

New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists Celebrating 60th Anniversary

60 years ago on June 28th 1949 the New Zealand Registered Occupational Therapists' Association (NZROTA) became a formal entity after a year of preparatory work. The Association is now known as NZAOT and "Kiwi" occupational therapists are commemorating the milestone birthday this year, with celebratory activities up and down the country. National highlights include:

- Media releases focus on the central place of the work of the Association in the profession and the impact of it on high quality practice.
- Tea parties acknowledging two Life and founding members of the Association - Hazel Barton and Norah Hobcroft. Norah, the first elected Secretary, recalls that the work of forming the Association was "not without much anxiety and effort" and its growth was amazingly fast.
- Every occupational therapist registering as a member in 2009 receives a commemorative NZAOT badge with its distinctive koru logo.
- The Association's monthly OT Insight magazine features historical highlights and important moments for occupational therapy in Aotearoa/New Zealand over the past 60 years.
- Historical review of NZAOT's contributions to the World Federation of Occupational Therapists since 1952 – from our shores have come Committee Chairs, Co-Ordinator of WFOT representatives to WHO and WFOT Regional Representative to WHO, member of WFOT delegation to South Africa reviewing apartheid impact on rehabilitation and recipient of a Merit Award for Exemplary Service. A New Zealand-born Australian delegate became Secretary/Treasurer, 2nd Vice President, WFOT President and a WFOT Honorary Fellow. Individual delegates have consistently contributed to the work of the Federation and NZAOT itself has hosted a WFOT Council meeting and given generously in donation, particularly to the development of the WFOT Disaster Responsiveness initiative.

Occupational Therapy in Aotearoa/NZ began in 1940 with the work of Margaret Buchanan/Inman, an English occupational therapist. The profession was very

young therefore when the Association was formed nine years later. Joining WFOT in its founding year 1952, only three years after that, then the publication of its own Journal in 1953, surely confirms the commitment of practitioners to occupational therapy in this small nation at the bottom of the globe that is Aotearoa/NZ.

NZAOT is today a pro-active, totally supportive resource for occupational therapy in Aotearoa/NZ. It provides services, support, representation, consultation and networking opportunities for members: Special Interest Groups (SIGS); bi-ennial Conferences and Clinical Workshops; representation in key action groups related to disability, practice, funding providers and Allied Health; support for the development of Maori practitioners; the unique ethical resource of NZAOT Values Exchange; the development of position statements; tangible support for research activity in the Occupational Therapy Research and Education Trust and facilitation of the Frances Rutherford Lecture Award, the Medical Staffing International/NZAOT Achievement Award and the NZAOT Graduate Award.

The 2009 NZAOT Clinical Workshops are scheduled for October 8-10 in the lovely North Island harbour city of Tauranga, 10 minutes from stunning Mount Maunganui beach. The intriguing themes of "Harvesting our catch, Resetting our net" highlight a celebration and acknowledgement of the achievements and current position of occupational therapy in Aotearoa/NZ and developing the clinical and marketing skills we need to successfully take us into the future. The Workshops promise three days of stimulating, practical and inter-active educational sessions with lots of other exciting things to do in the area either before or after, such as blokarting in Papamoa, or horse trekking at Maketu beach. Go online to www.nzaotevents.com for more details - register and join us in October!