership.

This relates to our second goal:

To enhance the profile of gifted and talented education in New Zealand.

All the aforementioned activities attribute to this ambitious goal, but for immediate consideration by the incoming Board is work to raise the profile of giftEDnz with the new Minister of Education, Secretary for Education, and Ministry of Education personnel. A first step was extending invitations to the Te Manu Kotuku lecture at the conference, but these relationships need to be actively sought and built by the incoming Board.

We have new people in each of these roles who need to know about the professionals working in gifted and talented education and the needs of the children and young people for whom we advocate.

Evidence of our third goal has been witnessed today, for it is:

To create a professional community for networking, supporting and learning.

I would like to publically thank the conference subcommittee for their ongoing work to make this conference a reality, especially in the face of a difficult governance decision, made by the Board, to move the conference out of Christchurch. My most sincere thanks to Jeanette Christensen, who was the former conference chairperson and laid the foundation for the event, and to Louise Tapper and Jenny Smith, who acted as co-chairs when Jeanette stepped down. The leadership and vision for the conference can be attributed to the sheer determination, persistence, and energies of these women, who worked with Sue Breen, Sunny Bush, and Anna Meuli – and, of course, Eddy van Til of e-events.

I would like to move that the conference subcommittee be formally thanked for their contribution to giftEDnz.

And I would also like to say, “Congratulations!” to the recipients of the Todd Foundation scholarships to attend this conference. The Board felt like Father Christmas giving people an opportunity to participate in this event, especially our colleagues from Christchurch.

Another major thrust of work to support networking, learning, and support has been the ongoing development of the Early Years Special Interest Group and He Kahui Pumanawa. As evidenced at this conference, these groups have continued to develop and share their learning through presentations, brochures, and publications (in the pipeline!). Two writing retreats have been held at the Tainui Endowed College in the last year – and as an attendee, I can only repeat Leeanā’s favourite descriptor, “stunning!” We are in the fortunate position to be able to develop another Special Interest Group for professionals working with twice-exceptional learners, which will be discussed at a workshop tomorrow. It will be important in the coming months that the tangible results of these groups be realised and shared, so other groups can form and additional funding can be secured to support this work. A formal evaluation of these groups needs to be conducted, with the results disseminated widely. There was international interest in this model when I presented it at the World Council conference in Prague last year, but also a call for research evidence of its effectiveness.

In 2011, giftEDnz collaborated with Learning Media, CWA New Media, and Evaluation Associates for the development of online resources to support schools in the implementation of National Standards, as well as opportunities for networking (for teachers and students) and self-review processes. The thrust for this work developed, in part, from a recommendation made by the Advisory Group at the launch of the National Standards, which included guidelines for children with special needs and English second language speakers, but not gifted learners. Importantly, the Education Review Office identified a number of gaps in gifted and

talented education practice, including a lack of planning and evaluation (or self-review), which these resources start to address. There are stories or case studies of providers in New Zealand that work alongside state schools, including EastBay and Tairawhiti REAPs, GO Gifted Online (Gifted Education Centre), and Gifted Kids Alumni, and interview data from schools about self-review. The practical cases were collected and written by members of giftEDnz, including Maree Quill, Deb Clark, Mary St George, and Bev Harrison. The online resources will be available for a sneak preview tomorrow afternoon, and we are working with the Ministry of Education and Cognition Education to prepare the materials for public release soon.

Facilitation of opportunities for networking within and across sectors and professions, including research students, is an area that needs further development, and this can be facilitated online. In 2011, a Working Party to investigate our online presence was established and their recommendations, with a comprehensive report on our website by Anne Sturgess, require further discussion and implementation by the incoming Board. Thank you to Sonia White, Elaine LeSueur, Alison Kirby, Kate Lightfoot, Robyn Boswell, and Samantha York for your input into this review process. As Anne's report recommends, it is important the incoming Board investigates a self-hosting site, so that professional learning packages, an online "roadshow", and opportunities for online communication can be explored. Some of these networks have been included in the new tki materials and will be useful as we lift our online profile.

We continue to share other opportunities for networking through conferences and events, via the website and newsletters, and this is an important ongoing role. It is important to liaise with other associations and organizations, and I want to thank Louise Tapper for her work in this area. Sharing opportunities for further, advanced study in gifted and talented education as a form of professional learning and development is another avenue for building stronger networks. Rosemary Cathcart collated information about in-depth learning opportunities via advanced study which was circulated to members. Scholarships to support advanced study also need to be investigated and shared, and the incoming Board will need to prioritise this. Advocating for recognition of scholarships for specialist teachers studying gifted and talented education is another ongoing priority: gifted learners do have special needs!

Our fourth goal is:

To encourage the pursuit and sharing of best practices in gifted and talented education.

As has been evidenced by the conference theme, this is a goal we are pursuing! We are working with the Editorial Board of *APEX: The New Zealand Journal of Gifted Education* (published by the New Zealand Association for Gifted Education) to publish a special issue which will feature research-based articles from some of the workshops and presentations. This should be available online in the next month (and please see me if you have a paper you would like peer reviewed for this issue but have not yet submitted!).

Further development of online networking for the Special Interest Groups, so that people other than writers and mentors, can have access to innovative practices and expertise needs to be further developed through the

Virtual Learning Network sites developed in 2011. Teachers and children's stories need to continue to be sought and shared, through ongoing liaison and development with the tki gifted and talented community site. As we move forward, it will be important that giftEDnz begins developing resources to support professionals in the field, and the Board is particularly interested in providing "how to" resources for coordinators and leaders in gifted education. For example, job descriptions for coordinators, guidance for writing conference proposal abstracts, and templates for funding proposals could be developed and shared.

Our final goal is:

To provide liaison with international organisations and other national associations for gifted and talented education.

One of the most exciting opportunities to work with international organisations is the upcoming World Council for Gifted and Talented Children's Biennial Conference to be held in August 2013 in Auckland! This is an excellent chance to lift the profile of giftEDnz and our members, as well as collaborate with others, through active contribution in its planning and participation in the event itself. I am serving as a member of the organising committee, representing giftEDnz, and am working with many of our members who are actively involved in planning this conference. The incoming Board needs to determine if our organisation should become affiliated with other international associations, like the World Council or Asia-Pacific Federation, in more formal ways. It is also important that our website is linked to other international and national groups – and visa-versa. Raising the profile of our association in New Zealand and overseas will also be enhanced by ensuring a continuation and widening of publications in journals and magazines and presentations at conferences.

As I was preparing this report and reflecting upon the achievements and activities of 2011, I couldn't help but think back to three years ago when our Board was elected at our inaugural meeting in Rotorua. I dug through my files and found our agenda and minutes from our first meeting as a Board: we had no officers or portfolios; no protocols or processes for communicating with ourselves, much less our members, the media, other organisations, the Ministry or politicians; and no money! We did have 167 members, with more outstanding fees than paid, and a bank balance of less than \$2000.

To adopt a marketing slogan from the 1970s, I would like to say to the members of the Board: *You've come a long way, baby; To get where you've got to today!* This particular advertising was quite controversial, as it promoted a new brand of cigarettes that targeted young professional woman, linking smoking to women's freedom, emancipation, and empowerment. And so, it is a fitting tribute to the members of giftEDnz, especially our Board, who show an ongoing commitment to fighting for equitable opportunities for gifted and talented children and young people – the right to an education matched to learning, cultural, social, and emotional needs. I cannot close this report, which has highlighted the growth and accomplishments of giftEDnz, without publicly acknowledging and thanking the elected and co-opted members of the Board.

Firstly, to our Deputy Chairperson, Louise Tapper, who has made a major contribution by so willingly serving on the conference committee as co-chair – thank you! Louise also kept us up to date on upcoming events and conferences, liaised with other organisations to ensure publicity and involvement in giftEDnz, and always reminded us that New Zealand is made up of two islands!

Ann Easter, our Secretary, keeps the most incredibly comprehensive minutes, is a top-notch proofreader, checks our in-box and ensures emails get answered, and, importantly, maintains our membership database. Ann has also managed the online election process (and we must again thank her husband Mike for his expertise with databases!). Ann's professionalism – and perfectionism – cannot be matched.

Rosemary Cathcart served as Treasurer for the first two years, tackling our accounts, GST matters, charitable trust status, and all the fishhooks associated with book-keeping. Rosemary has also worked with me as co-editor of the newsletter, giftEDnewz. Rosemary's depth of experience in gifted education as an advocate, volunteer, and businesswoman helped guide me through many thorny moments!

Anne Sturgess guided our strategic planning and development, constantly reminding me in my moments of enthusiasm what was and wasn't on the plan! Anne also ensured the website was kept up to date and has tried to help the Board embrace today's new technologies. Anne is a fierce advocate for gifted learners – and reminded us often of the needs of the underserved gifted young people in New Zealand.

Sue Breen, who was co-opted to represent the early childhood sector, has embraced every aspect of the work undertaken by the Board, contributing to the Early Years Special Interest Group, the conference committee, and the Ministry of Education contract. Sue has an amazing energy – and it is no wonder 'small poppies' grow tall under her care.

Leeana Herewini, Laura Hawksworth, and Hinetai Tait were co-opted to represent our Maori kaupapa and tamariki. These women have demonstrated giftedness, as Jill Bevan-Brown describes, for as a group they each brought different strengths and abilities to our Board. Leeana's passionate enthusiasm, tempered by Laura's thoughtfulness and wisdom, and reignited Hinetai's bursts of energy. I also learnt about manaakitanga through a lived experience at Tainui Endowed College (and Laura's carrot cakes!).

Finally, thank you to Susan Hassall who was co-opted onto the Board last year to take on the role of Treasurer. Susan brings a wealth of experience in secondary boys' education, but also gifted education.

I would like to move that the elected and co-opted members of the Board of giftEDnz be formally thanked for their contributions during their term of office.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the sponsors-in-kind of giftEDnz for their support over the last three years: Conferences and Events, CORE Education, Eastbay REAP, Edgecumbe College, Gifted Education Centre, Massey University College of Education, REACH Education, University of Canterbury College of Education, and University of Waikato Faculty of Education. I would also like to thank the Todd Foundation for

their generous support for both the initial establishment of giftEDnz and the ongoing support for our strategic planning, special interest groups, and this conference. I would like to thank the sponsors of the conference: Cognition Education, the Gifted Education Centre, and University of Waikato Faculty of Education as major sponsors; Gifted Kids for the programme handbook and minor sponsorship; and Kimochi's as a minor sponsor. Also thanks to the other organisations that have supported the conference.

I would like to move that our sponsors-in-kind and conference sponsors be formally thanked for their contribution to giftEDnz.

I have felt that the bringing together of the many different and unique professionals in gifted and talented education, with a common purpose and direction, has been one of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of our work over the last three years. As the Chairperson, I certainly appreciated the diverse views, steadfast commitment, deeply held beliefs, and sheer passion of each Board member. Working with the Board and our members has often reminded me of growing up in the Bible belt of America, where there are many different religions, all trying to get to the same place – heaven! – though, perhaps, with different ways of getting there. Moving into the next three years, I am confident that giftEDnz will continue to meet our goals on the strong foundation built from the beginning – together!

Iti noa ana, he pito mata. With care, a small kumara will produce a harvest.

Tracy Riley, Chairperson