

Archaeology in New Zealand

Editor's report to NZAA Annual General Meeting 2016

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I took over the editorship of AINZ at the beginning of the year, so have only produced two full issues (as well as assisting with the last issue of last year). As I outlined in several editorials I have made a number of changes to AINZ while retaining the basic overall format of A5 B&W.

Firstly the layout of AINZ was nearly 20 years old, and this combined with a change of editing software (that meant that templates had to be redone from scratch) meant that Volume 59 started off with a new look. The sidebar to paper titles and headings was dropped, as was the mixture of serif and sans serif fonts. The cover has been redesigned, although I have to admit I am as yet undecided about the best typeface to use (constructive discussion on this would be welcomed).

The list of recent consultancy reports had lately got very long (one example ran to 7 pages), many of which were simple monitoring reports. While this is valuable information I felt that it was better catered for online and I dropped it from AINZ. I have continued to include a short comment that this information is available in the Heritage New Zealand digital library index, together with the address of that index.

The formal papers have been moved forward in each issue, with Recent Fieldwork moved back. This is to try to give more emphasis to the papers, and I have been actively soliciting new papers. In particular I have been encouraging students to contribute, and a new student paper prize was introduced this year. There has been a good response to this, with three student papers in the last two issues.

The Fieldwork and Other Activities section has also changed. It has been noted that it is now information-light, and I am unapologetic for this. I have tried to include more photographs than previously carried, with a brief roundup of what is happening around the country, rather than any detail. The aim of the section is to keep people informed, but effort spent on detail here is not well spent. This section is not indexed in any way (either in AINZ or Index New Zealand), so detailed information here will be lost. If you have something to say: write a short paper. I want to encourage the publication of preliminary reports.

One idea that I would like to float here at the AGM is the possibility of having peer review of some or all papers in AINZ. While this would move away from the original intent of what was the Newsletter, it could aid its status as a journal. At present AINZ is seen by some in the academic world as not being worth contributing to because it is not refereed, and students are encouraged to contribute to journals that increase PBRF scores. I still see the role of AINZ as being the best place to carry short and preliminary reports, but I think that there is potential for a more robust place in the publishing world without necessarily competing with the Journal of Pacific Archaeology. Again, this is a discussion point rather than a proposal at present.

Overall I think that AINZ is in good health. The latest issue has three good papers, two from students and one from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, and the September issue is already half full. More changes are likely, but they will be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.