

# NZNO nurse researchers plan celebration to mark 50 years of the research section



*'We hope to honour and pay our respects to the nurse leaders who paved the way for a culture of nursing research in Aotearoa New Zealand to grow and enrich the profession of nursing.'*



**About the author:** Lorraine Ritchie, RN, PhD, is a professional practice consultant for Te Whatu Ora — Southern, and a professional practice fellow at the University of Otago. She is chair of the NZNO Nursing Research Section Te Wāhanga Rangahau Tapuhi.

Lorraine Ritchie

THE NZNO NURSING RESEARCH Section Te Wāhanga Rangahau Tapuhi (NRS) has around 380 members, with an overall goal, as stated on NZNO's website, to "raise the profile of research in all areas of nursing by inspiring and encouraging nurses in research".

Section members are nurses from all over New Zealand — many are educators and researchers, while others have a particular interest in research and research methodologies. We are committed to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and endeavour to honour this commitment through our meeting kaupapa, the scholarships we make available and the inclusion of researchers using indigenous kaupapa Māori research methodology at our research forums.

## Research presentations

The section held its biennial general meeting in Christchurch in October 2025, which included three research presentations:

- Chey Ratima, nurse educator Māori at Te Whatu Ora — MidCentral, presented her research on cultural safety, titled *Kawa Whakaru-hau: A framework for enabling culturally safe practice with Māori*.
- Wintec nurse educator Patricia McClunie-Trust (who is also an NRS committee member) spoke on her research into graduate-entry nurses, *Graduate-entry nursing students' development of a professional nursing self*.
- Isaac Amankwaa (also a committee member) spoke on his research into assisted dying: *Evolving nursing roles in assisted dying: Insights for an ideal service model*.

These presentations generated stimulating discussion and we are very grateful to those who presented and fortunate to have such experienced researchers in the committee and section.

At the October meeting, the section committee looked ahead to next year to plan activities for the membership. Many ideas were discussed, including a mentorship model for members seeking mentors for their research journey, and "how to get published" workshops,

where researchers on the NRS committee could give helpful suggestions and inside knowledge on the sometimes daunting task of turning a thesis or study into an article ready for publication. This would include which journal is the most appropriate to send an article to, how to condense a thesis into 4000-or-so words and how to respond to reviewers' feedback. To confirm which activities would be most helpful, the committee wants to consult the membership — a survey will be sent to all members seeking their views and suggestions on what they would like to see from the committee.

One event which is already in the planning stage is the NRS golden jubilee, to be held in October 2026. This celebration will be a two-day forum marking the section's 50th anniversary. The section (then known as the nursing research special interest section) officially began its life in 1976. Prominent nurse leaders and academics came together to form a group which was interested in the development and promotion of a professional nursing voice through the medium of research.

From the late 1950s through to the 1970s, prominent nurse leaders had to go overseas to pursue academic degrees, which were not available in New Zealand at that time. Many studied in universities in the United States and returned home with fresh ideas, influences and vision on how the profession of nursing could be advanced in New Zealand.

## The profession becoming more 'professional'

Nursing was moving into a more professional space on an international level and New Zealand followed this lead. Many changes were taking place in society and in nursing, such as the shift of nursing training from apprenticeship-style, hospital-based training to polytechnic or other tertiary education bases from 1973 onwards. This move emphasised the transition of nursing from a more task-focused, service-driven role into a profession with its own identity and body of knowledge. This meant that nursing would also develop its own

research culture, rather than it being an adjunct to medical research.

In her history of the section, Merian Litchfield summarises the context: “The international professional movement, the social forces shaping it in New Zealand, the structuring of the health sector and the resources of NZNA [now NZNO] together formed the setting of radical change in which the Section came into being in the mid-1970s” (Litchfield., 2009).

The section was officially inaugurated in April 1976 and immediately started planning for its first seminar, held in September 1976, titled, “A Forum for Nursing Research”. The early years of the section were exciting and formative ones. The current committee’s intention is to honour the mahi of these visionary nurse researchers of the past, to foster contemporary research in Aotearoa, and to look forward to research possibilities in the future.

A busy year of planning lies ahead of us. The golden jubilee will be held in Auckland in October 2026. The venue and programme is yet to be confirmed and will be advertised as the year progresses. We hope both NRS members and other nurses will join us at this exciting and historic gathering of nurses who have a passion for research. We also hope to honour and pay our respects to the nurse leaders who paved the way for a culture of nursing research in Aotearoa, New Zealand to grow and enrich the profession of nursing.

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## Reference

Litchfield, M. (2009). *To Advance Health Care – The origins of nursing research in New Zealand*. New Zealand Nurses Organisation.