

## IYTA (NZ) President's report 2022

As I reflect on 11 months as president, it has been a rewarding yet at times incredibly challenging journey.

In the early months of my time as president, there was much to contend with around the impact of Covid restrictions on our small organisation, the constant changes, the implications of not being able to meet in person, how to finish of a course, have a graduation and should we run another teacher training. It would have been an easy choice to press pause on our organisation and hibernate until the storm passed. Yet sitting in the quiet times with these decisions, it felt that we needed to sit in the eye of the storm and that yoga was needed more in our communities than ever before. We needed to adapt even if at the point we made some of the decisions, weren't sure what we were adapting to. I kept coming back to the vision of IYTA to inspire unity through yoga. At times we weren't united in our opinions, but we found ways to hold space for the middle ground, for unity of our organisation over individual choices and opinion and continuing to connect to the communities we support. We found ways to gather online, and we had a joyful start to year with an online gathering which also housed the graduation. Our subsequent seasonal gatherings hosted by our branches to give people a chance to connect, experience the richness and gifts of our teaching members and maybe find some time to nourish and be nourished. We are halfway through our gatherings with the next gathering a celebration of Spring hosted by the Auckland branch.

The National Executive collectively decided to run a teacher training course for 2022/23, with the first year being offered online without the in-person weekend immersions, this decision was made in November 2021 with much uncertainty at that time. The immersions have instead been offered as an online experience, the first of these in June which allowed a wider variety of teachers to skilfully offer yoga to our trainee teachers. For me personally, there is something lost online, I love the connection of being in person and holding space for not only the seen but the unseen to become known. That said we have been able to gain in other ways and the quality of our teaching hasn't been compromised and the breadth of specialised knowledge has been deepened.

There have been some beautiful connections over the last year with IYTA Australia, Yoga New Zealand, and IYTA members globally. While we are a small organisation, it feels like one with a big heart, a rich community with so many gifts both as yoga teachers and generous humans.

The work of IYTA Aotearoa wouldn't be possible without the talented members that come forward and work with care and diligence in their roles (and beyond). I have encouraged people not to take on multiple roles within the organisation and to allow space to be created for others to step in as time allows them. I could list so many people here who have come forward to offer support, but our National Executive are responsible for making decisions on behalf of our members and they are particularly worthy of mention. Sheena offers exceptional skill with numbers, they are translated into practical common-sense suggestions, ideas, and solutions, we are grateful for your wisdom. Karyn has stepped in to support the secretary role with great insight and diligence. The newsletter continues to be of a high standard thanks to the work of Susan. Glenys has worked tirelessly making the website more user friendly plus editing and sending out the monthly e-news. Tania supported by Jeannine are taking wonderful care of membership. Our branch reps keep us all connected and offer wonderful practical on the ground suggestions. Jo is our reliable, practical, and super organised and every so adaptable co-ordinator of the Teaching Diploma Course. And there are you our members some of whom are just here to connect with other yoga teachers, some of you are practical and offer suggestions of support and some of you are silent and curious observers, making this community rich and varied.

The challenges that we face as we move forward continue to be similar to those raised in the past but I will outline some of our immediate challenges:

- Income – this is limited to currently the membership fees and the TDC income as an organisation we don't want to commercialise the way we generate income. Both membership and the TDC have both been impacted for different reasons in recent years and it takes incredibly careful cash management to maintain cash flow (thanks again Sheena). New ideas and possible ways to invigorate this have been suggested but without consistent effort in this area with a development committee, this has been slow to move forward.
- We will have to re-apply for our charitable status as do all incorporated societies. As an NE we spent time looking at our constitution/rules so that we are in position to re-apply when we have the time and space for that. Our suggestions and comments are attached in the document from last year, any amends to this need to be approved by members at the AGM.
- The evolution of the TDC as a hybrid delivery. The current model was developed out of need due to limitations of COVID. At this point we are focused on delivery of the TDC for 2022/23 but a slight eye on the horizon to how to continue to deliver the best course, within budgets, while maintaining community and connection.
- Encouraging members to step forward with skills for projects, filling the roles on the NE and TDC, finding ways to develop the organisation. If you have skills, willingness to offer, you have tried to offer suggestions before but felt the timing wasn't right or they couldn't be developed at time, we are keen to hear from you. Our NE have open hearts and minds and would appreciate any input that you have to offer. We are also a small team of mostly people doing this work for seva or a small honorarium so ideas can take time to percolate, seed and come to fruition.

## **Statement for nomination to continue as president.**

Kia ora IYTA NZ whanau,

Here are a few words about me Rachel Chapman and why I would consider continuing with the role of kaitiaki of IYTA NZ. I would like to revisit the President role/name I see myself as a conduit and connector and that on every yoga mat is a leader that can support this community to continue to thrive and support each other as yoga teachers and people.

I am a Yorkshire-born lass and proud that the rural North Yorkshire Moors was my landscape growing up, it still holds a special place in my heart and the place I always refer to as home. However, in 2007 I chose to come to New Zealand with a backpack and I haven't left for long since then. I currently live in Hawke's Bay with my partner Dion and our 2 daughters Millie 12 and Evie-Mae 8.

Firstly, and most importantly, I love what yoga has taught me and who it has brought into my life. IYTA has been a place where I have met a wonderful community and amazing teachers and I would like to see that continue to evolve, grow and change to continue to serve both its members and trainee teachers.

In terms of my personal yoga journey, here is a brief insight into how I became a yoga teacher and the journey since. I had a false start as a yoga teacher, I started an Iyengar level 1 in the UK when I was 22, I almost but didn't quite complete it as I found it wasn't the right fit for me. When I came to NZ in 2007 and while living in Nelson, I was introduced via a yoga studio there to the yoga teacher training with IYTA, I completed this in 2008/9 and I have been teaching ever since. In 2009 I completed a pregnancy and post-natal yoga teaching course in London. Pregnancy yoga has become a passion, empowering women to have the best possible experience into and through the life changing transition that is motherhood. My pregnancy classes are inclusive, nurturing, supportive yet somewhat pragmatic. I couple these classes with post-natal teaching which started out with a Government based programme in the UK called Surestart. I extended this teaching with a Children's teaching Diploma with Samadhi Yoga in 2012 which has allowed me to teach from toddlers to teens. I wanted to keep learning and sharing knowledge with others, so in addition to teaching weekly classes, I have been a tutor for IYTA twice now in 2014/5 and again in 2020/21. I currently teach all ages and stages of life supporting students to increase their awareness of themselves through yoga to be able to ultimately create a balanced approach to their life. I love to teach yoga for women's wellbeing, teen yoga, yoga nidra, as well as specialist workshops with a range of other yoga teachers and health professionals.

Outside of yoga teaching, my area of expertise is strategic marketing, communications/PR, project management and organisational change, I am currently a self-employed consultant, and my work encompasses of all those areas. My current and long-term project has been the Hawke's Bay Arts Festival, which I have worked part-time on since 2015. Most of my work since 2004 has been in charitable trusts and the not-for-profit sector although previously to that I had a commercial marketing background in brand management. I feel I can bring this kete of diverse skills to support IYTA to weave together my experiences with those who also generously share their time and resources to continue to offer this beautifully collegial model of creation.

Rachel Chapman July 2022