

## **2024 President's Report for the Australasian Corrections Education Association**

Kia ora ACEA whānau,

It's been a challenging period for me personally and for the Australasian Corrections Education Association (ACEA). For those who may not know, I have been navigating a cancer recurrence. What was initially expected to be a straightforward course of mild treatment became significantly more complex as my body reacted adversely to chemotherapy, landing me in hospital after each round. This unpredictability has been frustrating and disruptive. However, I am delighted to share that my final chemotherapy session is tomorrow, and recent scans show promising results. I am cautiously optimistic about the future and grateful for the ongoing support of the ACEA community during this time.

On a broader scale, corrections education across Australasia has continued to face its own challenges. While not grappling with a life-threatening disease, many jurisdictions are still dealing with the lingering disruptions of the pandemic. Recruitment remains a persistent issue, affecting the capacity and consistency of education programmes. And, political changes and shifting bureaucratic priorities have added instability to an already strained system. Educators on the frontline are being asked to do more with fewer resources, and the toll on morale is visible everywhere. Burnout is a common refrain, yet despite these hurdles, ACEA has worked

### **The 15th Biennial ACEA International Conference**

A highlight of the year was the 15th Biennial International ACEA Conference, *Broadening Horizons: Navigating a Chaotic World*, held virtually from 11 to 13 June 2024. While the decision to host a virtual conference was not universally popular, it was a deliberate effort to maximise accessibility. With travel funding unavailable for most frontline educators in correctional jurisdictions, the online format allowed us to welcome attendees from across Australia, New Zealand, and beyond. We encouraged watch parties, offering group attendance for the cost of a single registration to ensure as many people as possible could participate.

The conference boasted an exceptional lineup of keynote speakers, including Fergus McNeill, Jane Garner, Sergio Grossi, and Pia Puolakka—names normally seen at much bigger global events. Feedback from attendees affirmed the quality and relevance of the sessions, though some logistical challenges, including my health, delayed our plans to make session recordings available. I am hopeful that with my recovery, we can soon share these valuable resources. Financially, the conference broke even, but this decision aligned with our core mission: prioritising education and accessibility over profit.

### **Looking Ahead: 2026 Conference and Beyond**

Planning for the 2026 ACEA Conference is already underway. Mark your calendars for Thursday, 11 June, and Friday, 12 June. The theme, *Changing Perceptions of Secure Justice Education*, promises a forward-looking exploration of evolving narratives around corrections education. In response to feedback from members, we are also pursuing partnerships to facilitate face-to-face gatherings. Negotiations are currently underway with the Australia and New Zealand Society of Criminology (ANZSOC) to incorporate ACEA events into their annual conferences, which rotate between Australian and New Zealand locations.

### **Expanding ACEA's Reach**


This year, ACEA proudly sponsored ANZSOC's annual conference, hosted at the University of Canterbury in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Aotearoa New Zealand. This collaboration provided a valuable platform to showcase corrections and juvenile justice education to a broader academic audience. Alongside our Vice President, Stavroola Anderson, and International Representative, Tatiana Harrison (both attending at their own expense), I had the privilege of representing ACEA, strengthening our presence and influence within the criminological community.

### **Exciting Plans for 2025**

The year ahead promises to be dynamic and engaging for ACEA members. In addition to regular webinars and newsletters, we are planning podcasts, in-person events, and expanded networking opportunities. These initiatives aim to enhance professional development and foster connections among our members.

In closing, I want to thank my fellow Executive Members and Advisory Council Members. You all pushed ahead and helped out at every turn, and managed to keep smiling throughout! I also want to thank our members and friends for your resilience, dedication, and commitment to juvenile justice and corrections education. Despite the challenges, our shared vision continues to drive us forward. I look forward to working with you in the coming year to strengthen and grow our community.

Ngā mihi nui,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Farley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Helen Farley  
President, Australasian Corrections Education Association