

NZGA PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018/2019

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Delivered at the AGM at the Napier Conference, November 2019

Thank you for coming to the AGM for this the 81st conference of the NZ Grassland Association.

I would like to thank our family of sponsors for the continued support, and in particular AgResearch for their continuation as a premium sponsor of the Association. Also the Hawkes Bay Regional Council and NZ Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre for their specific support of our 2019 conference.

Plans are well underway for the 2020 Conference in Invercargill, with a LOC ably led by Chris Smith. The theme will be around 'Meat, milk and water' with winter management part of the focus. The 2021 Conference is planned for Rotorua, where we will not have been for 42 years (since 1979).

Another event we have coming up is a special symposium on pasture persistence, to be run in the Waikato in autumn 2021 as a follow up, 10 years on, from the 2011 persistence symposium. There has been a significant amount of research on this topic since 2011, and it remains important for our pastoral industry.

This year the NZGA Executive met with Pat Garden of the NZ Grassland Trust, looking to understand the specific roles of the two groups with an objective of working more closely together. The link between the two organisations has been formerly recognised by a 'Memorandum of Wishes' created by the NZGT, which the NZGA appreciates.

The NZGA again assisted student attendance at the 2019 conference, of nine university students, in support of our industry's future. In addition the NZ Grassland Trust, T.R. Ellett Agricultural Research Trust and NZ Grassland Association have agreed to jointly fund 6 travel awards to next years International Grassland Congress in Nairobi, Kenya.

Within the NZGA Executive the Audit Committee of the Executive has worked very well under the chairmanship of Laurie Copland this past year, recognised by an external review of the accounts. The financial position of the Association is still very strong, although this last financial year we made a small accounting loss. Laurie will speak on this more in this meeting. Thank you to Laurie and the Executive Audit Committee.

Thanks must go to David Chapman who in the last year, as Editorial Liaison member of the Executive, led a review of our Journal in terms of process, and set up an Editorial Board to provide expert comment on improving both the content and processes of the Journal. The editorial board who are giving their time

are: David Chapman, Alistair Black, Jo Kerslake, Warren King, Derrick Moot, Diana Selbie, David Stevens, Lydia Cranston and our editor Ruth Falshaw. They met for the first time this year, making some valuable recommendations, which have been almost universally adopted.

Thanks must go to Ruth Falshaw as editor of the NZ Grasslands Journal, who has turned out a quality publication for this conference. Ruth has also made significant improvements in our processes, and applied for Scopus listing, which we are yet to hear back on.

Thanks must go to Warren King in leading the Executive thinking around strategy, and as VP taking on a number of responsibilities. Warren will speak more on strategy today.

Likewise, thanks must go to Aaron Meikle on the NZGA communication strategy, which we will continue to build on. Aaron has better communicated the availability of such material as the Levy Orations, which has led to much greater uptake. Podcasts have been a particular success, with up to 838 downloads of one.

Thanks must go to Jo Kerslake who has been the Executive Liaison with the Hawkes Bay Local Organising Committee, and also run several workshops on early-mid career agribusiness members looking at their wishes. These workshops were also run by Laura Keenan, who has been a co-opted member of the NZGA Executive for the past year. Our younger members have different requirements, and we need to engage well with them. We will hear more on the workshops from Jo and Laura in this meeting.

Thanks to the Executive Office team, Marie Casey and Glenis Thomas for their work through the year in running the day to day management and financial transactions of the Association, that keep the Association on track. You may have seen we are currently advertising the EO contract in the market. This is in no way a reflection of the good performance delivered by our current EO, but in their governance role the executive in reviewing all major expenses, including this one.

A special thanks must go to Jeff Morton and the Hawkes Bay Local Organising committee, as this has been a very well organised event from the very start, which has turned into two great days so far.

Lastly, this is the end of my 12 years of the NZGA Executive, and I would like to thank everyone I've

worked with in the previous and the current executive team over that time. There have been challenges, as always, but I have thoroughly enjoyed it.

My last remarks are we have a great, unique Association, that has a very positive, friendly culture. It is probably the overseas visitors to our conferences, and the envy they have, that is the best testament to us of what we have.

We are beholden to our Local Organising Committees that give us their time and energy, and also link us with

regional farmers and issues in a way we could never do from a central location. We also have a passionate Executive team, and while there are challenges for them, the history of the Association it is one of continual challenges.

While the Association needs to grow and change, the need for the peer-reviewed, independent status of our Association is more important than ever. I wish the incoming NZGA Executive Team all the best for the future.