

A message from the chair

It's no secret that most of us ended 2021 with high hopes of farewelling COVID-19, which for almost two years has impacted all aspects of optometry, including OCANZ business, as well as the way we work and live. While we don't know how or for how long COVID-19 will continue to affect us, what we do know is that through these disruptions and challenges, OCANZ will continue to play a vital role in protecting the eye health of the public by assuring the quality of optometric education and assessing overseas trained optometrists.

Innovative solutions in a COVID-19 world

Numerous activities had to be reorganised and rescheduled around pandemic requirements in 2021, with the examination of overseas trained optometrists by OCANZ particularly affected by cancellations and rescheduling.

Optometry education providers continued to innovate and be flexible, adapting their curriculum, especially clinical training, to be



Alex Gentle - Chair, OCANZ Board

COVID-safe. OCANZ applauds providers for delivering to students the required learning outcomes in new and innovative ways.

Silver linings

In a serendipitous opportunity, OCANZ turned a COVID-19 problem into a solution when we adapted our own assessment processes, delivering the Competency in Optometry Examination written papers online using live remote proctoring. In May 2021 we made this change permanent in response to positive feedback from candidates and the OCANZ Examination Committee.

Our 2021 achievements

In our vision to deliver excellence in accreditation and assessment services, OCANZ achieved a significant number of milestones, despite the pandemic's challenges. There is quite a list, and so I encourage you to read more about them in our annual report at <https://ocanz.org/about/annual-reports/>. The highlights included:

- Reviewing the OCANZ Accreditation Standards for Entry-level Optometry Programs.
- Conducting an inaugural annual survey of graduates and employers on how well programs of study are preparing graduates for the optometry workforce.
- Commissioning a report on the potential of remotely assessing clinical competence.
- Exploring how cultural safety is being embedded in optometry programs in a workshop hosted by OCANZ's Indigenous Strategy Taskforce.
- Launching a consultancy to work with Māori stakeholders on developing a Māori Optometry Health Curriculum Framework.
- Mapping - in partnership with QUT - current education programs and professional practice standards to demonstrate the preparation of optometrists to prescribe medicines for oral administration.

So many achievements in just one year! I look forward to our continuing journey of exploring and implementing reform and innovation in supporting the eye health of the communities we serve.

None of this could be achieved without our bright, dedicated, passionate and caring staff. I take this opportunity to thank Sian Lewis, who has led our organisation for the past eight years and is about to retire. Her enthusiasm, experience, and intelligence have been outstanding in equal measure. We will miss her and wish her well in her next chapter.

The OCANZ Board is very excited to welcome our new CEO Susan Kelly. Many of you will already know Susan in her role as OCANZ Accreditation Manager. Susan is a practising optometrist with 20 years' experience in clinical, administration, regulation and policy roles. You can read more about Sian and Susan in the next pages.

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Farewell to Sian Lewis as OCANZ Executive Officer

“compassionate”; “kept everyone on board during the challenges of the pandemic which was helpful in getting a lot of work done” and “personally I’ve learnt a lot from her, including her government experience”.

Sian’s achievements as CEO have included two seminal reviews of the OCANZ accreditation standards for entry-level optometry programs, as well as significant enhancements to the OCANZ examination function. She retires from OCANZ at the end of January 2022.

Former OCANZ Director New Zealand Peter Grimmer described Sian as “just what we needed – a rock, a clear thinker – who delivered”.

Emeritus Professor Joyce Kirk, Chair of OCANZ’s Accreditation Committee said “I’m sure you will be missed by your colleagues and by the firms and Schools with whom you’ve worked very closely over the years”.

“The significance of Sian’s work on cultural competency will be a lasting legacy of her leadership”, both Alex and Joyce commented.

OCANZ Indigenous Taskforce co-chair Associate Professor Mitchell Anjou said on the back of the Optometry Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Curriculum Framework project the idea of the Indigenous Strategy Taskforce was formed and Sian initiated discussions with the OCANZ Board about how the organisation could make a contribution to improving First Nations eye health in Australia and New Zealand.

“Sian played a particularly important role in initiating and supporting the Taskforce and all it has done, and is going to do, from this point onwards,” Mitchell said.

OCANZ Indigenous Taskforce co-chair Mrs Renata Watene said Sian gave Indigenous optometrists a voice.

“All the work that she’s done has got us to a point where we actually feel like we can be heard, we’re in a safe space and we’re making progress,” Renata said.

“I think that’s the most exceptional thing and we really, really, really appreciate it. Thank you.”

Successful leaders know how to harness people and resources to take an organisation on a path of improvement so it can make a more powerful difference to those it serves.

When Sian Lewis arrived as OCANZ’s Executive Officer eight years ago she found an organisation committed to enhancing the training of entry-level optometrists but in need of clear strategies to move this agenda forward.

According to OCANZ chair Alex Gentle, Sian has been a “massive advocate” for cultural safety and for quality education and a “real leader” in harnessing collective ideas, skills, energy and professional passion to drive that outcome and make it happen.

Alex spoke of Sian’s many attributes: “always staff in mind”; “very structured approach”;



Welcome to Susan Kelly - our new CEO

As a practising optometrist with 20 years’ experience in clinical, administration, regulation and policy roles, as OCANZ’s new CEO Susan Kelly brings with her a “lived experience” of the optometry profession.

Formerly OCANZ’s Accreditation Manager, Susan brings to the CEO role a deep experience and knowledge of accreditation. In that role, held for the last 10 years, Susan supported the accreditation of four new Optometry programs as well as the reaccreditation of all existing programs. She also managed a wide range of projects and activities for OCANZ, including supporting some key aspects of the OCANZ examination function.

Building relationships and working closely with a broad range of stakeholders to understand their needs and issues is another important string to her bow.

“Being a practising optometrist has helped me to build networks and to contribute in a unique way to my work at OCANZ,” Susan said.



“I’m very excited and honoured to be appointed CEO of an organisation that I love and one that has a huge role in protecting the eye health of the public through its quality assurance activities.”

Equity and cultural safety rate very highly in Susan’s personal and professional values and providing secretariat support for the OCANZ Indigenous Taskforce in 2020 deepened that passion and commitment.

Susan said she loves ideas, collaboration, consultation and community.

Susan thanked outgoing OCANZ Executive Officer Sian Lewis for her leadership and mentoring of OCANZ staff.

Sian said that she couldn’t be handing the OCANZ reins to a better person than Susan .

“Susan was up against a strong field of very highly-talented applicants. The OCANZ Board appointed her because her professional experience as an optometrist, her deep knowledge of OCANZ and her engaging and collaborative style made her perfect for the role,” Sian said.

Susan has a new email address which is: CEO@ocanz.org



Welcome our new Accreditation Manager – Dr Melisa Rangitakatu

Dr Melisa Rangitakatu comes to OCANZ as Accreditation Manager with wide-ranging experience in academic management and executive leadership roles in various health disciplines, in both public and private higher education providers in Australia and the United States.

Melisa is a U.S. trained Nurse Practitioner, holding a Doctor of Nursing Practice from the University of Colorado with a specialisation in general practice. She has taught in undergraduate and postgraduate nursing programs in Australia and the U.S. and is currently teaching advanced nursing principles in Victoria University’s online Master of Nursing program.

Her wide-ranging skills include educational quality improvement, academic and corporate governance, and academic and research capacity building. Melisa has successfully managed TEQSA reaccreditation for a program

delivered by a private higher education provider and was recently contracted to write accreditation standards for the naturopathic profession in Australia and the Western Pacific region.

In line with her passion for life-long learning and humanitarian equity, Melisa is undertaking a Master of Public and International Law at the University of Melbourne focusing on international law and public policy and human rights for women and children. She is also undertaking a PhD in Humanitarian Leadership at Deakin University addressing gender-based violence and child marriage.

“I am incredibly excited to have the opportunity to work with such a positive and professional team,” Melisa said.

“I’m really looking forward to bringing my experience to the role to support the continued quality education of optometrists in Australia



and New Zealand in order to enhance the eye health of communities.”

It is a pleasure to welcome Melisa to OCANZ.

You can contact Melisa at accreditation.manager@ocanz.org



Examination News

Written and clinical components of the Competency in Optometry Examination have been scheduled for March 2022. For more information see the OCANZ website at: <https://www.ocanz.org/examination/competency-in-optometry-examination/examination-dates-and-venues/>

OCANZ has commissioned Neville Chiavaroli, Principal Research Fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research, to deliver a one-day workshop on assessment at participating optometry education programs in the first half of 2022. OCANZ is paying for the workshop development and participating programs will meet the costs of delivery. Each program is arranging their own scheduling. Detailed information will be provided in due course by each program.



Accreditation Updates

Find out more about the updated OCANZ accreditation procedures which take effect on 1 January 2022 at: <https://ocanz.org/accreditation/standards/>

Edited accreditation standards for entry-level optometry programs have been endorsed by the OCANZ Board and are with the Optometry Board of Australia for approval. Read about the proposed standards at: <https://www.ocanz.org/accreditation/standards-review/>. Subject to approval, the recommended start date for the revised standards is 1 January 2023.

The assessment of the new UWA optometry program will soon be completed, with advice to be presented to the OCANZ Board in mid-February 2022. OCANZ published the outcomes on all its assessments of optometry programs of study at <https://ocanz.org/accreditation/programs-of-study-accreditation-details/>. The report on the UWA optometry program will be published in March 2022.