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PMAANZ CONFERENCE

Te Kira steps down as chair, Practice Manager of the Year announced



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Retiring chair Michelle Te Kira and incoming chair Mary Morrissey exchange a hug after the annual meeting at the PMAANZ annual conference in Christchurch on Saturday [Image: Keepa Digital]

After four years of the “double whammy” of health reforms and COVID-19 it is the right time to step down, says Michelle Te Kira, outgoing chair of the Practice Managers and Administrators Association of New Zealand.

Ms Te Kira stepped down at the PMAANZ annual general meeting on Saturday, and Mary Morrissey was elected the new chair.

Ms Morrissey, the former PMAANZ treasurer, is practice manager at New Plymouth’s Family Health Centre.

The annual meeting was held during the association's annual conference, "Operation Transition", at Te Pae in Christchurch, with 290 delegates attending.

Ms Te Kira says the role leading the country's nearly 500-member practice managers' association has "imploded" since the pandemic. Stepping up the role has been good for PMAANZ's profile, as it is now a recognised voice around national decision-making tables, she says.

But it is time for her to focus on her day job, says Ms Te Kira, general manager of Three Rivers Medical in Gisborne in a region that was "absolutely smashed" by Cyclone Gabrielle.



Outgoing PMAANZ chair Michelle Te Kira at the Christchurch conference held over the weekend [image: Keepa Digital]

Changing of the guard

At the conference Ms Te Kira asked practice managers what's keeping them awake at night and their responses included the uncertainty of funding and exhaustion.

“We are shattered, we are tired and we're dealing with tired staff, dealing with doctors and nurses who are possibly looking at leaving – really or anticipating...

“Also pay parity is a nightmare and now we’re worried about pay equity, what it will look like and whether it will be funded fully. Because if it’s not, [practices] can’t afford it...there will be practices that actually end up closing their doors...”

Ms Te Kira tells *New Zealand Doctor Rata Aotearoa* she enjoyed the chair role until it “absolutely ramped up” with the pandemic and the workload blew out on top of her practice role.

Professionally, it has been invigorating learning from some “amazing” health leaders, she says. She loves the PMAANZ organisation – “a passionate bunch” – but it was “definitely time for me to step down”.

“Starting new health reforms during a pandemic wasn’t the best thing in the universe. That kind of double-whammied it.”

Some “amazing” PMAANZ executive members remain on board, whom she will support, Ms Te Kira says. She continues as a member of the General Practice Owners Association board.

She says the health sector may not have enough GPs or nurses but it also suffers without “a medical receptionist or a bloody good practice manager or management knowledge in [a] practice”.



Mary Morrissey, from New Plymouth’s Family Health Centre general practice, is the new PMAANZ chair [Image: Keepa Digital]

PMAANZ award-winners

Lisa Hamblin, operations manager at the Cyclone Gabrielle-hammered Three Rivers Medical, was announced winner of the 2023 Practice Manager of the Year award at the Christchurch conference.

The award was presented by Waitaha Primary Health chair and Rangiora GP Lorna Martin on Saturday afternoon.

The runners-up were Bethan Rajwer, of Takapuna Health, North Shore, Auckland; Wendy Harris, of Cambridge Medical Centre; and Ruth Mansell, of Stoddard Road Medical Centre, Mt Roskill, Auckland.

Samantha Malloch, of Takapuna Health, won the UNEP scholarship.



PMAANZ Practice Manager of the Year Lisa Hamblin is congratulated by Waitaha Primary Health chair Lorna Martin [Image: Keepa Digital]

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