

2nd June 2024

Tēnā koutou katoa,

I am pleased to present my report as the President of Te Ohu Pūniho Ora o Aotearoa - the New Zealand Oral Health Association for 2023-2024.

Achieving the formation of NZOHA has been a historical movement in the uniting of our collective voices and combining resources. Since the inception of NZOHA 2021, the Executive team has dedicated countless voluntary hours to the day-to-day running and representation of the association.

Advocacy has also been an extremely important aspect for the betterment of each individual profession and scope of practice we represent: dental therapy, dental hygiene, and oral health therapy.

Reflecting on the past year, we have faced challenging economic and professional development times. Despite these hurdles, our commitment to our mission remains unwavering. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the key accomplishments and initiatives.

Reflecting on Key Changes and Successes:

- Dental hygienists no longer require direct supervision from a dentist.
- A signed working relationship is also no longer required for all three professions we represent, a move that recognises our unique clinical skill set, training, and education as independent practitioners.
- Verified CPD hours have been replaced by DCNZ recertification plans and PDPs.
- An extra-oral radiography course has been set up by the University of Otago and approved by DCNZ.
- Botox and dermal fillers can now be administered by dental hygienists and oral health therapists in a dental setting following appropriate training.
- The adult scope has been approved, with the University of Otago running the corresponding course.

Upcoming Potential Key Changes:

- Pending approval of Sodium Diamide Fluoride (SDF) by Pharmac.

- Potential change to the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act to include dental hygiene, dental therapy, and oral health therapy under one umbrella to reduce APC costs.
- Initial discussions with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and ACC to have our professions register as ACC treatment providers.

Despite the challenges, our membership has remained stable, demonstrating the steadfast dedication of our community. We have actively engaged in advocacy efforts at various levels throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to address important issues affecting our professions both directly and indirectly. Our association has collaborated with policymakers, industry experts, and stakeholders to influence and support the growth and development of our sector.

Our annual conference was a success in terms of the quality of presentations and engagement, although attendance numbers were lower than expected, reflecting the broader economic challenges. Nonetheless, the conference provided valuable insights and networking opportunities for all participants.

We have also investigated the formation of a union to support members with employment issues and collective bargaining. However, due to legal reasons associated with the MECA documents, we will not be moving ahead with this initiative.

We continue to strengthen relationships with educational institutions, international associations, and industry leaders to provide our members with access to cutting-edge resources and opportunities for career advancement. I express my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated members of the NZOHA Executive: Samuel Carrington, Lizelle Koen, Melody Martin, Chris Han, Anishma Ram and Lateisha Chant. You all bring different strengths and experiences to the team, and you work tirelessly to make our association a success for members. Thank you to you, the members, for your ongoing support of the NZOHA. I also extend my appreciation to our valued partners, staff, and sponsors for their continuous support.

Together, we have achieved significant milestones, and I am confident that our association will continue to thrive in the coming years. Let us keep our eyes on the future with renewed energy and enthusiasm, embracing the opportunities that lie ahead.

Sincerely,
Anna Holyoake
NZOHA President

