Report on ANZTSR 2014 Conference "Resilience, Change and Third Sector"

Organisation

The Conference was organized by Christchurch-based ANZTSR Board Member, Garth Nowland-Foreman, who recruited a Local Organising Committee in Christchurch, which he chaired, comprising:

- Kim Chamberlain (Consultant, formerly Ministry of Social Development)
- Ruth Gardner (Manager, Volunteering Canterbury)
- Tony Milne (National Manager of Public Health, Problem Gambling Foundation)
- Mary Richardson (Executive Officer, Christchurch Methodist Mission)
- Sandy Thompson (Programme Leader, Not for Profit Management, Unitec NZ)
- Sharon Torstonson (Executive Officer, Christchurch Council of Social Services)

We were supported by a conference organizer engaged for 250 hours from April to November 2014. A shortlist of 3 candidates were identified from a variety of sources and Lani Evans (Thank you Payroll and Malcam Charitable Trust) was appointed to the position. She brought great creativity and energy to the task.

Lil'Regie was used as the Conference web-based registration tool (https://resilience-change-the-third-sector.lilregie.com/closed), and it was directly linked to the accounting software that Community Research (who did our NZ accounts) uses. As well as publicity generated by the Organising Committee, Community Research also provided publicity via their newsletter, website and Facebook page (http://www.communityresearch.org.nz).

Dr Suzanne Grant (Senior Lecturer, School of Management, Waikato University) was appointed Academic Convenor for the conference to ensure overall academic standards and especially arrange blind peer reviewing of papers.

The Programme

The Conference was held at CPIT, Christchurch from Tuesday 18th to Thursday 20th November 2014. Sandy Thompson (Unitec NZ) was the conference MC.

On the morning of the Conference, Tuesday 18 November, Community Research sponsored a New and Emerging Community Researchers Forum.

The Conference proper began after lunch with a powhiri (traditional indigenous welcome) at the CPIT marae. Following afternoon tea, attendees were welcomed by Christchurch Mayor, Hon. Lianne Dalziel, John West, Head of CPIT Business School, and Garth Nowland-Foreman, ANZTSR Deputy Chair, and the first

plenary panel, on "*Creativity Out of Chaos: What Can We Learn from the Community in Christchurch's Recovery?*" followed immediately.

A creative 'shared' Conference dinner was held that evening at Visions Restaurant, the CPIT hospitality student on-site restaurant. The theme was *"Connecting Community through Kai* (food)", and included three speakers on food-related community projects with each course.

The first full day of the Conference began with the international keynote speaker, Margaret Wheatley on "Resilience, Perseverance and Community". The day ended with another plenary session on the theme "Outcomes and Accountability: Holy Grail, Wholly Possible or Black Hole?" In between there were two sets of 90 minute parallel sessions on either side of lunch. Each session offered a number of workshop session and/or sessions with 3 papers presented.

At the end of the day, the ANZTSR AGM was held over drinks and nibbles.

The final day of the conference commenced with a plenary panel session on "Te Wero: Indigenous Challenges for the Third Sector". Again there were two sets of 90 minute parallel sessions of either side of lunch offering a wide selection of workshops and/or sessions with 3 papers presented. The Conference proper finished with presentation of some awards, concluding comments and a final plenary session on "Futures for the Third Sector Down Under: Coming Ready or Not"

Over all there were 73 people presenting on 5 panels, 7 workshops and 44 papers. We have 52 abstracts available on the conference website (http://www.thirdsectorresearch2014.com/abstracts.html).
And 15 full text papers uploaded so far to a special collection on Community Research website (http://www.communityresearch.org.nz/events/third-sector-2014/). This page also has links to the abstracts, and other conference information.

During lunch and morning/afternoon tea breaks we also held a Meet the Editors session (with Third Sector Review Editors), and three Meet the Author sessions to meet recently published authors on our sector.

Specific efforts were made to encourage interaction, through printed "Conversation Spots" in the break areas, and filling our A4 speech bubbles with memorable quotes in the Plenary sessions. We also developed a conference website (http://www.thirdsectorresearch2014.com), a Conference Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/thirdsectorresearch2014?fref=nf attracting 222 Likes) which were also both used to promote and publicise the conference), and a conference mobile App, built on https://www.yapp.us - available at this link on android or IOS devices, like smart phones or tablets etc. (http://my.yapp.us/HMFKME).

A detailed programme, including list of papers and presenters, is available at the Conference website (http://www.thirdsectorresearch2014.com/programme.html).

Participation

All up 115 people participated in the Conference, plus a few invited plenary panel speakers who only came for their session.

This included 99 full conference registrations, 16 day passes (13 for 19th Nov and 3 for 20th Nov). Of the full conference registrations, 15 were free passes provided to conference volunteers (mostly students and some small NGOs).

23 participants paid a concessional student rate for the full conference.

40 participants paid the premium 'non-members' rate for their full conference, and the plan is to contact them offering 'free' membership, including subscription to the Journal till the end of the financial year. The aim being to pick up some continuing new members in subsequent years.

30 (the maximum spaces available) registered for the New & Emerging Community Researchers seminar, and 38 registered for the post-Conference Community Recovery Tour.

42 registered for the Conference Dinner, and with guests a total of 50 attended.

A public list of participants names and affiliations is available on the Conference website (http://www.thirdsectorresearch2014.com/delegates.html), and a list of participants with their contact details (not for publication, but available for use by ANZTSR) is attached.

Finances

(All amounts are in NZ Dollars and include NZ GST unless specified)
A repayable Advance was received from ANZTSR of $9,276, and Grants were received provided by Unitec NZ ($10,000 for overseas speaker etc.) and from the Tindall Foundation ($5,000 subsidies for indigenous organisations participation). Registrations raised $35,335 as at 31 January, 2015 – at which stage there were 7 people still owing a further $2,899.76. I estimate some $1,500 of these bad debts may still be recoverable. Unitec chose to pay their assistance direct to recipients, so that money did not come through our accounts, but of course the Conference still benefitted from it.

The following registration fees were charged:
Early-bird Rates (up to 30 Sept):
Full Conference – ANZTSR Member $402.50
Full Conference – Non-Member $488.75
Full Conference – Student $287.50

Standard Rates
Full Conference – ANZTSR Member $460.00
Full Conference – Non-Member $546.26
Full Conference – Student $345.00

Day Rates: $195.50

Conference Dinner: $60.00

New & Emerging Community Researchers Forum: free to conference participants

Community Recovery Walking Tour: free to conference participants

Total Income (including ANZTSR advance, and excluding Unitec contribution) is likely to be approx. $51,100.

Community Research provided NZ banking and accounting services for the Conference for a fee of $1,015.

Some other conference expenses included:
- Fee for conference organizer ($9,375)
- Catering, Conference Dinner & AGM ($9,054)
- Accommodation, support & koha Speakers ($8,024)
- LilRegie & Credit Card fees ($1,279)
- Stationary & printing etc. ($861)
- Community Recovery Tour NGO donations ($600)
- Volunteer expenses & Koha ($508)

Total Expenditure (including travel subsidies to 3 Australian organisations to be paid by ANZTSR) is likely to be aprox. $33,300

The Balance of an expected $17,800 will be provided to ANZTSR (and includes the Advance of $9,276). In addition $3,035 will be provided to ANZTSR to make 3 travel subsidy payments on behalf of the conference.

Feedback and Learnings

An evaluation form was developed using Survey Monkey. It was sent out on 11 December to 113 conference participants. 37 valid responses were received by the end of January, with one reminder email (a return rate of 32%).

Only four substantial questions were asked (plus 4 demographic questions, and one on attendance). The substantial questions were:
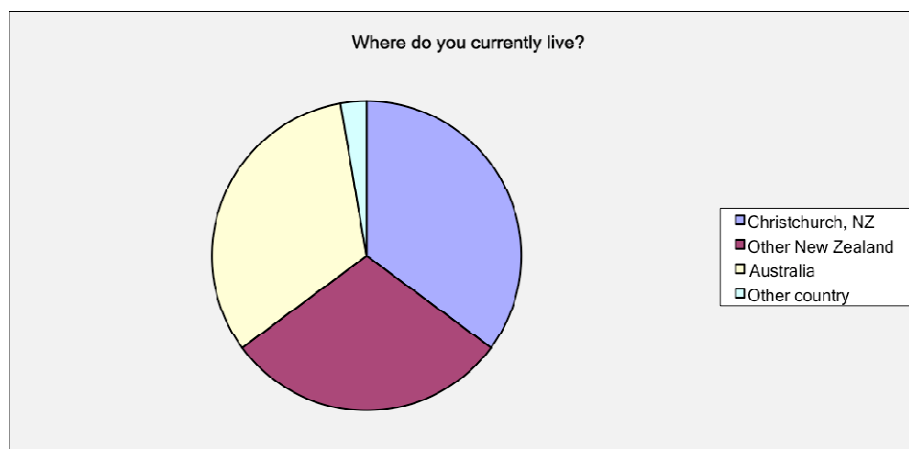
1. What did you most appreciate about ANZTSR Conference 2014 in Christchurch?

2. What did you least like about ANZTSR Conference 2014 in Christchurch?

3. What single word or short phrase best describes your overall experiences of ANZTSR Conference 2014 in Christchurch?

4. What specific advice would you give the organisers for the next ANZTSR Conference (in 2016)?

A copy of the full narrative answers to all questions are attached. (This was printed out when there were only 36 replies, so there are some discrepancies with the data in this report which includes all 37 responses.) The single words or phrases used to describe their experience were:

Engaging and thought provoking; Friendliness; Dynamic; Stimulating and enjoyable: Warm, welcoming and informative: Pretty good, opening dinner was fabulous, but one could feel the budget constraints; Fantastic; Great opportunity to network; Community; Informative and engaging; Satisfying; Enlightening; Enriching; Much better and more relevant than I expected; Thought provoking; Christchurch; Energetic engagement & unapologetic values driven debate; Challenging ,stimulating, friendly and informative; Hopeful; Stimulating, creative, energising...well done team; As a speaker I felt my experience wasn't overwhelming, everyone was welcoming and the environment was warm; Pleasant; Impressed; Connected; Capturing the resilience!; Inspiring; Ok - would not attend again though; Full on, the walk organised on the day following the conference was inspiring and great to see Te Whakarururuhau - the shared accommodation for community orgs; interesting; interesting; Great; Diverse; Great; Awesome!; While not always shiny and professional, there was quality content and most of all these were the "friendly games" of research conferences; Inspiring!

The following graphs indicate the demographics of the participants who responded:
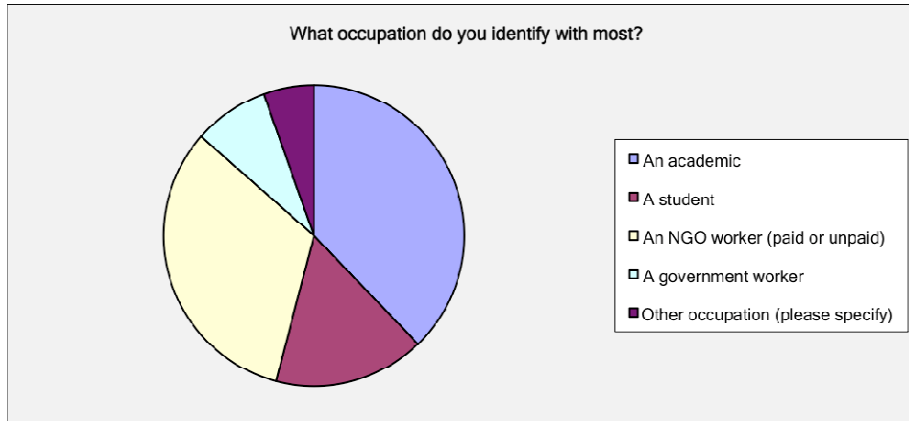

Christchurch – 13 (35%)
Other NZ – 11 (30%)
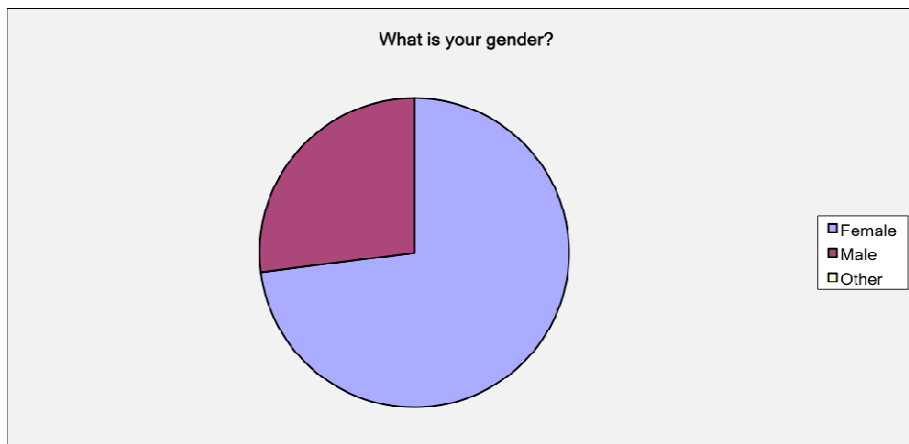Australia – 11 (32%)
Other country – 1 (3%)

Academic - 14 (38%)
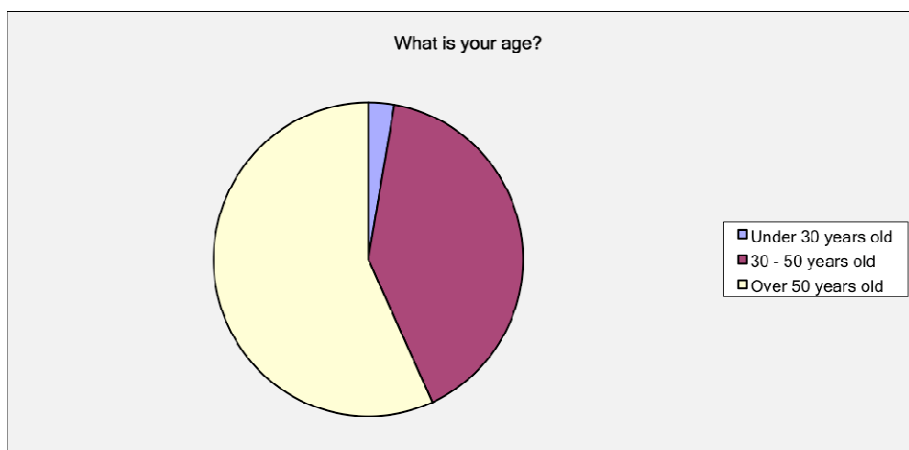Student – 6 (16%)
NGO – 12 (32%)
Government – 3 (8%)
Other – 2 (5%) (Business analyst and Consultant)
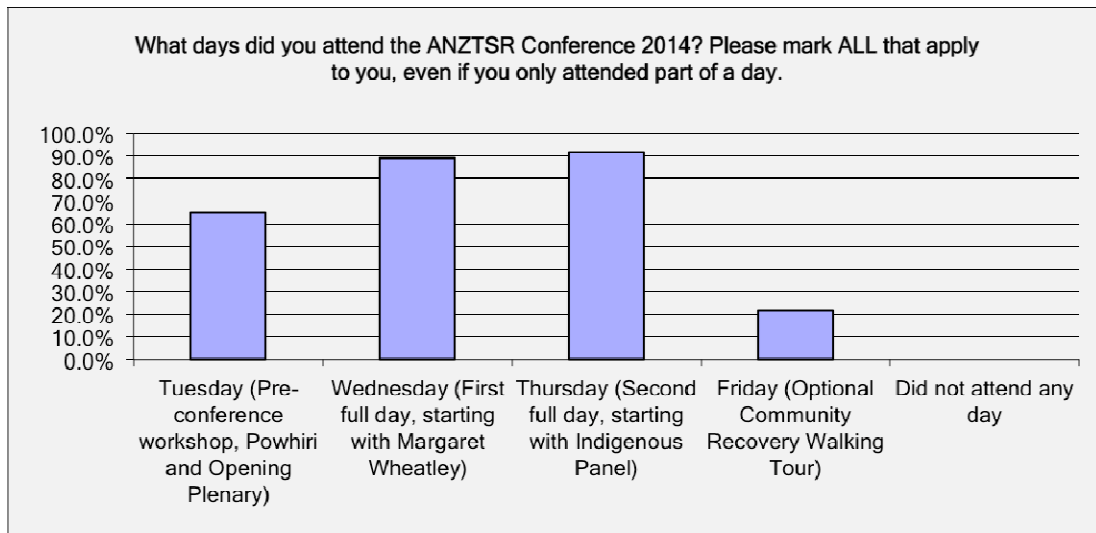

Female - 27 (73%)
Male – 9 (27%)

Under 30yrs – 1 (3%)
30-50 years – 15 (41%)
Over 50yrs – 21 (57%)

What days did you attend the ANZTSR Conference 2014? Please mark ALL that apply to you, even if you only attended part of a day.

A debriefing meeting was also held with the local organizing committee in Christchurch on 10 December 2014 to discuss what went well and what could be done differently.

Based on both the participant feedback and the debriefing discussion, the following strengths and limitations were identified – with a focus on lessons for future conferences.

What seemed to go well was:
- Creation of a welcoming, hospitable atmosphere (mentioned by 10 of 36 survey respondents as what they liked most)
- A good mix of, and to some extent a meeting place for, NGOs and researchers (mentioned by 7 respondents as what they liked most) (this was also mentioned by 5 in lessons for the future, 2 saying keep mix, 2 saying more practice focus, and one wondering if not enough academic focus)
- Good connections made (mentioned by 9 respondents as what they liked most), good quality speakers (mentioned by 12 respondents as what they like best); with 8 respondents particularly highlight they appreciated the diversity
- We also thought the catering went well and was of a high quality, and they were very responsive to changing demands (as well as giving practical experience to the hospitality students involved).
- Collaboration and support from Community Research also went well. They provide great publicity for the event, and especially a permanent collection for the abstracts and full text papers from the conference.
- Sandy Thompson and her team from Unitec were also a great support in helping us raise $15,000 to support attendance at the conference, and in organizational support on-site (they were always a spare pair of hands when needed).
- The volunteers were a great back up, and several people commented on how helpful and friendly they were. Extra volunteers were recruited in the last week when it was realized different parts of the venue would be so far apart, and guides would be needed, especially on the first day.

- The Facebook page also seemed to a great venue for advertising the conference, generating a buzz, allowing communication during the conference (posting of photos, the giraffe competition, etc.) and even some post-conference follow-up. It could probably have been even more used during and after the conference.
- A couple of people especially appreciated the powhiri (traditional indigenous welcome) – thanks to the generosity of the CPIT Maori whanau. And we were also able to involved some good indigenous presenters from both Australia and New Zealand. This was significantly boosted (doubled or tripled) because of the $5,000 financial assistance provided by Tindall Foundation specifically for this purpose.

What didn't go so well:
- Problems with the venue (mentioned by 6 respondents as what they liked least) and the AV equipment/technology (mentioned by 3 respondents) (and both again mentioned by 4 respondents on what to improve for next time)

  One of the problems here I believe was that the venue had no stake in the conference – they were doing us a favour by providing it free of charge. Thus they changed the rooms available at the last minute, with inferior plenary space (noisy, further away from break out rooms – five minutes walk each way - and in unattractive setting that took most of the pre-conference prep time the day before to try and minimize). There was not the level of AV support promised, and it was old equipment in poor condition in plenary venue. And the plenary venue was difficult to keep dark enough for video/slides, even with the unexpected imposition of compulsory $400 fee to put up and take down curtains for that space. We probably should have organized a run through of this earlier than day before conference, but had relied on assurances. It is still important that the free venue saved us several thousand dollars in hire and therefore increased income for ANZTSR (even if alternate conference venue had of been available in post-Earthquake Christchurch).

- The ANZTSR website and email address (including the conference email address) went down for two long periods in a critical time for registrations and last minute communications in the weeks before the conference. This unreliability and especially the length of time taken to fix the outage needs to be taken up with the ANZTSR supplier. We were able to develop workarounds, primarily through the Facebook page and a separate Conference website we established. Having the separate conference website meant we were able to quickly do our own updates etc. and not create extra work for our limited hours of ANZTSR secretariat support.
- We had hoped to reduce reliance on paper for cost and environmental reasons, and also take advantage of the greater flexibility and timeliness of electronic communication, through a Conference App. We were too late in getting people to use this, and explain no written programmes etc. would be provided. It was poorly taken up, and very few people seemed

to referring to it on site. This lead to complaints about inadequate information about the conference (5 of 33 respondents mentioned this as what they liked least about the conference, and a further 3 referred to confusion or being disorganized). Two respondents also referred to lack of information about tourist or dining options in Christchurch which is a separate matter, but could also have been enhanced with links on the Conference App).

- Three respondents (of 33) referred to timing problems. Apart from the powhiri, which ran an hour late and did cause anxiety for our opening plenary (though lucky the Mayor was also running late), overall almost all sessions ran to time. We had allowed a half hour buffer for the powhiri to run late (but our precautions here were not enough!) Plenary sessions often started up to 10 minutes or so late, and in order to get the programme back on schedule, question time suffered. Question time in plenaries also suffered when a few panel speakers went over time. Some tighter chairing may be required. Timing was pressed as a result of venue changes adding a 10 minute work back and forth between different locations.

- 2 people were concerned that it was too much to squeeze 3 papers in 90 minutes parallel sessions. We had felt this was reasonably generous, especially compared to some academic conferences I had been to. While it could be extended it would mean more parallel sessions. We planned for a maximum of 5 or 6 sessions on at the same time (even though we did have more rooms available), as 4 mentioned that already meant 'too many' options and hard to make choices (though a couple of them also said this was a good thing). One also mentioned they felt the 2 ½ days was too long, however, fewer papers would have been able to be presented in a tighter programme. And one mentioned that the cost was too high.

On past experience of most participants also being presenters, we had spent a lot of effort to get a good number of presenters. But this requires time and space for them to present. In the end we had 73 people presenting on 5 panels, 7 workshops and 44 papers. If we exclude the people on panels who came by invitation (apart from those who also separately presented a paper) and often did not stay for other parts of the conference, there would have been 63 presenters (out of the 115 total attendees).