

# What makes a **LIFE MEMBER?**



The NZRDA started a positive process of nominating life members early in our history.

## **A little bit of history**

After breaking away from the NZMA, we started operating independently in 1985/1986. (As an aside, ASMS – the SMOs union – followed us a couple of years later under the Employment Relations Act, which required union representation in bargaining.)

Our turnover as resident doctors challenged us as an organisation at that time: we could never rely on long-serving National Executive members simply because we did, do and should move on. Therefore, we established two initiatives:

1. We set up our national executive as, effectively, a board of directors to oversee a contracted organisation to deliver the services we wanted, and
2. We actively sought life members who had demonstrated a dedication to RMOs who would reasonably endure.

The first initiative, which perhaps might seem ho-hum today, was ground breaking at the time. That sort of structure was not generally viewed as “what a union does”. However, we were new and different, and were prepared to break a few moulds!

## **Life members**

Life members are people who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to represent and progress members interests. On top of the busy life we all have, they have invested time and energy in us. In doing so, they inevitably demonstrate a commitment to resident doctors and our role, and to addressing our challenges and needs. Ultimately, life members have to be elected to life membership by an AGM.

## **Paving the way**

Boyd Swinburne was the first to be elected a life member of the RDA. Boyd led the 1985 campaign that saw the introduction of the first limits on hours:

- No more than 16 hours per day
- No more than 72 hours per week, and
- Every second weekend off.

In an age when doctors just didn't strike, and we had no established organisation like we do today, Boyd led a campaign including the threat of strike action to get the ball rolling.

He also saw the devolution of what was previously a

social club (whose fees were \$4.00 a year) into a union.

Obviously Boyd has gone on to other great things, qualifying as a physician and endocrinologist. His passion was diabetes, and today he is Professor of Population Nutrition and Global Health at the University of Auckland, Alfred Deakin Professor and Director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention at Deakin University in Melbourne.

## **What do life members contribute?**

So what does Boyd's role as a life member do for us today? As one example: when the Ministry of Health was pushing the healthy eating campaign on DHBs for staff food (but not yet patients, we note!), Boyd alerted us to the NZRDA being cited incorrectly as a barrier because of our meals clause in the MECA! He has remained available in the process as we tried to develop positive RMO leadership opportunities (despite DHB resistance) as part of the process.

## **And then . . .**

Shortly after Boyd's election, Terry Powell was elected to life membership. The only non-doctor to ever be so elected, Terry took on the responsibility to deliver the services NZRDA needed after the 1985/1986 campaign – and do the work required to build us into a union.

Many SMOs and politicians of the day would have preferred he had not done this, and had expected the campaign to die a natural death – and NZRDA along with it . . . But that is now history!

Other life members include Dr Marc Adams, the first MCNZ member successfully supported by NZRDA once we got the right to vote. Now working in the Department of Anaesthesia & Peri-operative Medicine at Monash in Melbourne, Marc still regularly sends us updates on issues, or potentially issues that might affect us, from across the ditch.

Drs Kate O'Connor (also an NZRDA supported MCNZ member in her day), Nemisha Chhand (née Ranchhod), Catherine Simpson and Brigid Connor all contribute their time and skills as trustees of the NZRDA Education Trust. And Curtis Walker continues as a MCNZ member, keenly interested in matters related to RMOs.

Our latest new life member is Dr Sara Moeke, who has recently retired as our national president after four years of service.

Please see over the page for a full list of life members.

# LIFE MEMBERS

The comprehensive list



|      |                       |
|------|-----------------------|
| 1991 | Dr Boyd Swinburn      |
| 1993 | Dr Alma Rae           |
| 1994 | Dr Garry Barron       |
| 1995 | Dr Deborah Sidebotham |
| 1995 | Mr Terry Powell       |
| 1996 | Dr Catherine Simpson  |
| 1997 | Dr Marc Adams         |
| 2000 | Dr Nemisha Ranchhod   |
| 2002 | Dr Kate O'Connor      |
| 2003 | Dr Brigid O'Connor    |
| 2006 | Dr Ian Rosemergy      |
| 2008 | Dr Deralie Flower     |
| 2013 | Dr Curtis Walker      |
| 2015 | Dr Bevan Jenkins      |
| 2017 | Dr Sara Moeke         |



Dr Sara Moeke, 2017 outgoing President, thanks Dr Curtis Walker, past President and MCNZ member. Both are NZRDA life members.