
Editorial

Mary Ann Baskerville-Davies

This is an editorial with a difference. As editors of the journal, Kieran O'Donoghue and I decided that Mary Ann's speech acknowledging receipt of the Association's award of Life Member, was one all our readers would want to read. We also want to preserve it for the future, in view of the points made and the challenge delivered. Mary Nash

The award of a Life Membership in the ANZASW last year gave me the opportunity to stop and reflect about my involvement over many years, what I had achieved and also what it had done for me.

I am thankful to the Manawatu/Whanganui Branch and Manawhenua Roopu for nominating me. I have invested years of time, resources and effort into Association business and I am grateful for this recognition.

I am chuffed to join the awesome group of Life Members from the local Branch and Manawhenua, which is a testament to our local commitment to the profession over the years. This includes:

Merv Hancock
Bertha Zurcher and Jack Shortt
Mary Nash, Jackie Sayers
Buster Curson and Turoa Haronga,
And last year Emma Webber-Dreadon

I would like to share some things I have learned about social work through my involvement with two national executives, years of branch meetings and my recent work as a competency assessor: I have learned that:

- If you put some time and effort into something you believe in, the rewards always exceed the effort.
- The Association gives you a safe place from which to advocate, when you are employed by more restrictive organisations.
- Joining a national committee gives you a broad view of the issues and challenges your thinking and attitudes.
- Patience is a necessary virtue when working with government and statutory bodies.
- The importance and value of knowing the rules that govern incorporated societies and trusts.
- The majority of social workers cannot construct a simple financial statement or balance their chequebook or access account – but they need to learn to be effective! (Old but still relevant lecture.)
- People are not always what they seem. The quiet ones often achieve the most. Join the committee that they are on.
- Bi-culturalism is a challenge but it can be achieved with trust and commitment on both

sides. The effort is always enriching.

- If you want your professional organisation to be an advocate for you, it costs money and is well worth the investment. This includes time, submissions, support and your chequebook.
- All members should do a few competency panels to appreciate how awesome social workers are.
- Advocacy and networking are our most powerful and effective tools and need to be core competencies wherever we choose work. These set us apart from other professions.
- If social workers don't advocate for themselves as a united group, they will get snowed under by the professions that do.

Personally, I have made many new friends throughout New Zealand and seen places in New Zealand that I may never have visited otherwise.

I challenge you to get involved and continue to believe in our profession, as it can and DOES make a difference.
