

BAY OF ISLANDS FREE KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION INC  
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I thank you for allowing me to be your president in one of the most challenging years that our association has had.

1985 saw the completion of the Kerikeri Kindergarten and it is certainly an example of the latest with the best - when we compare our efforts in past years and the lengths that Marion Toplis and Nessie Nisbet and all the legion of mothers and fathers went to build Hillcrest we find that the efforts of the Kerikeri Establishment Committee were the same and just as frustrating but, my goodness, you certainly get what you want nowadays - the days of Department dictatorship must have gone when you see the end result today compared to past building programmes.

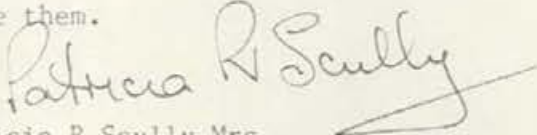
My thanks to all who helped Kerikeri become established and my thanks to those people who 35 years ago or more who began our association and the hundreds who have carried it on to the present day where we have four kindergartens, 260 children and eight teachers.

Speaking of teachers, your association was embroiled in a staffing appeal hearing last year in Wellington and subsequent to such hearing has made several recommendations for the improvement of appeal procedures. May I thank the council and the teachers for the advice and support given to the association during a very difficult time preceding, during and after the appeal. My special thanks to Mr Hewitt Harrision, Vice-President of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union and Mrs Colleen Steadman for their assistance to the association during the year past.

I am concerned over Department staffing ratios in our Kindergartens and while I appreciate the strong position of KTA in this matter might I suggest that a gentle approach be taken by all parties to assure that all our children get an opportunity to spend some time at Kindergarten even though a matter of staffing may put extra pressures on our staff. I am always reminded of the warmth and understanding of our teachers and I wish to thank all of them now and I hope later individually for what they do for us, our children and our children's children.

We have seen the encouraging growth of Te Kohanga Reo and perhaps a decline in Playcentre in the last few years - remember that there may be jealousies over equipment and funding of these organisations at times especially when we find fundraising difficult, but Pre-school is where we're at and we must learn to share our knowledge, our experience and our right to educate as many as can be accommodated. We may think we in Kindergarten have "the state of the art" but sometimes we need to sit on the floor at a session of each of the three arms of pre-school and learn some humility and as someone once said "know what we don't know". Philosophy is not my strong point, however let's all work for a better pre-school world and a bigger slice of the pre-school cake.

My especial thanks to the council who have worked away smoothing paths and clearing bureaucratic and administrative snowdrifts which take our secretary and treasurer particularly many hours of their own time - my thanks to all our family of committees who keep our four kindergartens functioning with apparent ease - if the truth be known with their share of problems but they overcome them with considerable resource and guile - New Zealanders seem not to have lost their initiative but perhaps some of their freedom of speech. We must hear the problems if we are to solve them.

  
Patricia R Scully Mrs  
President

10 April 1986