**AKTESOL BRANCH REPORT AGM MARCH 2021**

Tena koutou katoa. This year has truly been a test of our resilience and adaptability. Many of our colleagues in the tertiary sector have lost their positions and, sadly, some have left the profession. Teachers in all sectors have pivoted and redirected their energies firstly into emergency remote teaching and then, with increasing confidence and experience, into online teaching, course and curriculum design. In the process we have all learnt a great deal about new technologies, the joy and drama of working from home, and the challenges of teaching, holding meetings and attending PLD online. Let’s hope 2021 will bring a return to a semblance of normality with a deeper and more supportive connection between us all.

Looking back over the year, in 2020 AKTESOL continued to uphold the interests of our members and advocate on matters of professional concern. We organised professional development opportunities and events which enabled networking, sharing and learning from one another. Unfortunately, the unprecedented situation of the Covid-19 lockdown disrupted many of our plans, including CLESOL, yet the important work our members do in supporting ELLs, migrants and refugees cannot be underestimated and is even more important in these times when social contact with others is limited.

**EVENTS**

We started the year with an online AGM at which Stephanie Layec, HOD of ESOL and Dean of International Students at Howick College, joined our committee. Jill Hadfield invited all AKTESOL members to attend an online version of the presentation she had planned to deliver at our AGM on *How to create interactive online tasks.* Our next event was an online forum *Keeping connected in Covid Times* at which Rosie Wallis, Erin McKechnie and Jo Leach facilitated discussions in which participants shared their knowledge and experience. This was followed by an online demonstration of how to provide enjoyable, differentiated and independent learning for low level ELLs using *The Learning Village* led by Breda Matthews and Miranda Howell. Our end of year event was on the theme of teaching pronunciation with two practical and entertaining workshops led by Maren Behrend and Maria Treadaway. Many of our members also attended the online Catch-up/Korero Events hosted by TESOLANZ and, more recently, the TESOLANZ symposium *Focus on Assessment: Practical applications and considerations in the classroom.*

**AKTESOL Committee 2020**

The 2020 committee has worked very hard to represent your needs and provide the interesting events that have been outlined. We thank them. They are: Rhonwen Dewar, Zina Romova, Judi Simpson, Ken Pearce, Petronella Townsend, Faezeh Mehrang, Sally Hay, Miranda Howell, Stephanie Layec, and Martin Walsh.

Judi Simpson has continued her role as Treasurer overcoming hurdles such as not having EFTPOS and the bank no longer accepting cheques, to bring in the branch’s finances in a strong position for the new year. Thank you, Judi.

Our wonderful Newsletter team of Rhonwen Dewar and Martin Walsh have ensured that our messages and events are disseminated and advertised widely. They have also enabled the promotion of other regional and national events, keeping us all up-to-date amidst the continually changing lockdown levels.

Miranda Howell has been our Secretary for the year, in addition to her PLD contributions. She has navigated the chaos of online, mixed, and in-person meetings with great flair.

Unfortunately, we have two members standing down this year. The AKTESOL Committee would like to acknowledge Petronella Townsend and Ken Pearce who have been on the committee for many years. Their commitment and preparedness to devote their time, energy and resources to the professional community has been wonderful. Petronella was Chair of the Auckland branch and her leadership and knowledge of the goals and the operation of AKTESOL, as well as her communication skills and ability to mobilise people has been outstanding. Petronella’s understanding of both the primary and secondary sectors was invaluable. Ken was one of the organisers of the last CLESOL in Auckland and has provided guidance and strong support in organising events as well as contributing to them. His knowledge of the tertiary sector and tikanga Maori will be greatly missed. The committee would like to thank them for their hard work, dedication and the fantastic support they offered in their time on the committee. We shall be sad to farewell them.

We have a number of members contributing to TESOLANZ. Christine Hanley is Branch Liaison for the Executive Committee and Convenor of the CLESOL Organising Committee. Faezeh Mehrang is the TESOLANZ Treasurer and a member of the CLESOL committee. Breda Matthews is the Special Interest Groups (SIG) liaison to the Executive Committee Secondary SIG co-ordinator. Martin Walsh and Ailsa Deverick are the Tertiary SIG co-coordinators and Ailsa is also the CLESOL Programme Convenor. AKTESOL committee members Rhonwen Dewar and Faezeh Mehrang are also members of the CLESOL committee – Rhonwen as Social Activities co-ordinator and Faezeh as Treasurer. Martin Walsh has been working with CLESOL reviewing presentation abstracts and Graham Couper and John Read have also contributed to the programme sub-committee.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Our current membership stands at 189, which is an increase from last year. Unfortunately, the cost of membership has increased for the coming year. It now stands at $65.00 for a full membership, $35.00 for the low-wage option, and free for new graduates. Please promote our organisation among your colleagues and to any recent graduates of certificate or diploma courses. Check your membership status [here](https://www.tesolanz.org.nz/my-account/). There is also the option of 5 for 4 memberships which attracts a 20% discount. Please [contact](https://www.tesolanz.org.nz/contact/) TESOLANZ to arrange this.

As you know, CLESOL was postponed and will be held in Auckland this year at St. Cuthbert’s College on October 8-10. Members will receive a substantial discount.

Lastly, I would like to express my admiration for the way in which teachers have responded to the events of 2020. The extra time required to upskill, teach, and assess online and the associated fatigue has demanded much of our professionalism. Many have been negatively affected by the drop in student numbers. Yet all around I have seen teachers continue to offer their best to their institutions, colleagues and students. Witnessing how you have handled this year has been inspiring.

Nga mihi nui,

Leslie Robertson (Chair)