



Te Ao Māramatanga

New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses

TE KARERE

Issue 1 - 2025

Editorial

Kia ora e te whānau, and welcome to the latest pānui from Te Ao Māramatanga – a space to reflect, reconnect, and stay informed as we continue our shared journey in advancing mental health nursing across Aotearoa.

We encourage you to make a cuppa and sit down for a while to read and enjoy reading about the myriad of work that is being undertaken by so many from the College Board, its officers, regional representatives, and you the members.

Thank you all for your hard mahi.. Enjoy that cuppa and enjoy your read.

In this May 2025 edition of Te Karere we bring to you:

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Message from the President

Tēnā koutou katoa

E ngā rau tapuhi rangatira o Te Ao Māramatanga puta noa i te motu tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. Ki o tātou tini mate o ia rohe, ia marae, ia lwi, ko wheturangitia, haere, haere, haere kia piataata, tiemiemi to atāhuatanga i te uma o Ranginui. Tātou ngā kanohi ora, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

Another busy start to a new year, as we finished celebrating Te Aranga or Easter, followed by remembrance, particularly of ANZAC day to remember the sacrifices of those who have served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations. 'lest we forget'.



At the end of 2024 we held Te Ao Māramatanga Conference. First face to face gathering after COVID, which was hosted by Tamaki Makaurau Branch, at Counties Manukau. Some inspiring speakers to lift our wairua and our new young nursing mental health nurses, full of enthusiasm and innovation as they embark on their nursing journey. And we the seniors of nursing, will show them a good haere mai into our world of mental health, addictions and disability to grow them for our future workforce to become leaders of tomorrow. ahead and in acknowledging her contribution to the College.

Enter 2025, Te Ao Māramatanga has worked on two submissions, that have been hot topics and couldn't be ignored. Such as the Mental Health Act. We submitted our response and got an opportunity to present to Select Committee. Dr Tony O'Brien, Suzette Poole, Secretary for Te Ao Māramatanga, Director of Nursing, Waikato District and myself. We have just submitted our response for Putting Patients First: Modernising health workforce regulation. The hope is, we have represented your views and thoughts with strong intent and purposely presented the information from our perspective.

- [Mental Health Bill Oral Submission](#)
- [Putting Patients First Submission](#)
- [Mental Health Bill Submission](#)

A conference that I attended at the end of 2024 was the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses. I had the pleasure of meeting the President of ACMHN, Dr Rhonda Wilson who is an Indigenous nurse lecturer at Melbourne Institute of Technology. The hope is Te Ao Māramatanga can forge a Trans-Tasman relationship with the Australian. There may be mental health nursing common projects we could work on, that could support our relationship moving forward.



Finally, leaders and kai mahi alike, working tirelessly with your teams, colleagues and leaders we commend you for your unwavering efforts and dedication to caring, supporting whai i te ora back into their communities and whānau. We know it hasn't been easy to maintain integrity of good safe practice for the people we serve, but you, persevered with sheer grit and determination. You continue to uphold our nursing standards of practice which demonstrates our commitment to mental health, addictions and disability fraternity.

Ngā mihi nui kia koutou katoa. I hope, that throughout the year, you take time for yourself to getaway, whether it be to a local or international conference, or a jet away to some tropical place in the sun or it may even be in your own backyard, Aotearoa.

Wherever you choose to take your break, holiday enjoy yourself, you deserve it.

20th Anniversary Messages and Reflections

First Patron

Dame Margaret Bazley

I wish you well for your conference and your 20th anniversary celebrations. This is a great time of celebration for the college and well done to the nursing leaders that have continued to make this happen. On this occasion, I am unable to join you as I will be travelling at this time. All the best.

Past Presidents and Kaiwhakahaere

Anthony (Tony) O'Brien

Inaugural President 2004-2006 Fellow

Te Ao Māramatanga was developed by a group of professionally committed mental health nurses after seeking recognition within the Australian and New Zealand College for Aotearoa as a sovereign State, and in particular for the bicultural nature of Aotearoa. College members from Aotearoa advocated for this change, and when it was not accepted, we took up the challenge to develop our own College within Aotearoa. Key to the initial negotiations was Erina Morrison who at the time was Vice President of the Australian and New Zealand College.

Once we made the move, in 2004, it was my privilege to serve as inaugural president. In that role I was supported by a committee of dedicated mental health nurses and by Māori Caucus. I remember this period as one of great optimism and satisfaction. There was a sense that Te Ao Māramatanga now had a mandate to advocate for mental health and nursing in a way that reflected our unique cultural context. Te Ao Māramatanga has always provided a context of collegiality, of mental health nurses working together to address important professional and socio-political issues.

As inaugural President I formed many close relationships that have endured over the years. Since the inauguration of the College many other mental health nurses have served as president and in other leadership roles. These nursing leaders continue to influence mental health and nursing in Aotearoa. Te Ao Māramatanga has provided the collegiality and forum for mental health nursing leaders to develop their negotiation and leadership skills.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful conference, my gratitude for the opportunity to share this reflection, and my acknowledgement of the critical work you all do to sustain our profession and to improve mental health care for those we care for.

Ngaa mihi

Tony O'Brien

Heather Casey – Past President
2006-2010 - Fellow

I had the privilege of undertaking the role college president from 2006 to 2010. I was very humbled to be selected and to have the opportunity to contribute to our profession as registered nurses working in mental health, addictions and intellectual disability services. Undertaking this was one of the biggest learning curves in my working life. I remember being very nervous many a time but what I recall with gratitude is the generosity of college members. They forgave me my trembling voice and were always there to offer support and advice.

There was great expertise amongst the membership and I often called on this expertise as the college contributed to national standard settings and discussions. I believe strongly that if we don't identify what and how we practice then other professions and organisations will happily do this for us! Our voice as college members needs to stay strong and at the forefront of the College.

In the early days I quickly realised that there was a lot to do and that contributions were voluntary and often squeezed in among work and family commitments. I firmly believe the college needs to keep building their infrastructure to enable meaningful contribution to professional discussions. The employment of various roles dedicated to college business has been of enormous benefit to the college, the professional discussions but most importantly the people who we see.

There were many highlights during the 4 years I served however some of the most notable were the appointment of a College Patron, updating the standards of practice, establishing an education programme, employed a college secretary, developing MOUs with agencies and consumer organisations, press releases as a college and jointly with other professional groups and establishing and gaining funding for the Primary care Credentialing programme.

Most of all though was being part of a group of people who are passionate and care about what they do. Enjoy the conference and each other.

Ngaa mihi
Heather Casey

Daryle Deering
Past President 2010-2014

I was the former vice president and elected in 2010 to replace the outgoing President, Heather Casey. This time included the major earthquakes and the hundreds of after-shocks in Christchurch – my home.

My initial reflections were of College colleagues during this time and their leadership and collective passion for mental health nursing and of making a difference for people experiencing mental health issues, and their families and whānau. Ron Baker, Kaumatua, Hineroa Hakiha, (current President) and Tish Siaosi Kaiwhakahaere and Māori caucus members were instrumental in the continuing development of the partnership (National Committee and Māori Caucus) approach of the college. The role of Immediate past-president provided continuity and Mel Green in the role of Vice President and treasurer played an important role in strategic direction as did Jo Harry in her manager role (see Credentialing below).

Dame Margaret, our Patron was instrumental in my decision to enter mental health nursing and during my time as President, her wisdom and support were invaluable. Dame Margaret was in Christchurch for a period of time following the earthquakes and we were able to regularly meet for dinner.

A key Māori Caucus initiative was: Tuia Te Ao Mārama (The Oral History Project) an oral history project comprising recordings of Māori mental health nurses who practised from 1950 to 1990 in Aotearoa NZ.

It was an honour to award peer nominated mental health nurses as Fellows. The first biennial Whetū Kanapa Award ceremony honouring career long contributions in the field of Māori mental health nursing as acknowledged by their peers was held in conjunction with the College's Biennial Wānanga. This inaugural award ceremony was held at Tangatarua Marae in Rotorua in 2012 with an investiture of five inaugural recipients. In 2014 a further four nurses were honoured at a special ceremony evening held Makaurau Marae, Mangere, South Auckland.

Boards were part of the structure of Te Ao Māramatanga – Education, Practice and Research – they were since disbanded.

Face to face regional meetings by a contracted mental health nurse identified professional development needs and helped with connections with mental health nurses.

In 2011 Te Ao Māramatanga New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses was successful in obtaining innovation funding support from Health Workforce New Zealand to develop and test the implementation of a Primary Care Nursing Mental Health and Addiction (MH&A) Credentialing Framework. The credentialing process was implemented with a registered nurse at East Tamaki

Healthcare in Auckland and eight registered nurses at Manaia Health Primary Health Organisation (PHO) in Whangarei. Heather Casey was the inaugural Credentialing Director and Jo Harry was the inaugural manager.

Of concern during this time was that data published by the Ministry of Health suggested that use of the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act was increasing in New Zealand. Information contained in the Office of the Director of Mental Health Report for the 2011 calendar year) showed the highest rates of compulsory care since the Ministry began publishing figures in 2006. In particular, the use of community treatment orders, showed a steady increase since 2009. In a guest editorial in the February 2013 College Newsletter, Dr Tony Obrien stated that this overall increase was concerning given the “closer to home” strategic direction of the Mental Health Commission outlined in the Blueprint II documents. It is of note that on 1 October 2024 the Mental Health Bill was introduced to the House of Representatives. This Bill, if passed, will repeal and replace the Mental Health Act. Of note was that Tony was a co-chair of the Expert Advisory Group.

In 2013, Te Ao Māramatanga and the Drug and Alcohol Nurses of Australasia jointly hosted a Mental Health and Addiction conference titled ‘Close to Home’ recognising the lived experience of many people, and their families and whānau, of the impact of experiencing substance use and mental health problems which are frequently intertwined.

The revised Standards of Practice were formally launched at the 2013 conference and it was envisaged that the Standards would underpin a certification process which would provide a vehicle for professional recognition of the specialist practice of mental health nurses. Perhaps certification will be revisited.

The College’s voice on behalf of mental health nurses was strengthened in enhanced relationships with other nursing bodies and Ministry of health through membership of the National Nursing Organisations group and with consumers and nursing and other organisations through memorandum of understandings.

Discussions were held with the Disability nurses in regard to establishing a Branch within the College – this has now been established.

Nursing Council consulted on registered nurse prescribing and this was established and the number of Nurse Practitioners practicing in the area of mental health began to grow.

Hineroa Hakiaha

Past Kaiwhakahaere – Past Vice President, Current President and Fellow

Kia ora Tatou katoa

It was an honour and privilege to be the Kaiwhakahaere for Te Ao Māramatanga. I had big shoes to fill, especially at the time I had to convince myself that I could do job. At that time I was living at home in Whakatane and so I belonged to the Waikato, Waiariki Branch. I had the good fortune to be under the guidance of the likes of Erina Morrison Ngatai, Tio Sewell, Rangitamata Kinita, Briana Pickering, and Rehu Murchie whom worked at Rotorua Hospital or the Waiariki Polytechnic, and, Erina was the DAMHs at Lakes DHB. Within this Branch, was, a comradery or Whānaungatanga relationship within in this roopu of people that I really could relate to. They were genuinely, like minded caring people, that I have never seen or felt, existed, only within my whānau.

In 2003, it was the separation of the New Zealand Branch of mental health nurses from the Australian, New Zealand College of mental health nurses. It was also the year that myself Tio Sewell, Mark Smith, Suzette Poole, Erina Morrison, importantly, Frances Hughes was our guess speaker for our oration. It was also my final year in the Waiariki district as my kotiro and I moved to the Wairarapa and she came a tauira at Massey University, and I started my new mahi as the Senior Māori Advisor for the Mental Health Commission. I became part of the Wellington Branch with the likes of Nani McCluskey, Thelma Puckey, Chris Walsh and Tony Dal Din.

As the Kaiwhakahaere my priority was the College Standards. In particular Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Cultural Safety. How do we as Te Ao Māramatanga demonstrate Te Tiriti in practice? At governance we have a board that is 3 Māori and 3 Tauwiwi. We also have a President role, and equivalent Kaiwhakahaere role, to demonstrate true partnership in decision making.

We also have a Kaumatua role for tikanga process to occur at Board level and attending different rohe hui we a kept safe and engage with iwi appropriately. These processes and conditions are also part of our constitution.

Supporting of Māori Caucus members across the motu. Supporting Huarahi Whakatū programme, which is a Māori PDRP program that has been supported by Te Rau Ora 2007, and continues today.

Ngaa mihi

Hineroa Hakiaha

Suzette Poole

Past President 2017-2021, past board member, chair of Practice Board. Current Secretary – Fellow

Kia ora koutou katoa

My journey with Te Ao Māramatanga New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses has been and continues to be personally and professionally such a rewarding aspect of my life.

I recall going to a forum where Frances Hughes and Julia Hennessey were speaking – I think in the early of mid 1990s. That was my first experience of hearing about the Australian College of MH nurses. I spent some serving as the Waikato branch chair and we ran forums and events for this I was awarded a Fellowship into the Australian College in 2003.

In 2003, I was privileged to work with Tio Sewell, Julie and another lovely nurse from Bay of Plenty, Andy Walford, Denny Mc Nae and Hineroa Hakiaha on the 2003 Australian and New Zealand College conference in Rotorua. A highlight was the creative experience we used to develop the theme- Earth, Sky and No 8 Wire and from that emerged the art work of Rangi and Papa. Today this art work remains a taonga and is owned by the Rūnanga in Kirikiriroa. The college logo is the image of this artwork. Tio and I took Rangi and Papa- the artwork to Sydney, Australia to announce this conference. This artwork was encased in a large wooden box and no taxi van would take us the short 5min drive to the event from we were staying so we had to carry it up and down stairs all the way. We were determined to get the art work there. I remember we played loudly- Kotahitanga by Hinewehi Mohi at the conference of a couple of hundred nurses.

In 2004, Te Ao Māramatanga New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses was born. The courageous mental health nursing leaders that took the final steps to end (sometimes referred to as divorce) the relationship with the Australian college are role models for us all. The relationship had served its purpose. My support of this momentous decision remains unchanged.

Around 2004-2005, the College Board approached me to join and I did so serving for a few years. I spent some time serving as practice board chair also. I recall work commencing on the advanced standards of practice and the beginnings of Huarahi Whakatū- PDRP

In 2007, a team of us from Waikato worked together to bring the newly formed college its first conference – the theme was A fresh look at mental health nursing. At this conference we contracted a person to design mind maps which we still have today and are on display at the 2024 conference. A great way to capture the moment.

In 2017, a team of us again from Waikato thought it would be a great idea to run another conference and the theme was 'Surfing the Waves. The team included Mandy Shanley, Denny Mc Nae, Alice Te Are, Jax, and Rachael Cotter. We offered around 16 workshops. This was the first

conference the college delivered without support of a conference event company. I still remember collating all the paper based registrations and juggling grandma duties whilst doing so.

Just prior to this conference I had the honour and privilege of going to the International Council of Nurses Congress in Barcelona, Spain. There I was joined by Heather Casey and Daryle Deering who were key note speakers. Frances Hughes was CEO of ICN at the time. Heather, Daryle and I ran a workshop about mental health nursing. We also spent some time dipping our toes in the Mediterranean Sea during conversations about the college. On my return I agreed to be considered for election as president and was successful. At the 2017 AGM held at the conference I have fond memories of accepting the presidency dressed in a beach shirt –to match the conference theme.

My tenure as president was blessed by the presence of Chrissy Kake as Kaiwhakahaere. We made a concerted effort to role partnership between Tauwi and Maori. I spent many hours connecting with Dame Margaret Bazley- Patron who generously shared her wisdom and guidance with me. During that time as President I attended two Maori Caucus college Wānanga which where amazing experiences and in particular the hui in Porirua where Moana Jackson spoke. Staying on a marae is where I feel most at home.

The board spent time updating the strategic plan following the hui in Queenstown. During my tenure the college established the Addiction Nurses National Branch and the Disability Nurses National Branch and following the 2024 AGM the respective chairs will now be members of the College Board.

The advent and impact of Covid was strongly felt during my time as President and throughout that time the board continued to meet and share words of encouragement to nurses. Through this I witnessed the incredible dedication of Maori Mental Health Nurses to actively respond to supporting whanau and communities.

During my tenure I was thankful to work with a great operation team; Tracey Merlini, Helen Hamer and Regina Yhonjan. Lois Boyd- Director of the credentialling programme was instrumental in the college receiving substantial funding for this programme.

In 2019, alongside a great team of college members we delivered a conference in partnership with Weltec/Whitireia. The theme was “Weaving the threads of wellbeing together”. In 2021, we were unable to deliver the biennial conference due to Covid 19. In 2022, we decided to offer a hybrid conference with a small group in Nelson and the majority of participants online. The theme was Urungi Pae tawhiti Nau Mai Ki Rangiātea is Navigating the Future, Welcome to Rangiātea. The Nelson conference committee rallied the local community who provided gifts and spot prizes. Therefore it is delight to bring to you a face to face conference in Auckland in 2024, with only a few choosing to attend online. This is significant given the time of austerity now faced by the Ministry of Health and resulting impact on nurses ability to gather and learn together.

In 2023, I decided to seek nomination to re-join the College Board as secretary and was successful and it is a delight to work with college leaders.

Throughout my involvement with the college as Tauwiwi I feel very privileged and grateful to have walked alongside inspirational nurses who committed to working in partnership and in respect of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This is truly a unique and essential aspect of and our voice must continue to resound and permeate throughout to Aotearoa. A big thank you to Matua Ron Baker whose presence and support continues to influence and enable me to be the mental health nurse that I am today.

Happy 20th anniversary Te Ao Māramatanga and all the best for the next 20 years.

Nga mihi nui
Suzette Poole

Fellow and Whetū Kanapa

Dr Frances Hughes ***Fellow***

RN DNurs, CNZM, Chair Mental Health Assurance Group, Snr Research Fellow CHOPR Upenn (USA),
Adj Professor QUT- Faculty of Health, School of Nursing (Australia)

On the 4th December 2004, I stood in parliament foyer when Hon. Annette King formally launched Te Ao Māramatanga, the New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses. She mentioned that many of us had been on a long journey to establish the voice of mental health nurses in New Zealand, over many years.

We joined and separated from the Australian college of Mental Health Nurses, we developed standards, we conducted indicator research, and we established the importance and significance of Te Tiriti within context of our practice.

For the majority of us at that time we came out of a specialist mental health/ psychiatric nursing programme and registration. We fought for funding from the then RHA for new graduate and specialist mental health nursing programmes when our separate registration programmes ceased. We were strong then in articulating the place of the specialist mental health nurses, and impact of specialist education on the outcomes for those we provided care for. We had vision and direction, fire within us drove us to combat many obstacles, many within our own nursing profession.

I personally want to recognise Tony O'Brien, Chris Walsh, Thelma Puckey, Kaye Carncross, Iona Edmonds, Kate Prebble and Erina Morrison-Ngati, from that day.

Whilst we must celebrate the progress the college has made over the last twenty years – we must not be complacent. Today more than ever specialist mental health nurses need to be front and centre in mental health policy, services, research environment and leading our academic post graduate mental health nursing programmes.

The consistent theme behind the impacts we have made is Leadership, having leaders where and when we needed them to tackle the challenges of the time. If we want to continue to be leaders in mental health and grow our membership we need to be relevant and tackle the issues that for many are uncomfortable, we must continue to be vigilant and tackle, discrimination, stigma, abuse and inequities. That means we speak out, we rally against injustice, we are the voice when there is resounding silence in the room.

I will never forget in the thick of making the case for college programme funding when I was in a key leadership role a wise person said to me “remember Frances - you cannot be a bystander in situations of injustice, leaders need to step in”.

The college has a key role in providing formal submissions not just in area of mental health but for mental health in societal issues – housing, justice, social development to name a few. If we are to

continue to punch above our weight we need to be seen to be of importance and expand our influence.

We need the next generation of mental health nurses to be as energised as we were 20 years when everyone said the college would not survive. They were wrong then, this is a testament to many of you here at this celebration, please don't forget your importance and as a collective group we have incredible power to achieve whatever we set our sights on. Do not underestimate the role the college can have to improve outcomes at individual, families, community and national level if we maintain our focus.

I am very proud of being one of your fellows and wish you well for the conference and we are here today because of the energy of many who worked tirelessly for the college over many decades.

Te Ao Māramatanga-New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses oral submission on the Mental Health Bill

On 19 February 2025, the college was invited to present a 10 minute oral submission to the Health Select Committee which was in addition to the written submission. Hineroa Hakiaha (President) and College Fellows - Suzette Poole and Dr. Tony O'Brien (Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit) delivered the following oral presentation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an oral submission to the Health Select Committee on the Mental Health Bill.

Te Ao Māramatanga- New Zealand College of Mental Health Nurses is the professional body and voice for Registered Nurses with specialist mental health knowledge and skills in New Zealand. We also have national addiction and disability branches.

This oral submission is made in addition to the written submission we have provided you with. At this meeting we wish to convey to the Health Select Committee 10 key points.

1) Firstly we welcome collective action being taken to transform mental health legislation in Aotearoa – New Zealand and believe this is a step in the right direction. With the right adjustments to this Mental Health Bill we hold hope that change will enable an approach based on people's rights and recovery.

2) Whilst the Bill describes how to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, in Clause 5, we believe that this can be strengthened. A range of options must be available and easily accessible. Options to receive Western and or Te Ao Māori approaches and interventions are critical to reducing compulsory care of Māori tangata whaiora. Hauora Māori models of care must be at the forefront of system change to reduce use of compulsory care in Aotearoa. Growing community based hauora maaori services is critical. Resourcing services and communities to support the family - whaanau of a person experiencing problems with their mental health will be needed.

3) We are very mindful that any new mental health legislation will be impacted by, social determinants of health ie; poverty, housing, employment and access to health care in the community. All of which still need to be addressed. Furthermore stigma and discrimination about mental health continues to be evident in our society and impacts on people seeking and accessing support.

4) At the core of this Bill is the use of compulsory assessment and care. Further work is needed on rebalancing substitute decision making processes towards more supported decision making approaches to enable the voice of tangata whaiora and whanau to be heard, listened to, and respected. Particular attention is needed on what happens in the community to ensure that there is an agreed plan in place.

5) *As nurses we will continue to encourage people to have advanced directives so we are aware of their will and preferences during times of crisis.*

6) *Assessing the capacity of a person to determine whether or not they are capable of making decisions should be completed by trained registered health professionals and include expertise of cultural advisors.*

7) *Te Ao Māramatanga continues to support and advocate for least restrictive practices and minimise use of seclusion and restraint. Hospital based care for people who are using or withdrawing from substances, and experiencing problems with their mental health continues to require attention in terms of providing safe care. People with co-existing mental health and addiction problems are often subject to compulsory assessment and care. Building CEP capability with the workforce is needed.*

8) *We implore you to ensure that the implementation plan includes a robust workforce plan to enable the range of kaimahi- worker roles to confidently and competently implement new mental health legislation building on a strong foundation of values, knowledge and skills. Culturally safe practices will be critical. Support, mentorship and supervision for kaimahi undertaking any new roles will need to be in place.*

9) *Mental health nurses are the largest registered health professional group in specialist mental health and addiction services and we will play an instrumental role in bedding in any new mental health legislation. Mental health nurses will continue to be involved in responding to people in crisis and in providing 24 hour nursing care within inpatient settings.*

10) *The Standards of Practice for Mental Health Nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand developed by Te Ao Māramatanga will be the beacon of light to guide us through the journey ahead. We are here to work with the Ministry of Health to transform mental health legislation in Aotearoa- New Zealand*

Message from Nurse Practitioner

My Journey as a Nurse Practitioner – From Registered Nurse to Addiction Specialist

In 1988, I graduated as a registered nurse. My career began in primary care, and I soon discovered I had a passion for children's health, which led me to work in neonatal intensive care. The fragility and resilience of newborns fascinated me, and I dedicated myself to supporting these tiny lives in their most critical moments. It is in neonatal care that I was first introduced to post graduate study.

A desire to leave shiftwork behind in the year 2000 led me to apply for a position in nursing education, sharing my knowledge and passion with the next generation of nurses. Teaching allowed me to reflect on my practice and continuously improve, completing my own further post graduate studies culminating in a Master of Nursing. From undergraduate nursing education, I moved into a position supporting new graduate nurses working in medical, surgical, and older adult care. By now, I was developing another passion for working with older adults, and particularly at end of life. This led me to a development position as a Clinical Nurse Specialist at Otago Community Hospice. The new position aimed to support Registered Nurses and Carers with their older adults at end of life. Collaborating closely with patients at the end of their lives, I learned the importance of compassion, communication, and holistic care.

My role in hospice development as a clinical nurse specialist was both challenging and rewarding. It was during this time that I recognized a significant gap in our ability to prescribe medications for older adults who were losing their ability to swallow and required end-of-life care. Driven by a desire to provide the best possible care for these patients, I decided to further my education and become a Nurse Practitioner (NP).

Completing the Nurse Practitioner program equipped me with the skills and credentials necessary to prescribe medications and offer more comprehensive care to my patients. My new qualifications opened doors to opportunities I had not previously considered. One such opportunity arose during a conversation with a psychiatrist about the challenges of engaging clinicians in addiction medicine. I suggested a Nurse Practitioner may be an innovative idea for the service, and before I knew it, I found myself stepping into this new and daunting transition from palliative care to addiction specialist care.

The change was significant and at times overwhelming. Moving to the uncharted waters of addiction medicine required me to draw on all my previous experience and knowledge. I was confident in the support of my team, which consisted of the addiction specialist, a medical officer, and numerous experienced drug addiction clinicians. Their expertise and encouragement were invaluable as I navigated this new landscape.

As a beginning NP in addictions, I applied the skills and insights I had gained over my 30-plus years in nursing. I sought the support of other Nurse Practitioners in Mental Health and Addictions, knowing that collaboration and continuous learning were essential to my success. Now, three years into this

role, I have a clearer understanding of my place within the team and the impact we can have on our clients' lives.

My team and I cover opioid substitution treatment for over three hundred clients from Oamaru to Balclutha and across to Central Otago. This work involves completing comprehensive reviews, reviewing treatment plans, and collaborating with other service providers who provide care to our clients.

Reflecting on my journey, I am grateful for the diverse experiences that have shaped me into the Nurse Practitioner I am today. Each step of the way, from primary care to addiction specialist, has taught me valuable lessons about resilience, empathy, and the power of interdisciplinary teamwork.

The path of a Nurse Practitioner is one of continuous learning and adaptation. It is a journey that requires dedication, compassion, and a willingness to embrace new challenges.

I look forward to the future, knowing that my work as a Nurse Practitioner in addiction medicine is making a meaningful impact. I am proud to be part of a team that is dedicated to improving the lives of our clients and advancing the field of addiction medicine.

Welcome our new Board Member
Please join us in welcoming our new board member Sarah – Jane.



Ko Mournes te māunga, Ko Lagan te awa, Nō Lisburn, Northern Ireland ahau.
Ko It taku hoa pumau, nō Tūhoe ia. Ko Peyton rāua ko Elysse ā māua tamariki.
Ko Sarah-Jane Reweti toku ingoa.

I grew up in Lisburn, Northern Ireland and have over 19 years' experience of working as a mental health nurse both in England and Aotearoa. I immigrated to Aotearoa in 2008 and soon settled down with my husband JT. We have two daughters who keep us busy!

I am currently employed as Clinical Nurse Director for Adult Mental Health Services at Te Whatu Ora Waitematā. I am passionate about leading clinical practice which incorporates mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori and hauora Māori health models. My goal is to ensure that mental health services provide tāngata whaiora and whānau care which is of a high standard and leaves them with hope. Nationally, I have established a strong nursing network through my work as a health committee panel member for the Nursing Council and as a Technical Expert Assessor for the Ministry of Health.

Last year I completed my Master of Nursing degree and am in the process of submitting my research findings for publication in a national nursing journal.

I feel privileged to be on the Te Ao Māramatanga national board and am committed to growing our mental health nurses.

Call for members to send us topics for Training Webinars!

As we continue to explore the possible avenues in which we can support our members, Te Ao Māramatanga would like a call to action for members to submit their preferred Webinar Topics.

Please email admin@nzcmhn.org.nz your submissions.

We look forward to hearing more about how the college can support your future.

2025 International Nurses Day

On International Nurses Day, we honor and celebrate the incredible dedication, compassion, and resilience of nurses around the world. Nurses are the backbone of our healthcare systems—offering comfort, care, and critical support every single day, often under immense pressure.

To all nurses: Thank you for your unwavering commitment to saving lives, your tireless service, and the empathy you show in every patient interaction. Your work matters deeply, and today we stand in gratitude for all you do.

Call for articles

We want your stories, summaries of research studies and other interesting information to add to this newsletter.

If you have items of interest, research summaries, stories from practice we want to hear about them.

Please send any details, summaries to admin@nzcmhn.org.nz with 'NZCMHN Newsletter' in the subject line. Feel free to send any queries also.

Cut-off date for the second issue of 2025 31st August 2025

Editor's Summary – Te Ao Māramatanga Te Karere May 2025

Tēnā koutou katoa. As 2025 begins, this newsletter reflects on a time of reconnection, advocacy, and resilience across the mental health nursing community of Aotearoa. Highlights include the successful in-person Te Ao Māramatanga Conference in Tāmaki Makaurau — the first since COVID — where the energy of new nursing professionals and the wisdom of seasoned practitioners came together in an inspiring event.

Over the past months, Te Ao Māramatanga has actively participated in two significant submissions: one on the Mental Health Act and another on the modernisation of health workforce regulation. These efforts aim to ensure that nurses' perspectives are strongly represented in shaping future policy.

The newsletter also notes emerging international collaboration, with a potential Trans-Tasman relationship forming following a meeting with the President of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses.

To all nursing leaders and teams: your dedication to whānau and communities is acknowledged with deep gratitude. This issue closes with a heartfelt reminder to take time for rest and restoration in the year ahead—you've earned it.

Ngā mihi nui.

**Thank you for taking time to read this edition of *Te Karere*.
Keep well. Keep safe and stay aware.**

See you in 2026 at the next conference!