



# leading lights

*grow your leadership potential*

Edition 2, 2011

## *President's Comment*



Kate Thornton  
President

Can you remember how you first became involved in NZEALS, and why you chose to stay involved? At the national council meeting held in Wellington in early May council members from around New Zealand shared responses to these questions as part of the introductions. The predominant reason for initial involvement was 'word of mouth' as most people had been invited along to a meeting by a current member. The most frequent reasons for continuing to be involved were the networking opportunities and the cross sector nature of the organisation. These motivations also link well with the mission of NZEALS: *promoting and supporting quality leadership for learning across all educational sectors. Understanding these motivations is important in helping us increase our membership and relevance, two of the goals of the society's strategic plan. If we each encouraged colleagues or students interested in educational leadership to attend meetings and conferences, and to become involved in branch committees then our numbers would quickly grow.*

In terms of relevance, the cross-sector nature of NZEALS can be seen as both a strength and a weakness. The strength is that it makes us unique as an organisation and allows each of us to learn from what is happening in other parts of the education sector. A related weakness may be that it can be

difficult to ensure that what NZEALS offers its members is relevant to each of the sector groups. One way of ensuring relevance is to have cross sector representation on branch committees and another may be to agree on an annual leadership focus that will provide an overarching theme for NZEALS activities. Mentoring seems to be a focus that is of interest and relevance to the whole educational leadership community. Establishing mentoring networks and providing opportunities for leaders to develop mentoring skills is a potential opportunity for NZEALS that will be explored by national council in the months ahead.

One of the other strategic plan goals I have been working on recently is raising our profile and strengthening our relationships with other national organisations. This has involved meetings with representatives of a number of groups such as the Ministry of Education, Education Review Office, Teachers Council, NZCER, teacher unions and principals' groups. These meetings have been useful and constructive, and various opportunities for collaboration with these organisations have been identified. The cross sector nature of NZEALS is acknowledged as a strength by these organisations and there seems to be a willingness to share communication systems and professional learning opportunities. We are fortunate to have

NZEALS members who are also members of these national organisations and who can help us in this networking.

After a very long wait NZEALS new website is now operational. Our aim is that the website is up-to-date interactive and accessible. Some of the new features include the ability to contact members more easily and regularly and to register for branch events online. We look forward to your feedback on how well the site meets the needs of members and will be using the site to survey members on a range of issues including relevance of current publications.

For NZEALS to continue fulfilling its mission and meeting its vision we need the support and assistance of all members. I urge you to consider who you might invite along to your next branch meeting or who you may persuade to join you in registering for next year's conference. Growing membership will make us a stronger organisation which is better able to promote and support educational leadership in all sectors of the education system.

E noho ra,  
Kate Thornton



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