

# HONONGA

NO. 02

JUNE 2025



INSPIRING ASSOCIATIONS  
IN AOTEAROA



NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES  
*Te Hapori o nga Kaiwhakahaere Hononga o Aotearoa*



# HONONGA

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# Kia ora, and Welcome Hononga No 2

## From the Executive Officer

Kia ora koutou,

It's a pleasure to welcome you to the second issue of Hononga—our shared space to celebrate and strengthen the work of membership organisations across Aotearoa.

Since launching NZSAE and our first edition of Hononga, the response from across the sector has been both humbling and energising. It confirms what we already knew: association leaders are hungry for meaningful connection, practical tools, and local insights that reflect the challenges and opportunities unique to New Zealand.

In this issue, we continue to explore ideas that matter—like the evolving role of AI in associations—not just as a concept, but in terms of real application and value. Hononga is about helping you turn inspiration into action and ideas into impact.

Thank you for being part of this growing network. Together, we're shaping a stronger future for associations across the motu.



Ngā mihi nui,  
Brett Jeffery, CAE  
Executive Officer, NZSAE.

## ASSOCIATION FOR ASSOCIATIONS in AOTEAROA

# WHERE YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS

In this second edition, we move from potential to practical. With AI rapidly integrating into everyday operations, we highlight real-world examples and emerging strategies that associations and membership-based organisations in Aotearoa are already exploring. From improving communication flows to enhancing event planning and member insights, we focus on how AI can become a supportive tool—not a replacement—for human connection and decision-making.



**NZSAE**

NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES  
*Te Hapori o nga Kaiwhakahaere Hononga o Aotearoa*



# Upcoming NZSAE Events for 2025

NZSAE has an exciting lineup of events scheduled throughout 2025, including the Associations Matter Conference & Exhibition, CEO/ED Meetings, and our Membership & Conferences Symposium. These events are designed to provide valuable networking, professional development, and collaboration opportunities for association professionals across Aotearoa.

While not all webinars are currently listed, more events are being added regularly, so keep an eye on the NZSAE Events Calendar for the latest updates and to secure your spot!

## June

- 6 The NZSAE Whiteboard: June
- 17 Matariki Lunch: Wellington
- 18 Matariki Lunch: Auckland

## July

- 16 CEO/ED Meeting – Wellington
- 23 CEO/ED Meeting – Auckland

## August

- 3-5 **Associations Matter:  
Conference & Exhibition**

## September

- 10 Associations in Focus – Wellington
- 17 Associations in Focus – Auckland

## October 2025

- 17 NZSAE Birthday Celebration
- 21/22 NZSAE Connections

## November 2025

- 12 CEO/ED Meeting – Wellington
- 19 CEO/ED Meeting – Auckland
- tbc Association Lunch – Wellington
- tbc Association Lunch – Auckland



**Membership Development**  
18 July



**Operational Procedures and HR**  
24 July



**Risk and Finance Management**  
29 July



**Social Media Strategy**  
07 August



**AI for Associations**  
13 August

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## Professional Development



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NZSAE is a Certified Association Executive (CAE) Registered Provider, supporting excellence in association leadership and professional development.

# 13 CELEBRATED VENUES, ONE OF OUR EXPERTS TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THEM ALL.

## Meet Charmaine Hylla

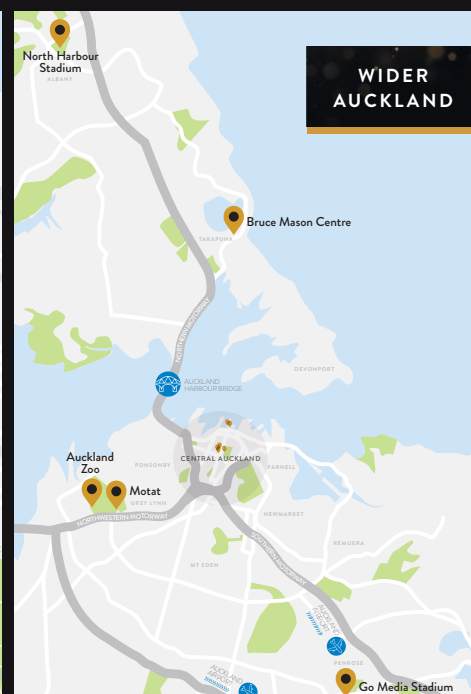
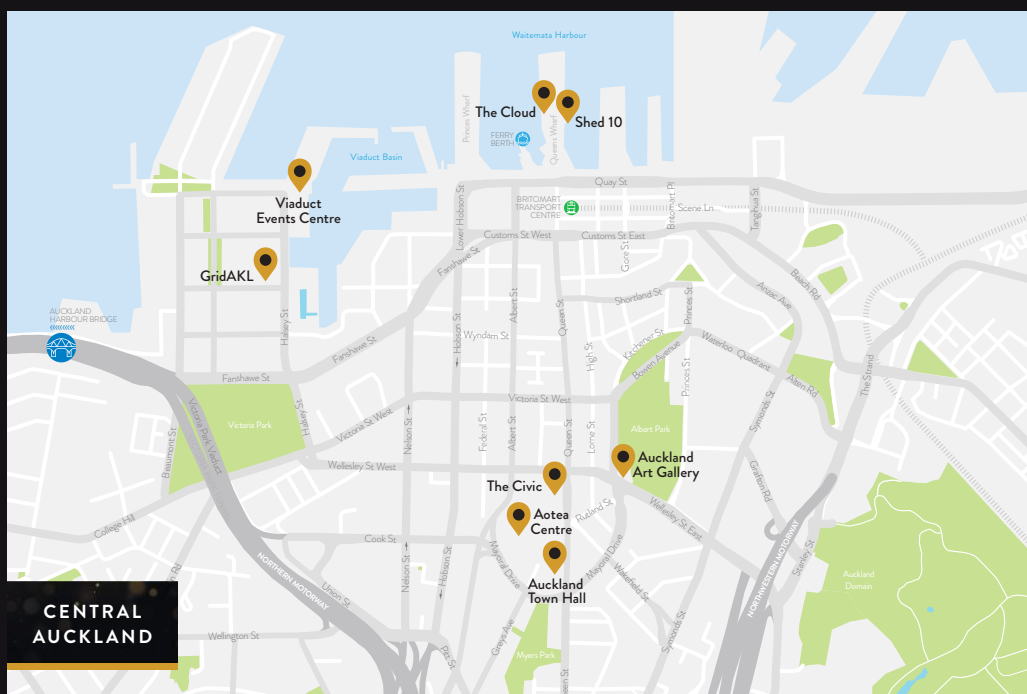
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# IS YOUR ASSOCIATION FIT FOR PURPOSE IN 2025?



*In a time when disruption feels more like the norm than the exception, associations in Aotearoa must pause and ask a critical question: Are we still fit for purpose?*

*Technology is racing ahead. The way we learn, network, influence policy, and deliver value is being reshaped. What worked for your association in 2019 may not carry you through to 2026.*

*The world of 2025 is not the same as it was five or even two years ago. Member expectations have shifted.*



## So, What Does “Fit For Purpose” Really Mean Today?

It's about alignment. Are your structures, offerings, and behaviours aligned with the needs of your members and your purpose? And just as importantly – are you agile enough to evolve?

Here are five key areas to explore:

### 1. Is Your Purpose Still Clear – and Still Resonating?

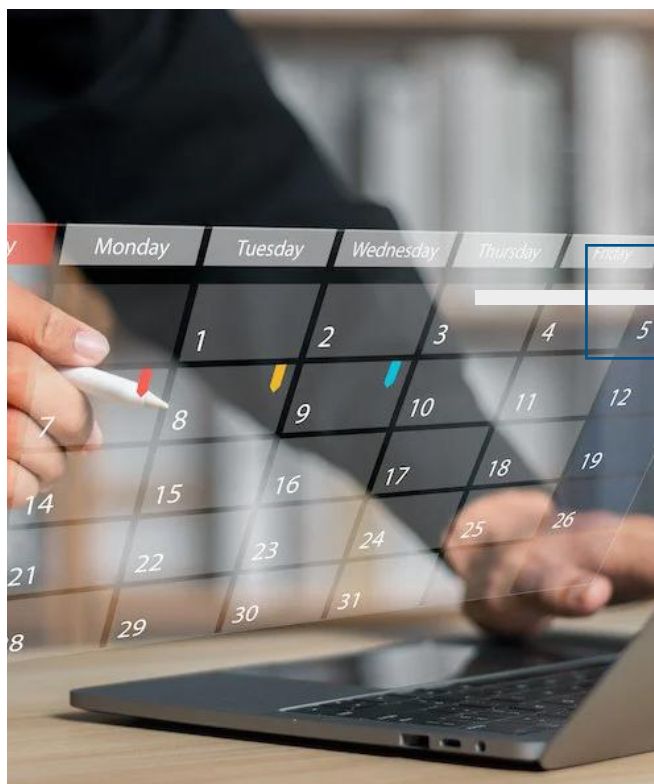
Your mission might be rock solid, but is it expressed in a way that resonates in today's world? In an environment of constant noise, relevance is everything. If your vision doesn't inspire your members or if it's lost in complexity, it may be time to reframe it. Associations that can clearly articulate why they exist – and who they exist for – are the ones leading the way.

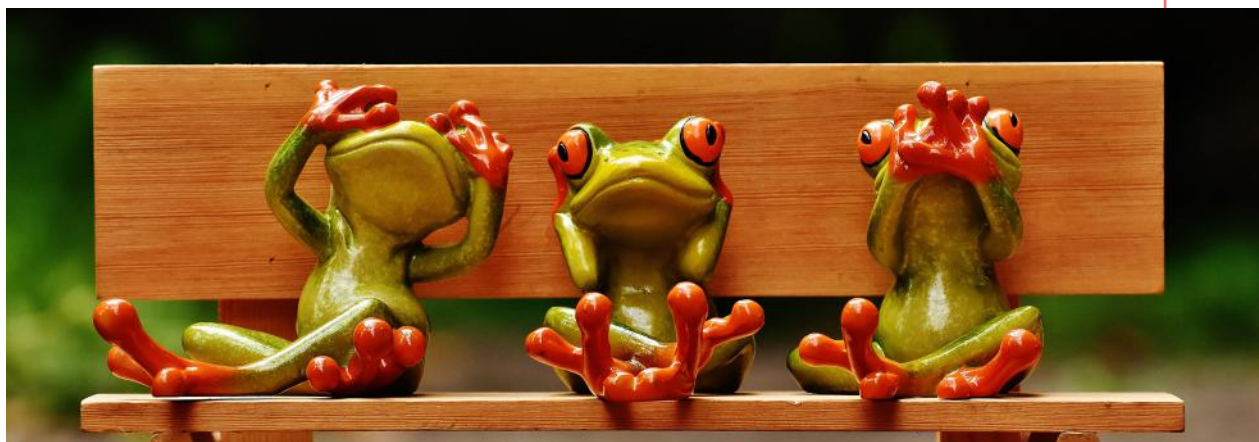
### 2. Are You Serving Members the Way They Want to Be Served?

Transactional touchpoints won't cut it anymore. Members expect responsive communication, value that meets them where they are, and flexible ways to engage. That doesn't mean abandoning your traditions – it means evolving them. Are your events hybrid? Are your resources accessible? Can members easily find answers and connect with others? Being fit for purpose means adapting to modern expectations without losing your essence.

### 3. Are You Leveraging Technology – or Just Tolerating It?

Whether it's your AMS, your member portal, or your communications platforms, the tech stack you use should empower your association, not frustrate it. Digital maturity is not about having every tool; it's about having the right ones – and using them well. Is your data informing decisions? Is your tech helping you personalise experiences? If not, it may be time for a digital tune-up.





#### 4. Are You Inclusive, Representative, and Forward-Looking?

A fit-for-purpose association in 2025 is diverse in voice and inclusive in action. That means reviewing how you select leaders, how you invite feedback, and how you build pathways for new generations to step in. It also means actively learning about Te Tiriti, about accessibility, and about emerging needs. If your board table looks the same as it did a decade ago, it might be time to invite new voices in.

#### 5. Are You Supporting Your Team and Volunteers to Thrive?

Behind every strong association is a hardworking team and a group of committed volunteers. Are they supported? Are roles clear, and are expectations sustainable? Purpose-driven work can only be delivered if the people behind it are empowered, energised, and aligned.

*The Challenge – and the Opportunity.*

*Being fit for purpose doesn't mean being perfect. It means being honest, open to change, and committed to continual improvement. The most impactful associations aren't just reacting to change – they're leading it.*

*So, take stock. Ask the tough questions. Engage your members in the conversation.*

*2025 could be the year you shift from what you've always done to what's most needed now.*



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## NotebookLM: Your AI-Powered Research Assistant

In the ever-evolving world of digital tools, NotebookLM is Google's latest offering designed to change the way we interact with documents and knowledge. For association professionals, this could be a game-changer—streamlining research, briefings, content creation, and even professional development.

### What Is NotebookLM?

NotebookLM (originally launched as Project Tailwind) is an AI-powered notebook tool that helps you understand and work with the content you upload. Whether you're reviewing reports, planning a board paper, or preparing for a keynote, NotebookLM allows you to:

- Upload files – PDFs, Google Docs, Slides, website URLs, or even YouTube videos with transcripts.
- Ask questions – Like "Summarise this report" or "What are the main takeaways from this webinar?"
- Generate content – Including timelines, FAQs, audio overviews, and more.
- Stay grounded in your sources – Every AI response is backed by citations, helping ensure accuracy and context.

### How It Works

Using Google's Gemini AI model, NotebookLM analyses the documents you upload and immediately provides:

- Key summaries
- Topic overviews
- Suggested questions to explore the content further

Unlike generic AI tools, NotebookLM doesn't make up answers. Its insights come directly from the sources you've provided, keeping you in control of the context.

### Key Features

- Smart summaries: Digest long documents into bullet points or topic breakdowns.
- AI-powered Q&A: Ask complex or basic questions and receive clear, citation-backed responses.
- Audio overviews: It can turn your uploaded content into an AI-generated podcast—ideal for listening while travelling or walking between meetings.

### Collaboration

- You can share notebooks with others via a link, allowing them to view, ask questions, or engage with the content.



# For Associations To Use



## Why It Matters for Associations

For association professionals juggling governance papers, member communications, sector reports, or speaker presentations—NotebookLM is a productivity booster. You could:

- Create briefing documents from AGM minutes
- Develop study guides for CPD courses
- Summarise sector research for your board
- Share curated, cited summaries with colleagues or volunteers

## Limitations to Be Aware Of

While powerful, it's still early days. NotebookLM isn't perfect:

- It can occasionally misinterpret nuance
- You'll still need to fact-check sensitive or critical points
- The mobile app is handy but offers a simplified interface

And while it's great for internal use, be cautious using it with confidential or private materials unless you're clear on data policies.

## Getting Started

Visit [notebooklm.google.com](https://notebooklm.google.com) and log in with your Google account. Upload your documents, start asking questions, and see how AI can support your knowledge work.

## Final Thoughts

In a world where information overload is real and time is limited, NotebookLM stands out as a practical AI tool for people working in complex, document-heavy environments. For those of us in associations—where context, clarity, and community knowledge matter—it's worth exploring how NotebookLM can support our everyday work.

*As always, it's a tool—not a replacement for critical thinking. But it might just become your smartest research partner.*



# Auntie Oracle

## Introducing Your Questions, Answered

Each edition of Hononga will feature practical questions from our members focused on the administration of associations. From managing member records and data security to streamlining board operations and workflow management, we aim to provide clear, actionable advice tailored for association leaders across Aotearoa.

This section is designed to help you navigate the everyday challenges of running an effective membership organisation with confidence and clarity. Have a question you'd like addressed? Let us know, and we'll include it in a future edition.

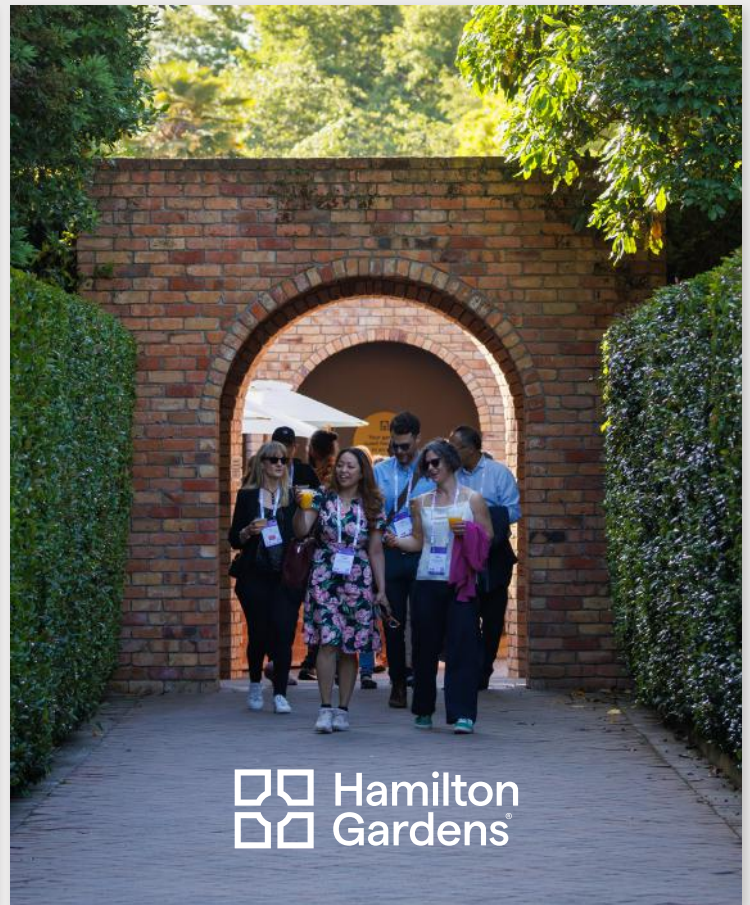
### Statistics every membership person should know

Your retention rate is just one of a number of membership statistics that all membership managers need to be aware of. Tracking your key membership statistics can give you an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of your member recruitment and retention processes and enables you to take targeted action where required. The basic membership statistics for each segment that every membership manager should know are:

- Retention Rate - The percentage of members retained over a period of time.  $(\# \text{ Members End Period} - \# \text{ Members Joined Over Period}) / \# \text{ members at start} * 100$
- Growth Rate - The rate at which membership is growing  $(\# \text{ Members End Period} - \# \text{ Members Start Period}) / \text{Members Start} * 100$
- Loss Rate - The percentage of members not retained...  $1 - \text{Retention Rate}$
- Tenure - The average length of time that a member stays...  $100 / \text{Loss Rate}$
- Lifetime Value - The average spend of a member during their membership...  $(\text{Average Dues} + \text{Average Non-Dues}) * \text{Tenure}$

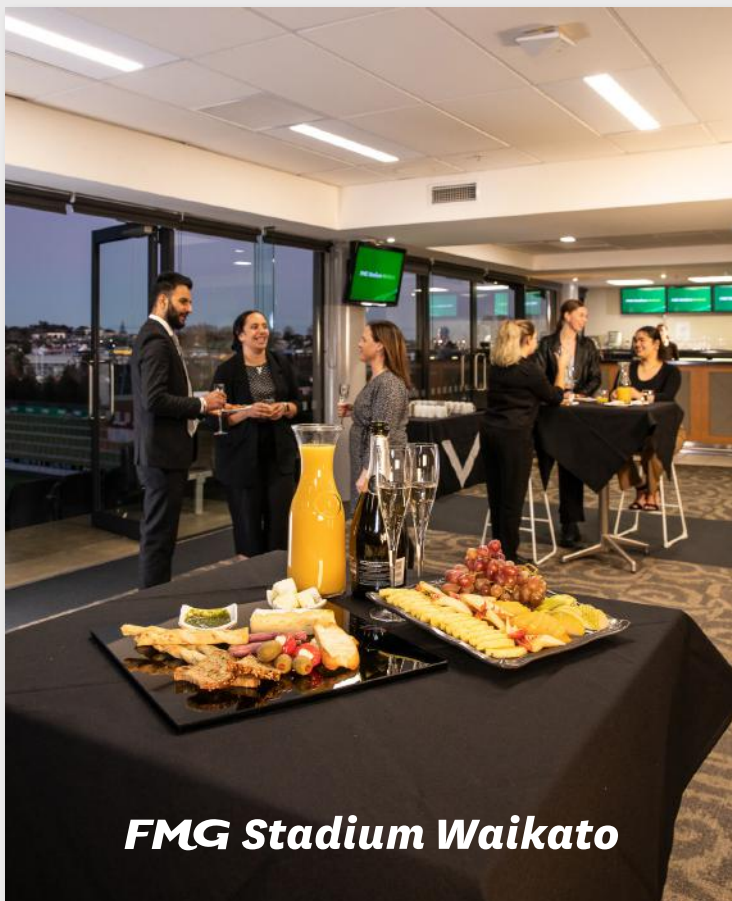






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# Auntie Oracle

## Benchmarking your statistics

It is extremely difficult to give examples of good, bad or ugly statistical benchmarks as what is acceptable varies dramatically between industries. Factors such as the length of time an organisation has existed, the depth of penetration they have into their market and the life cycle of the industry/profession/cause will also vary the appropriate benchmark for you to aim for. It is advisable to benchmark against comparable associations to get an accurate criteria. That said, a rough rule of thumb from industry and professional bodies where no special circumstances apply is:

## Member retention rates

- 70-80% Below average
- 80-87% Average - room for improvement
- 87-94% Good - you are on the right track
- >94% Excellent - a great retention rate

## Member growth rates

- 0-3% Below average
- 3-9% Average - room for improvement
- 9-20% Good - you are on the right track
- >20% Excellent - great growth rate

*"Have an admin question? Ask Auntie Admin!"*

*Email [accounts@nzsa.org.nz](mailto:accounts@nzsa.org.nz) with 'Attn: Auntie Admin' in the subject line, and we'll feature your question in an upcoming edition of Hononga!"*

## Analysing your statistics

An analysis of your growth and retention rates can provide an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of your recruitment and retention processes. A rough guide to determining focus areas is:

### High growth and high retention

High growth and high retention generally signifies an association with good member recruitment and retention processes. This is an ideal situation and one you should try to maintain.

### Low growth and high retention

Associations with a low growth and high retention rates generally have good member relationship management and renewal processes, but may need to work on: generating sources of new membership, managing their relationships with prospective new members, and improving their membership sales processes. Not a bad place to be as it means your service is good - you just need to convey that fact to more people.

### Low growth and low retention

A low growth rate and a low retention rate rings warning bells that there is some serious work to be done. If you are in this situation, you should focus first on retention. It is far easier to retain existing members than to recruit new ones. Once that situation has been resolved you can then consider your recruitment processes.

### High growth and low retention

This situation signifies good recruitment processes but poor retention processes. This is probably the worst situation to be in as you are creating a large pool of dissatisfied ex-members. If your association is in this position, you should halt recruitment until the retention issues have been sorted out. Otherwise the resources expended on recruitment are wasted





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# WE SERVE AT THE PLEASURE OF OUR MEMBERS

## Why this old phrase still matters for modern associations

The phrase “we serve at the pleasure of...” originates from U.S. constitutional and political tradition, most famously used in government to describe appointed officials serving at the discretion of the President. It’s a formal way of saying, “you remain in your role only while the people you serve believe you’re the right person for it.” Over time, it has become shorthand for humility in leadership and accountability in action.

In recent years, many associations have adopted this phrase, especially when reflecting on their role within a membership model. At NZSAE, we’ve embraced a version of this with deep sincerity:

### We serve at the pleasure of our members.

It’s not just about tone. It’s a declaration of how we see ourselves — not above, but alongside our members. Not directing, but supporting. Not owning, but earning.

### The Heart of an Association: Voluntary Trust

Unlike companies with customers or public agencies with statutory mandates, associations rely on voluntary affiliation. No one is forced to join. No one is compelled to stay. Our relevance is earned every day — not assumed. That’s both a challenge and a gift.

Serving at the pleasure of our members means being attuned to what they need now, not just what we’ve always done. It means recognising that people don’t join associations because they want to receive a newsletter — they join because they want to belong to something that helps them grow, connect, and lead.



### Service is a Mindset, Not a Transaction

If we think of membership as a transaction — “they pay, we provide” — we reduce something rich and complex to a simple exchange. But service? Service is ongoing. It means showing up with integrity, offering help before it’s asked for, and creating spaces where members feel seen and supported.

For NZSAE, that has looked like quietly connecting one member with another who’s been through the same governance challenges. It has meant staying up late rewriting a submission to reflect our sector’s views. It has meant saying “yes” to new ideas, and sometimes “not yet” with kindness and clarity.



## Being a Custodian, Not a Gatekeeper

There's a big difference between holding power and holding responsibility. We believe association leaders — staff and volunteer boards alike — are custodians. We're entrusted to take care of something bigger than ourselves, to leave it stronger than we found it. That means ensuring our structures, resources, and decisions reflect our commitment to members, not just to tradition.

We serve at the pleasure of our members because they are the association. We might be at the front for now, but the kaupapa endures long after any one person moves on.

## A Call to All Membership Leaders

Whether you're a CEO, board member, team coordinator, or volunteer — if you're in a leadership position within an association, this phrase applies to you too. Our members trust us with their time, their dues, and often, their professional identity. We owe them more than just services. We owe them thoughtful, values-based leadership.

So next time you sit in a strategy session, write a policy, or plan a programme, pause and ask:

***"Does this reflect that we serve at their pleasure — not our convenience?"***

That's the kind of question that keeps associations relevant.  
And that's the kind of leadership the sector deserves.

## The NZ Lens: A Different Kind of Leadership

In Aotearoa, leadership often carries a different tone — less hierarchical, more relational. We draw strength from shared values, collective effort, and the concept of manaakitanga — caring for and uplifting others. When we say we serve at the pleasure of our members, we're also acknowledging that leadership in the association space is not about titles, but about trust.

We aren't here to impress. We're here to empower.



# Lessons Learned from Constitutional Reviews under the 2022 Act

The Incorporated Societies Act 2022 has prompted many associations across Aotearoa to dust off their constitutions—some for the first time in years. What started as a legal requirement has become, for many, an opportunity to clarify purpose, strengthen governance, and future-proof the organisation.

But it hasn't been without its challenges.

## The review process takes longer than expected

Many associations underestimated the time required for a proper review. Aligning with the new requirements—such as clearly defined officer duties, dispute resolution procedures, and member consent—often exposed outdated structures or unclear processes that needed more than a quick fix.

## It's not just legal—it's cultural

Updating your constitution isn't just a legal compliance task. It's a chance to re-centre your kaupapa. Some associations discovered that long-standing clauses no longer reflected their current identity or aspirations. The best reviews invited member input and reflected the voice of the community, not just the lawyers.

## Boards need support

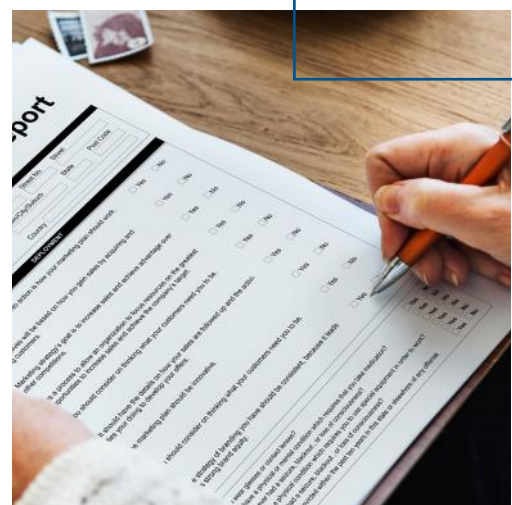
Volunteer boards often need extra help navigating the nuances of constitutional change. Clear guidance, templates, and examples from similar organisations made a huge difference. Where

boards engaged external advisors or leaned on networks like NZSAE, the process was smoother—and less stressful.

## The best constitutions are readable

Gone are the days of dense legalese. The new Act encourages constitutions that are clear, logical, and member-friendly. Associations that rewrote with plain language in mind found it easier to communicate their governance structure and build trust with their members.

*The 2022 Act may have created a legal trigger—but the review process has offered something more: a moment to reflect, reset, and reimagine what good governance looks like in our time.*





# Need help saying the right things, to the right people, at the right time?



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# From Free to Fee: Turning Student Members into Lifelong Supporters

Recruiting the younger generation has never been easy—but retaining them? That’s an even bigger challenge for many associations across Aotearoa.

The most common model—offering free membership to students until they graduate, then asking them to pay—sounds logical. But it often leads to mass drop-offs. Why? Because we haven’t built the value before the invoice arrives.

So, how do we create a membership journey that feels more like a relationship and less like a transaction?

## Start Before They Start

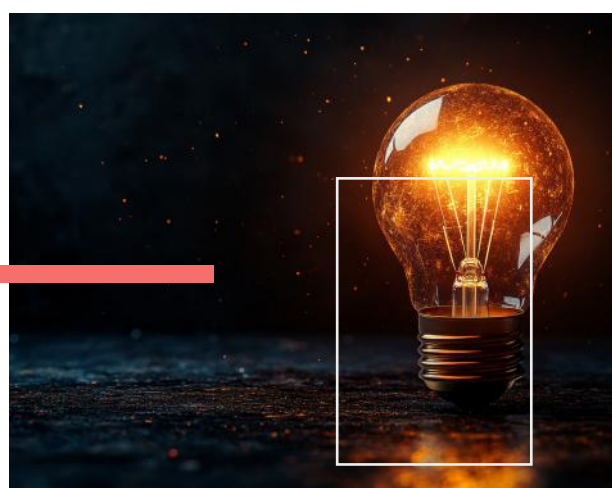
If your student strategy kicks in during the final year of study, you’re already behind. Consider forming student chapters or partnering with existing student groups. Having peer-led initiatives or campus ambassadors can keep the messaging authentic and relevant. Some associations even co-brand events with university faculties to create early touchpoints.

*Tip: Partner with academic departments to offer co-curricular recognition or CPD hours for participating in your student programmes.*

## Build Belonging, Not Just Benefits

Students stay with communities that see them. Assign “student hosts” or buddy systems at events to ensure they’re welcomed, not just seated. Invite them to roundtables, discussion groups, or even ask them to volunteer. Involvement builds belonging—and belonging builds retention.

*Tip: Let students represent your association on panels, podcasts, or in social media takeovers. Give them a voice before asking for a payment.*



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# From Free to Fee: Turning Student Members into

## Solve Problems, Not Just Promote

Many students are focused on one thing: getting a job. Associations are perfectly placed to help. Create a student-to-career transition pathway that includes things like:

- CV workshops
- Interview prep with real employers
- Internship or placement opportunities
- Networking with early-career professionals

*Tip: Create a job board exclusively for student/graduate roles in your sector.*



## Introduce the 'Next Step' Early

Instead of surprising students with a full membership invoice on graduation day, create a phased transition. Consider:

- Graduation gift memberships: Offer a heavily discounted rate for the first year post-study
- Step-up memberships: Gradually increase dues over 2–3 years
- Loyalty pricing: Reward those who stayed engaged throughout their student membership

*Tip: Use automation to send them “welcome to the profession” messages and a member journey that highlights the next benefits waiting for them.*





# Lifelong Supporters....

## Speak Their Language

Today's students are digitally savvy, socially conscious, and skeptical of hard sells. Your communications must be real, relatable, and respectful.

- Use social media platforms they frequent—LinkedIn for career value, Instagram for culture and community.
- Share member stories, especially young professionals who've benefited from staying engaged.
- Avoid jargon or 'corporate speak'. Speak like a mentor, not a marketer.

*Tip: Run an annual "Students to Leaders" campaign featuring past student members who've become influential professionals in the sector.*

## The Big Idea

The transition from free to paid shouldn't feel like a switch—it should feel like a natural step forward in a journey already full of value.

Associations that win the loyalty of the next generation don't wait until graduation to engage. They build relationships early, show value continuously, and create a culture where members don't want to leave—because they feel like they belong.

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# Rethinking Newsletters



*In 2025, the humble newsletter still matters—but only if it earns its place in the inbox.*

## Strengthening Connections in Your Association

For associations, newsletters were once the backbone of member communication. But with attention spans shrinking and inboxes overflowing, many newsletters are now quietly ignored.

The challenge isn't just reaching your members—it's engaging them. So how do you cut through the noise?

The role of the newsletter has evolved. No longer just a digital bulletin board, it's now a tool for connection, relevance, and value. But to be effective, it must move beyond routine updates and become something your members want to open. That means shifting from a broadcast mindset to a member-centric approach—one that puts usefulness, clarity, and timeliness at the core.

## 1. Be useful, not just informative

Members don't need another update—they need value. The best newsletters answer questions members are already asking: What event should I register for? What resource will help me this week? Who should I know in the sector? Prioritise content that helps, not just tells.

## 2. Use segmentation wisely

A one-size-fits-all newsletter is a missed opportunity. Associations that segment their lists based on roles, interests, or regions see better engagement. If your platform allows it, send the right message to the right people—not everything to everyone.

## 3. Short, visual, and skimmable wins

Long blocks of text are a thing of the past. Use bullet points, strong headings, and short paragraphs. Visuals—photos, quick stats, short videos—can dramatically improve click-through rates. Think of your newsletter like a social feed, not a formal letter.

## 4. The subject line is your headline

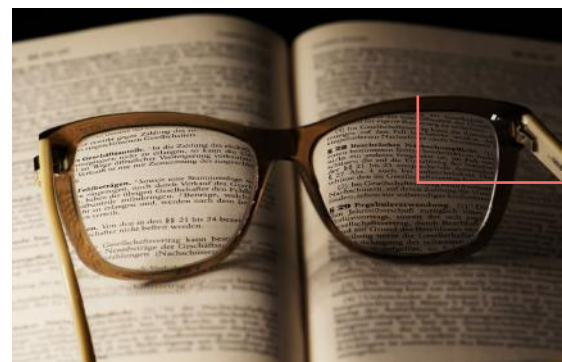
If the subject line doesn't spark curiosity or offer value, the content won't matter. Test different styles (questions, stats, emojis, direct offers) and track open rates. It's not about gimmicks—it's about being clear and compelling.

## 5. Make it two-way

The best communication isn't a broadcast—it's a conversation. Invite replies, ask one-question polls, or include a "what do you think?" prompt. Even a single reply shows that someone's listening—and that builds loyalty.

*In the end, a good newsletter in 2025 isn't just a habit—it's a strategy. It aligns with your association's goals, speaks directly to members' needs, and adapts with feedback.*

*If it doesn't do those things? Maybe it's time to rethink it.*





# More Than a Member: Designing a Journey of Belonging

We don't just join—we belong.

In the world of associations, there's a quiet but critical distinction between membership and belonging. One is a transaction; the other is a transformation. And the difference often starts—unsurprisingly—at the very beginning: onboarding.

## Onboarding isn't admin. It's identity.

Too often, onboarding is treated like paperwork. A welcome email. A login. A link to the latest newsletter. But in 2025, effective onboarding is an emotional handshake. It's a carefully crafted first chapter in a story where your new member sees themselves as part of something meaningful.

If you only focus on information, you'll miss the chance to build connection.

## Belonging starts before Day One

The journey to belonging doesn't begin with a welcome—it begins with intention. What does your association stand for? What kind of community are people joining? Clarity here helps you design an onboarding experience that reflects your culture and values, not just your benefits.

## Onboarding is never really over

Belonging isn't built in a week. Or even a month. It's something you nurture through milestones, touchpoints, and small moments of recognition. Associations that map a full-year onboarding journey—from welcome to "I'm home"—see better retention, stronger engagement, and more meaningful member stories.

Because in the end, no one wants to be just a name on a spreadsheet. They want to be seen. They want to matter. And it starts with how we say hello.

## The three Cs: Connection, Context, and Contribution

The most effective onboarding journeys are built around three pillars:

**Connection:** Introduce members to real people—through buddy systems, welcome calls, or new member gatherings. Put names to faces early and often.

**Context:** Don't just explain what you do—explain why it matters. Show new members how their role fits into the bigger picture.

**Contribution:** Give them a reason to lean in. Whether it's a micro-volunteering opportunity, a poll, or a member spotlight, offer a way to add value, not just consume it.





As a trusted partner of NZSAE, we take pride in transforming events into unforgettable experiences. From captivating visuals to crystal-clear audio, our tailored AV solutions ensure every message resonates with your audience. Whether it's a conference, awards night, or special event, we're here to bring your vision to life.



## Why Us?

- Seamless AV delivery for events of all sizes
- Engaging design that captures attention
- A proven track record of delivering exceptional results for associations.



# intense

sound and vision

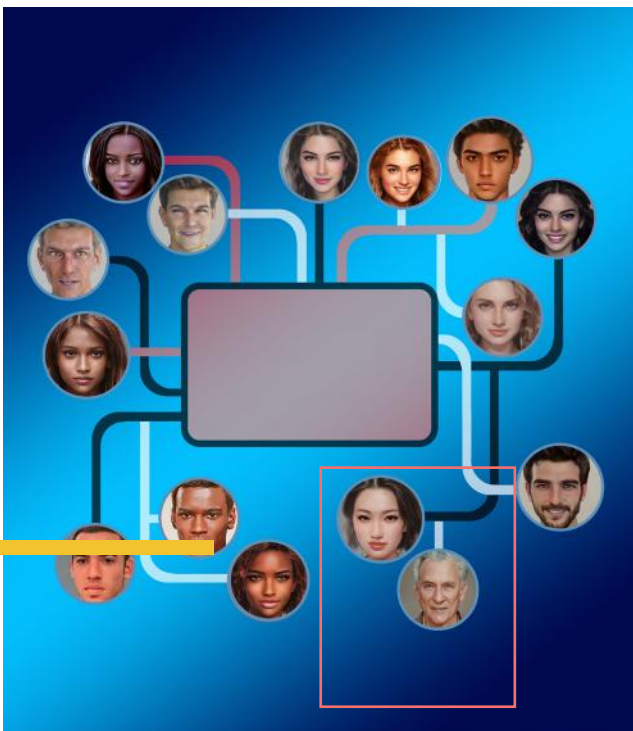
021 240 4035  
info@intense.net.nz

# Beyond the Ledger: Reclaiming the Purpose of Membership

When an association is just moving from general ledger to general ledger, it's easy to lose the spark that made it matter in the first place. Membership becomes a transaction — not a connection. But a healthy balance sheet means little if your members aren't engaged, proud, or growing with you.

The shift starts small: pick up the phone to a lapsed member, create one meaningful touchpoint a month that isn't tied to an invoice, and invite feedback even if you're not sure you'll like the answer.

Look for ways to bring members into the conversation — through stories, spotlights, or small group sessions that give them a voice. When members feel seen and valued, they're more likely to lean in. Purpose-driven associations don't just serve their members — they activate them. That's what turns stability into momentum.



If the numbers look fine but the energy is fading, it's time to refocus on what really matters.





[www.nzsaе.org.nz/conference](http://www.nzsaе.org.nz/conference)

**NZSAE**  
The Institute of High School Leadership & Development  
THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN AUCKLAND

**BOARDING PASS TO  
BELONGING**

**Associations Matter**

NZSAE Conference and Exhibition

Date: 4 - 5 August 2025

Venue: Grand Millennium Hotel

Auckland

NZSAE



## DINNER - DRESS CODE

**DRESS CODE:**

### VINTAGE TRAVEL- INSPIRED

Let your outfit tell a story.



**AVIATION ERA:**  
leather flight  
jackets, silk  
scarves, pilot  
caps, goggles

**CRUISE SHIP  
ELEGANCE:**  
cocktail dresses  
linen suits,  
gloves, pearls

**OR SIMPLY  
ADD A VINTAGE  
TOUCH** - a hat,  
a scarf, gloves  
or retro sunglasses

**PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED FOR BEST-  
DRESSED, MOST CREATIVE, AND  
BEST-DRESSED TABLE.**

### THINK VINTAGE TRAVEL



**HAT, SCARF,  
OR VINTAGE  
ACCESSORY**

# Conferences Are Where Culture Happens

*Walk into any conference venue before the doors open and you'll hear it — not the keynote mic check or the clatter of coffee cups, but the quiet anticipation. It's the hum of possibility. And it's a reminder that conferences aren't just events on a calendar. They're where culture is created.*

## The Culture You Create Is the Legacy You Leave

Conferences shape how people feel about your organisation and your sector. They model what's valued. Is the culture one of hierarchy, where speakers speak and audiences listen? Or one of inclusion, where everyone's contribution matters? These choices ripple out far beyond the closing remarks. What you programme says everything about what — and who — you prioritise.

## Every Room Sends a Message

From the plenary to the hallway, conferences are full of signals. Who gets the main stage? Who gets the coffee slot? Are the breakout sessions diverse in voice, format, and energy? Do the networking events cater to more than just extroverts? Culture isn't just what happens on stage — it's how people feel when they're not on it.

## Connection Over Collection

The real value of a conference isn't how many business cards you collect — it's whether you leave with someone you'd call when things get tough. Conferences need to create space for meaningful relationship-building — not just speed networking, but slow trust. Circles, not rows. Conversations, not commercials.



## Forget the Venue – What About the Vibe?

Good conferences aren't just logistically seamless. They're emotionally resonant. They energise, affirm, challenge, and sometimes even heal. When done right, conferences don't just deliver content – they create belonging. Delegates should walk away not only with notes, but with a renewed sense of purpose and place.

## If It Feels Like a Chore, You're Doing It Wrong

A conference should feel like a spark, not a script. It should honour the past, explore the present, and provoke the future. If attendees are watching the clock, it's a missed opportunity. But when they're staying late for the conversation that finally got real – that's when you know culture happened.







# Is Your Association a Disruptor?

## Or Just a Distributor?

In a fast-moving world, associations can no longer afford to be passive distributors of information and events. The most impactful associations today are disruptors — challenging norms, questioning outdated models, and leading their industries into the future. Being a disruptor doesn't mean causing chaos; it means having the courage to ask, *"Why are we still doing it this way?"* and the vision to offer something better.

**Disruptive associations don't wait for permission** — they set the pace. Whether it's launching bold initiatives, embracing new technology, or amplifying unheard voices, these organisations are reshaping what leadership looks like in their sector. So ask yourself: Is your association protecting the status quo, or rewriting the rules?

By Brett





# SOCIAL SCENE

## NZSAE ACTIVITY





# HONONGA

## associations matter

Credit

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Brett Jeffery, CAE

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