

## NOHANZ Executive Committee - Roles and Activities

### Version 2

#### Purpose

NOHANZ supports its members and the oral history community through a range of activities. These activities are all undertaken by some fifteen people on the Executive Committee and a range of Sub-committees. To thrive, to meet the needs of members effectively and for Committee work to be satisfying NOHANZ needs:

- energetic committed oral historians to contribute to all these activities
- a healthy mix of new people and ideas and people with NOHANZ experience
- you!

This note is intended to:

- encourage people to put their names forward for Committee or Sub-committee work at the 21 October 2016 Biennial General Meeting
- serve as a guide to the incoming Committee
- be a “working document” to be revised and updated by future Committees as appropriate
- be available on the NOHANZ website <http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/> under the heading: BGM2016.

#### Constitution

The NOHANZ Constitution defines the Aims of NOHANZ<sup>1</sup>. These include, inter alia, “to promote the practice and methods of oral history”. The website refers to “Fostering professional standards in oral history, and bringing together those interested in oral history”.

The Constitution also provides for an Executive Committee. Clause 6 states:

- (a) An Executive Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) shall be constituted to manage the affairs of the Association.
- (b) The Committee shall consist of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, the immediate Past-President and three other members.
- (c) The Committee shall be elected at the Biennial General Meeting and shall have the power to appoint a member to fill any vacancy on the Committee.
- (d) At least three Committee meetings shall be held each year.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/documents/nohanzconstitution2011.pdf>

- (e) A meeting of the Committee may be called at any time by the President on the requisition of any two Committee members.
- (f) The President shall preside at all Committee and Biennial General Meetings. In the event of the absence of the President any other Committee member may be elected.
- (g) The Quorum shall be three.
- (h) The Committee shall have power to co-opt additional members as it deems fit.

## **Role of the Committee**

“Leadership is one of the key roles for a Committee. Every voluntary and community organisation should be controlled and led by a management committee/board which ensures delivery of its objects, sets its strategic direction and upholds its values.” (DIY)

To fulfil its obligations the NOHANZ Committee meets regularly. In recent years frequency has varied between 5 – 8 meetings a year. Meetings are currently held from 4 – 6 pm, which could change. Current Committee members are based in Auckland and Wellington. We meet through a mixture of face to face, videoconference and telephone link-ins. Communication between meetings is largely through email with some phone calls.

The election of a Committee from several centres indicates that NOHANZ sees this geographic representation as desirable. There are, however, some ongoing challenges to conducting effective meetings across several sites. These challenges are both technological and, more importantly, to establish effective working relationships. We are working to resolve these to ensure effective and rewarding participation from all Committee members. The use of video conferencing is available from some libraries and tertiary institutions.

Membership of the Committee is purely voluntary. Membership of an harmoniously functioning Committee is enjoyable and rewarding in terms of learning and working with valued colleagues to achieve mutually agreed oral history goals. With co-operation the core activities, with the possible exception of the role of Treasurer, need not be too onerous.

Current practice is to elect the President, Treasurer, Secretary and Committee members at the BGM. The Committee may subsequently co-opt further members as required, and Sub Committees are set up post election.

## **Role of Constitutional President, Secretary, Treasurer**

For an effective Committee, we have identified tasks to be done, skills required, and the average time commitment – including preparation for and attendance at meetings.

### **President**

President is a key role. The President must ensure that the Committee functions properly, that there is full participation during meetings, that all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out. The role of President is time consuming, with

work between meetings, and maintaining contact with Committee and Sub-committee members.

NOHANZ is a dispersed and diverse organisation of volunteers. Chairing requires diplomatic, collegial and leadership skills of a high level.

### **President tasks**

The President needs to:

- provide leadership in identifying mutually agreed realistic goals for the coming term
- ensure the Committee functions effectively by conducting meetings properly and by ensuring that all voices are heard
- understand and use appropriately the skills and energy of Committee members
- model and support all members in working collaboratively and constructively together
- ensure that commitments made in meetings are effectively carried out
- support and encourage other Committee and Sub-committee members by engaging with and responding constructively and promptly to their work
- participate in Sub-committees as appropriate
- represent the organisation as its figurehead where so requested by Committee.

### **President Skills required**

Effectiveness as President requires demonstrated ability to:

- listen and lead participants to consensus
- deliver on own undertakings
- inspire and encourage members of the Committee
- provide professional leadership in oral history matters – experience of undertaking oral histories in the field is essential
- Previous experience on the NOHANZ Committee is strongly preferred.

### **President Time commitment**

Varies - an average of three to four hours per week

### **Secretary**

The role of the Secretary is to support the Chair in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Management Committee.

### **Secretary Tasks**

The Secretary is responsible for several tasks. These could well be shared between two people:

- Meetings Secretary - ensuring meetings are effectively organised and minuted e.g. collecting agenda items, circulating draft agenda one week before a meeting, circulating draft minutes promptly after meeting, using/improving existing templates
- upholding the legal requirements e.g. Charity law, Incorporated Societies etc

- manage, respond to, forward as necessary communication and correspondence - largely through email nohanzexec@gmail.com
- manage minimal but some hard copy mail - clear post box (based in Wellington)
- bank cheques and advise Treasurer and Database manager of details
- respond to queries seeking oral historians, following agreed process.

Given these responsibilities, the Secretary often acts as an information and reference point for the Chair and other committee members: clarifying past practice and decisions; confirming legal requirements; and retrieving relevant documentation.

### **Secretary Skills required**

An effective secretary needs to have:

- co-operative and collegial approach
- good concise writing skills
- basic computer and email skills e.g. word, Gmail
- good organisational skills
- ability to meet commitments punctually.

### **Secretary Time commitment**

Varies – average three hours per week depending on tasks undertaken.

The 2014-16 Executive divided this role into Secretary and Membership Secretary.

### **Membership Secretary**

This role is to welcome new members both by email and letter including back numbers of Newsletters, Journal. To anticipate membership concerns and ensure inclusion.

### **Treasurer**

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that effective financial systems and procedures have been established, are being consistently followed and are in line with best practice and legal requirements. Clause 11 of the Constitution provides for “Control of Funds”.

### **Treasurer Tasks**

NOHANZ ensures transparency and accountability by the Treasurer undertaking the following tasks.

- general financial oversight
- financial planning and budgeting
- monthly financial reporting
- banking, book-keeping and record-keeping

- sending out invoices and managing incoming payments and payment of expenses (the treasurer is assisted in this role by the database manager and fellow bank account signatories).
- gaining prior approval from the Committee for all expenditure
- having all payments authorised by two bank account signatories
- regular financial reporting to the committee and
- an annual review of accounts by a chartered accountant.

### **Treasurer Skills required**

- attention to detail
- good knowledge of Microsoft Excel
- understanding of and interest in management of money
- reliable and trustworthy.

### **Treasurer Time commitment**

About 3 hours per week, with probably an additional 5 hours per week around April/May (to prepare end of year accounts for review and send out invoices for the next year).

### **Records Manager**

We have identified a need for a person to develop and maintain effective records, including filing hard copy records and organising digital records on Google Drive. This role would actively support the roles of President, Secretary and Treasurer, the “essential activities”, and the various Sub-committees.

### **Records skills required**

- good knowledge of filing systems particularly electronic
- attention to detail
- ability to examine current system to identify what works, what needs to be improved, and to make recommendations for change to the Committee including system for ongoing maintenance
- ability to implement agreed recommendations
- ability to work well with others

### **Records Time commitment**

Initially it may take some time to set up robust systems, thereafter maybe an hour a week.

### **Committee Members**

For the effective conduct of all Committee and Sub-committee business it is important that all members:

- have a commitment to the aims and work of NOHANZ
- are able to work in a mutually respectful and constructive manner
- have or are willing to gain the necessary skills

- are able to commit the necessary time.

Committee members contribute to achieving NOHANZ goals by:

- attending all meetings well prepared, having completed any commitments and read and considered all documents such as minutes, agenda and any papers circulated
- being active members of Sub-committees
- helping maintain communication between the Committee and Sub-committees
- reading and commenting constructively and punctually on any circulated draft documents.

Membership of a Committee or Sub-committee provides a valuable introduction to subsequent office holding.

## **Essential NOHANZ Activities – Sub Committees**

In addition to these formally mandated roles for managing NOHANZ, the Aims are met through six essential key activities. These activities are the key channels for communication, change and growth within NOHANZ. These are undertaken by Sub-committees comprising current and former Committee members and other NOHANZ members. All of these activities require appropriate skills and a fluctuating time commitment averaging some two hours per week over the year. While many existing Sub-committee members are willing and able to continue in their roles, there is room in all of these areas for new participants.

The six ongoing core activities are:

- Organising the Biennial Conference
- Producing the Journal
- Producing three Newsletters each year
- Maintaining the website <http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/index.html>
- Maintaining the membership database
- Regional role

### **Organising the Biennial Conference**

This is a major undertaking and considerable focus of the NOHANZ Calendar. Tasks include setting the theme, arranging speakers and contributors, setting the programme, logistics of venue etc. The task is made much easier by information from previous conferences, especially a checklist, budget management spreadsheet and attendee feedback forms. It is customary to hold the Biennial General Meeting and elections while people are gathered for the Conference. Time commitment ranges from 0 to 15 hours per week over the two years.

### **Journal - Oral History in New Zealand**

The annual Journal contains peer reviewed articles, book reviews and articles. Editing the Journal includes attracting contributors, arranging appropriate peer review and editing articles. The current Journal Editor is a former Committee member.

## Newsletters

There are three newsletters each year. Recruiting, writing and editing articles, letters and book reviews is a substantial task. Two current Committee members are responsible for editing and production.

## Database

Maintaining the membership database is vital to ensure this is always up to date, and can be used for a range of purposes, e.g. for checking current/lapsed membership, for mailouts, both electronic and hard copy, to all or sub-groups. A Committee member is currently responsible for this role, with technical support from an Honorary NOHANZ member.

## Website

The website <http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/index.html> is our key tool for making information available and for communicating with both members and non-members. Maintaining the website to ensure that content is up to date and accurate is an ongoing task. This is currently done by a Committee member with technical support from an Honorary NOHANZ member. (see also WeRG below).

## Regional groups

There is some specific regional activity which is largely autonomous and responsive to their local communities. These depend heavily on the enthusiasm and commitment of one or two people. Currently there are occasional regional activities in Auckland and Wellington.

## Specific projects

In addition to these permanent activities, from time to time NOHANZ undertakes a specific piece of work through a working group convened for this purpose. Experience to date indicates that, in addition to the core work above, the Committee can realistically sustain at most two such specific projects in various stages of completion. The current projects are RAG and WeRG.

### RAG

The Recording Agreement Review Group was established in February 2009 to address complex issues including those relating to Placement, Copyright, Access, Publication, Restriction and the Privacy Act in a digital era. The Group is also developing Explanatory Notes to assist oral historians in using the agreement form and explaining it to interviewees, and other related documents. This has proved to be a substantial piece of work requiring a significant input of thought and time from members and involving considerable consultation with relevant legal experts. RAG comprises three current and one former Committee members.

### WeRG

The Website Review Group has undertaken initial work to revamp the website, including making interim changes to the site. They are preparing a paper for the incoming Committee to consider. It is hoped that completing revamping the website will be a major focus of the new Committee. WeRG currently comprises two Committee members and one invaluable technical advisor, an honorary member of NOHANZ. The question of use of social media has

been raised at various times. To date consideration of this has been deferred as all Committee members are fully committed and have no capacity for further NOHANZ work.

### **Knitting it all together**

This document outlines valuable work undertaken, mostly over 2013/14, by some ten people all on a voluntary basis. For freelance oral historians discipline is required to ensure NOHANZ does not crowd out potential commissioned work. With goodwill and sharing the work-load is manageable and membership of the Committee and Sub-committees is satisfying and rewarding for all.