

# **IEAG Co-Convenors Annual Report to AGM 28 June 2019**

Tena koutou, nga mihi nui ki a koutou!

IEAG has had another busy year advancing our own initiatives and making significant contributions to a number of ongoing national and regional events. This work aligns with our vision of an inclusive society where all people, including those with disability, are valued and contributing members of their community; where diversity is viewed as an asset. In the work of IEAG we aim to provide information that will challenge attitudes, practices and structures that create systemic barriers to students' participation and learning. We believe an inclusive education system will create an inclusive society.

2018/2019 was busy with a major review of the education system underway. This recognises a broken education system and promises major reform. A key goal is for all New Zealanders to work together to develop a thirty-year vision for education in Aotearoa New Zealand. The governments three-year work programme includes a consultation on the Disability and Learning Support Action Plan, the NCEA review, a review of Tomorrow's Schools policy, developing a future-focused Education Workforce Strategy, a continuous focus on raising achievement for Māori and Pasifika learners, an early learning strategic plan, and a comprehensive review of school property. More recently the Government has consulted on strengthening the right to education.

## **Creating Everyone's School conference**

We started the year by co-hosting a National inclusion conference "Creating Everyone's School" in April 2018. This was a collaborative project between IEAG and Berhampore School and was held over two days (on 26th and 27th April 2018) at Berhampore School in Wellington. The conference recognised that neighbourhood schools are the heart of our communities. Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programmes and activities so that all students learn and participate together in their local environment. The conference included a presentation on IEAG's Voices Project and a range of hands-on interactive workshops run by international and national presenters (including presentations by

IEAG members). IEAG members volunteered their time to assist with the successful running of the conference.

### **Education Work Programme**

The NZ labour coalition government announced last year that it would embark on an ambitious series of reforms to the education system. Two summits were held (one in Christchurch and one in Auckland over a weekend) in May last year to agree on a 30 year vision for our education system... IEAG was represented at both of these summits which were attended by 1400 people, including students, parents, teachers, academics and employers. IEAG was also on the Education Summits Virtual Reference Group.

Participants spent most of the first day listening to speakers in their chosen hubs which were separated into 6 themes including Ways of Learning, Ways of Teaching, Lifelong Learning, Skills and Abilities, Enabling Self-Fulfilling lives and Creating a Thriving Society. They were asked to reimagine the education system of the future as well as asked to identify the values they believed should be woven into the school system. These ideas were captured on small cards, written on tables and written up on whiteboards.

On the second day participants were asked to link the values they identified to the future vision or possibilities of the education system. It was pleasing to note that a common thread among all participants was an emphasis on equity, as well as belonging, diversity and caring for others (awhi). Yet other values identified included: Wellbeing (Hauora), Creativity, Family Community (Whānaungatanga), Respect, Curiosity, Manaakitanga.

‘Through two rounds of dialogue, participants began to develop possibilities for the future of learning in New Zealand. They painted a picture of a caring, inclusive and equitable society where learning pathways would be more personalised and diverse to give each New Zealander an opportunity to succeed.

They thought education could place more emphasis on soft skills like empathy, resilience, problem solving, cooperation, communication, and creativity and should measure success in different ways.’  
[\(https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/education-conversation/the-summit-events/values-principles-and-possibilities/\)](https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/education-conversation/the-summit-events/values-principles-and-possibilities/)

Following the summits, four significant workstreams were identified:

Tomorrow's Schools Review

Reform of School Property

NCEA Review

Reform of Vocational Education

As well as these workstreams there are 14 ongoing initiatives and priorities including the Disability & Learning Support Action Plan.

### **Education Work Programme Regional Meetings**

The Coalition Government has appointed a Ministerial Advisory Group to oversee the reforms as well as Independent taskforces and panels to oversee each workstream. In turn, the task forces and panels have consulted with interested parties regionally to ascertain the types of changes needed. Some of IEAG's committee members have been directly involved in the advisory groups and panels while others have attended and represented IEAG at the regional meetings.

IEAG was represented at the Building on Success for All Forum in June and had a representative on the Tomorrow School's Advisory Panel, as well as attending the Tomorrows Schools taskforce's Review Consultation Meeting in August. IEAG was also represented at the launch of the Draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan in Auckland in September 2018 and at a confidential briefing on the Report from the Tomorrow School's Independent Taskforce in Wellington in December 2018.

### **Education Work Programme Submissions**

Further to the regional meetings, IEAG's has made a number of submissions.

#### IEAG Snapshot Survey on the Disability and Learning Support Action Plan - October 2018

Last year the Ministry of Education consulted on the development of a job description for a learning support coordinator (LSC) in urban and rural environments. IEAG's Snapshot Survey undertaken in October 2018 was designed to find out what our members and supporters think about the role of learning support coordinators. The survey asked whether each school needs a LSC (98% of respondents said yes), what an

effective LSC would do and what skills LSC should have. The information from this survey informed IEAGs submission to Government on the Action Plan.

#### Feedback on the Update Recommendations to the update recommendations to ASD Guidelines on transitions 2019

IEAG was asked to provide feedback on the proposed updates to the Autism Spectrum Disorder Guidelines on school transitions for young people on the autism spectrum. The Living Guideline Group (LGG), a multidisciplinary advisory panel set up by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, oversees the guidelines. IEAG provided some comprehensive feedback and referenced material on the recommended updates.

#### Submission on Tomorrow Schools Review Group Report:

A survey was sent out to IEAG members. Survey questions reflected the contents page of the Tomorrows Schools Group report concerning Governance, Schooling Provision, Competition and Choice, Disability and learning Support, Teaching, School leadership, School resources. Antonia, Maree and Heather wrote a submission based on the survey results. Note that IEAG also contributed financially to the EFA submission which was commissioned out to Dr Jude Mcarthur who wrote a very good 'alternative chapter' on Disability and learning support for the Tomorrows School Review panel to consider.

#### Submission on Strengthening the Right to Education in education legislation.

Further, Governing Committee members gave an oral submission to the Education and Workforce Select Committee in Wellington in June 2018.

#### **Launch of Voices Project at University of Auckland**

Our upgraded website was launched by the Hon Tracey Martin, Associate Minister of Education and Minister for Children at the University of Auckland's School of Education and Social Work Epsom Campus on 17th July 2018. Over 100 disabled people, families/whanau, educators, academics, researchers and other supporters attended the event which provided an important networking and information sharing opportunity. The project aim was to listen and respond to the voices of young disabled people as they spoke of their experiences of school in Aotearoa New Zealand. Our Voices Project recognises that young people have important things to say about their education and what needs to change and that this can drive innovation



in teaching practice, school culture and government education policy. Our new website and Voices Project can be viewed at <https://ieag.org.nz/voices/>

The Voices project received further exposure when Heather and Anne-Marie went to the Melbourne TIES (The Inclusive Education Symposium) event in October last year, where they presented the project to an international audience. The voices project was very well received and positive feedback was provided on this unique project.

### **The Inclusive Education Summit - October 2018**

Three Governing Committee members attended the Inclusive Education Summit in Melbourne from 26th to 28th October 2018 in Melbourne. The summit provided an opportunity to present IEAG's Voices Project to an international audience. This project was very well received and positive feedback was provided on this unique project.

### **IEAG Governing Committee**

The Co-Convenors for most of the year were Heather Lear and Maree Kirk. The Governing Committee elected at the last AGM were Trish Grant, Maree Kirk, Heather Lear, Giovanni Tiso, Anne-Marie McIlroy, Carey-Ann Morison, Barbara Fogarty and Rebekah Corlett, with Cary-Anne, Anne Marie and Maree Kirk all stepping down during the year. Many thanks go to all our committee members for your contributions over the past year.

### **IEAG Organisational Review**

As IEAG is now 10 years old and much as has changed within education the Governing Committee successfully sort funding from the Lottery Ministers Discretionary fund to undertake an organisation review and governance training in February 2019. Tess Casey was appointed to conduct the review.

The purpose of the review was to look at the structure and operations of IEAG in order to identify options that would enable:

- Greater clarity about roles and responsibilities
- Practical and efficient operational and governance systems

- Improved communications between board members
- More time for the Board to focus their meetings on the organisation's strategic direction.

Tess Casey examined IEAG's Constitution, Policies and Procedures, Minutes of meetings, Audit Report and Annual Accounts and Financial reports.

Interviews were also conducted with each Governing Committee member and staff member. As well as presenting the committee with a written report, Tess met twice with the committee to discuss the recommendations. Recommendations included: updating the constitution, better identifying roles and responsibilities including the possible appointment of an Executive officer, establishing a procedure around any conflicts of interest, improving our agenda and minutes templates and their timely circulation, appointing subcommittees to work on identified projects and to further tighten up our financial processes.

## **Collaboration & Liaison**

### *Education for All Forum member*

- IEAG continues to be active members of the Education For All forum that lobbies for inclusive education at the legislative, policy and practice level.
- on -going leadership and collaboration with education, disability and family sector organisations to support the development of inclusive education policies, systems and practices in education.

-IEAG has an ongoing collaborative relationship with Universities across New Zealand including University of Auckland, University of Canterbury, University of Otago, Massey University and University of Waikato.

-IEAG works in partnership with key disability and education sector groups including, but not limited to, IHC, CCS Disability Action, NZEI and the NZ Principals' Federation.

-IEAG embraces opportunities to liaise directly with the Ministry of Education including the opportunity for a committee member to attend several Parent Engagement meetings with Ministry learning support leaders in Auckland between June & August. Further, some committee members have taken the opportunity to liaise with Manukau Learning Support directly regarding inclusive provision in the south Auckland area.

## **Financial Stewardship**

IEAG continued to apply for funding through the 2018/2019 cycle. We were successful in eight COGS regions and continue with the funding support of the Todd Foundation. The National Coordinator and Co-Convenors Heather Lear and Maree Kirk attended the Todd Hui in 2019.

We continued to engage AAF accounting and an auditor in the 2018/2019 term and utilise XERO software for the financial management of IEAG. We have undertaken all recommendations from the auditors.

IEAG has extended its approach to fund raising to several larger national applications. This has required considerable focused input from the Co convenors, Executive Committee and National Coordinator. The competitive nature of funding applications, criteria and skills with the process is a reality for all NGOs and charitable organisations and has proved a challenge for IEAG. This is an area of focus for 2019/2020. It will impact on the sustainability of IEAG as an organisation and will mean a review of the operational structure.

## **Acknowledgements for support given to IEAG**

Special thanks are extended to the Todd Foundation without the generous five year partnership funding we would not have achieved all we have this year.

We also wish to extend our thanks to organisations that have supported our work through grants, and to those people who have generously and voluntarily supported our work. We acknowledge with gratitude the funding received from these organisations:

- Todd Foundation
- IHC Foundation
- Lottery Community Grants Board
- Lottery Ministers Discretionary Fund
- COGS – Auckland City, Wellington, North Shore, Coastal Otago, Waitakere, Manawatu, Hutt Valley.
- Frozen Funds

IEAG extends its thanks to the following people for their generous, voluntary support:

- Trish Grant and IHC for ongoing supports
- Anne Marie McIlroy for her continued work on the Voices Project
- Dr Jude MacArthur for facilitating the inclusive education workshops
- To everyone who participated in our online surveys

This support has been invaluable and is very much appreciated.

## **LOOKING FORWARD 2019 -Strategic Direction**

### **Projects:**

1. Inclusion Symposium, Auckland University Kohia Centre, 18/19 July 2019. This symposium will provide an opportunity for education practitioners to access the most recent research and practice that describes effective and high quality inclusive education in both New Zealand schools and international examples. Anne-Marie McIlroy will be presenting the Voices Project and Antonia Hannah will be facilitating a panel of young disabled and neurodiverse people who will share their experience of school with attendees.
2. Voices Project, Funding from Frozen Funds and Lottery Community funding has been granted to add more voices to this project.
3. The TIES conference, Auckland University Kohia Centre, Auckland, 25 – 27<sup>th</sup> October. the Voices Project to be presented at this event.
4. IEAG Website and multimedia platform: website to support interactive website tools development

### **Representation**

- Continued involvement in advisory roles to the Ministry of Education and other Ministries, in advocating for inclusive education
- Raise public awareness about the changes to Learning Support

### **Collaboration**

- Education For All Forum, cross-sector meetings and initiatives
- Disability and education sector organisations



- Ministry of Education
- Human Rights Commission and Office of Disability Issues,
- Ministers responsible for Education, children and youth.

### **Membership Strategy**

- Review of the IEAG membership strategy and social media 'membership' status.
- Increase membership contributions and engagement
- Establish and support Inclusive Education Networks throughout the country

### **Education**

- ADSA professional development on Inclusive Education (Feb/Aug)
- Conference presentations and IEAG information stands
- Review, update and add to IEAG resources within multimedia platform and available in hardcopy, working to develop a page to be included in the NZSTA handbook on Inclusive Education Requirements and Practices

### **IEAG Co-convenor**

Heather Lear