

New Zealand Institute of Chemistry

President's Report 2004

While Chemical Science is still an important core discipline, its nature has changed dramatically over the last few decades and this change will continue. It now embraces areas such as materials science and nanotechnology through to chemical and structural biology. Hence the question we all need to consider is the role of our Institute in this changing climate. Council has spent some time examining the present status of the Institute and considering its future.¹ We have received considerable feedback from individuals and Branches and this has been most helpful.

There was not a strong feeling that the name of the Institute should change to include the words Chemical Science. Instead, we are holding a competition to find a short, snappy byline that reflects the diversity of chemistry that we can use in all published material. There was strong support to retain the Branches in their present form rather than moving to a national structure similar to that of the *New Zealand Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology*. The third question we asked you to comment upon was the organisation of Council and here the feedback indicated that a change in operation, rather than structure, was all that was required. To this end the role of each Council member will be defined in terms of a portfolio e.g. specialist groups, prizes and fellowships, conferences, publications, web site, Chemical Education Trust, strategic planning, membership etc. Council will hold the first of its two meetings in February to enable strategic planning to be carried out early enough to be actioned during the term of the President. The Council Executive will hold telephone conferences at least twice a year (more often if necessary).

One of the biggest challenges facing the Institute is the fact that our expenditure is greater than our subscription income. Thanks to the efforts of our Treasurer, Colin Freeman, we have accurate information about our financial status. Unfortunately, this has meant that Branch grants have been smaller than we would like. However, a number of Branches have considerable financial assets so this is something that should not affect their operation as long as they are willing to use them for the benefit of members. In future, Council will need to consider the financial assets of Branches when allocating Branch grants.

We have considered where savings can be made and it may be that our administrative expenses can be reduced. To this end we will be a calling for expressions of interest to perform this task.

The obvious way to increase income is to increase membership, but as we all know this is easier to say than do. There are a number of benefits of membership¹ but all chemical scientists should feel a responsibility to support their professional organisation.

Other matters are reported on in the rest of my report.

¹ See "Chemistry at the Crossroads: Does the NZIC have a Future?" in *Chemistry in New Zealand*, 2004, 68, 6-10.

Sponsorship of Prizes

Sponsorship for 5 years (2004–2008) of a plaque and \$1000 has been obtained for two prizes. (The attractive plaque for the SGS prize was produced by Xpress Awards, Auckland and I recommend they be used again.)

HortResearch Prize (replaces SGS) for excellence in the chemical sciences and Nufarm Prize (replaces Fernz) for industrial or applied chemistry. Dr. Jeremy Dombroski's efforts in obtaining the HortResearch sponsorship are much appreciated.

Change to Rules of the Easterfield Prize

Council approved a change to age of eligibility clause for this prize to: "Candidates must have less than ten (10) years of professional experience since completing their most recent relevant qualification of a BSc, BSc (Hons), MSc or PhD Degree, or the equivalent, at 30 April in the year of their application for consideration for the award." Previously candidates had to be less than 35 years old to be eligible.

Election of Fellows

At the October meeting of Council the following members were elected to the Fellowship of the Institute:

Dr A G Blackman, Otago University, Dunedin
Dr S Boniface, Queen Margaret College, Wellington
Associate Professor S Brooker, Otago University, Dunedin
Associate Professor R K Coll, University of Waikato, Hamilton
Dr B R Dent, BDG Synthesis, Wellington
Dr R H Furneaux, Industrial Research Ltd, Petone
Associate Professor K C Gordon, Otago University, Dunedin
Mr F W Grayson, Consultant Chemist, Auckland
Associate Professor L R Hanton, Otago University, Dunedin
Associate Professor D R K Harding, Massey University, Palmerston North
Dr P T Northcote, Victoria University, Wellington
Dr N B Perry, Crop and Food Research Ltd, Dunedin
Professor D L Officer, Massey University, Palmerston North
Dr S C Yorke, New Zealand Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Palmerston North

Award of Prizes

Council approved the award of the following Institute prizes for 2004.

HortResearch Prize for Excellence in Chemical Sciences: Professor D L Officer FNZIC, Massey University

Nurfarm Prize for Excellence in Industrial and Applied Chemistry: Dr G B Evans and Dr R H Furneaux FNZIC, Industrial Research Ltd.

NZIC Chemical Education Prize: Dr S Boniface FNZIC, Queen Margaret College, Wellington

NZIC Representation

This year the following appointments have been made:

Pacifichem 2010 Organising Committee: Professor Rob Smith FNZIC (Otago)

IUPAC:

Union Advisory Committee: Professor Kip Powell FNZIC (Canterbury)

National Contacts:

Div. II (Inorganic): Assoc. Professor Lyall Hanton FNZIC

Div. III (Organic & Biomolecular): Assoc. Professor Carol Taylor

Div. VII (Clinical & Human Health): Dr Paul Fawcett

Other NZIC representatives are:

Div. I (Physical & Biophysical): Associate Professor Jim McQuillan FNZIC

Div. IV (Macromolecular): Dr Greg Russell

Div. V (Analytical): Professor Kip Powell FNZIC

Div. VI (Chemistry of the Environment): Dr Pat Holland FNZIC

Div. VIII (Chem. Nomenclature & Struct. Representation): Dr Richard Hartshorn

Asia-Pacific Association of Catalysis Societies (APACS):

Associate Professor Hicham Idriss

Royal Society of NZ Council

Professor Andrew Brodie FNZIC (representing the NZIC and the NZIP)

Chemical Education Trust

The 2004 distribution from the Chemical Education Trust has seen the award of grants to:

Ellesmere College, Leeston (Lindsay Cook); Sacred Heart Girls College, Hamilton, (Isla Taufalele); Solway College, Masterton, (Lynley Rawston); Palmerston North Girls' College, (Raewyn Claridge); Nelson College, (David Fairley); St John's College, Hamilton, (Steve Wood); and Christchurch Girls' High School, (Kathryn Coakley). All the grants made were for laboratory equipment of one sort or another.

Emeritus George Petersen FNZIC steps down as a Trustee this year and I thank him for his service since the Trust was established in 1987. Professor Leon Phillips FNZIC and Dr. Pat Holland FNZIC continue as Trustees and Dr Alistair MacGibbon FNZIC joins them next year.

Specialist Groups

Dr Richard Coll contacted all the Specialist Groups to find out their current status. Some groups are no longer active whereas others, such as the 'Inorganic and Organometallic' and 'Fats and Oils' are. The role of some groups is simply to provide a contact person to link with activities of the *Royal Australian Chemical Institute* divisions. Updated information will be posted on the web page. I am keen to see the Chemical Education Group reactivated and thank Dr. Suzanne Boniface for agreeing to start this process.

Visit of the President to Branches

I visited all Branches in the August–October period and delivered a scientific address, *Towards New Metal-Rich Molecular Scaffolds*, and held a discussion on the future of the NZIC (except at the Manawatu Branch which missed out on the research lecture). The character of Branch meetings does vary with the Auckland Branch facing problems of parking and distance when a meeting is held at Auckland University. It

does appear that the Branches centred in the smaller centres find it easier to organise well-attended meetings. Meetings were all held at universities (apart from the Manawatu meeting held at UCOL). I thank all the Branches for their excellent hospitality.

Prizes for 2003 were presented at these visits to:

Dr. Sheila Woodgate (Auckland) and Richard Rendle (Canterbury) – Chemical Education

Professor Geoff Jameson FNZIC (Manawatu) – SGS

and a FNZIC certificate to Dr. Owen Curnow (Canterbury).

Unfortunately Denis Hogan Hon FNZIC (Canterbury) was unable to be presented to receive his *Certificate of Appreciation for Services to CHEM NZ* but I have posted this to him.

Editorials

At the Editors' requests, I have written editorials for *CHEM NZ* and *Chemistry in Australia*.

Letters

A letter of sympathy was sent to the Llewellyn family on the death of Sir Don Llewellyn Hon. FNZIC, an active NZIC member and Past President (on 2 different occasions).

A letter of congratulation was sent to the *Federation of Asian Chemical Societies* for their 25th Anniversary Celebration.

Letters of congratulation were sent to Dr. Alan Limmer (Stonecroft Wines), Professor Margaret Brimble FNZIC (Auckland University) and Emeritus Professor Ian Watson FNZIC for being awarded the NZ Order of Merit this year.

Concluding Comments

Finally, I would like to thank Council for their work and support for the NZIC during this year – in particular I thank Colin Freeman (Treasurer) and Grant Boston (Hon. General Secretary) who have given generously of their time. After 7 years as Secretary, Grant will not be standing for the position again and on behalf of you all I thank him for this long period of service to the Institute.

My thanks go to Professor Brian Halton FNZIC for continuing to edit *Chemistry in New Zealand* to a high standard, to the Canterbury-based *CHEM NZ* editorial team for their ongoing work on this popular education publication, and Rebecca Hurrell for updating the NZIC web page. I also thank you all, who as members continue to support your professional organisation. If you are not actively involved in the affairs of the NZIC I recommend you join a branch committee (if this is possible) for the future of the Institute depends on the support and enthusiasm of its members, not on the actions of its President or Council!

Andrew Brodie FNZIC

President

27 November 2004