

**Ann Dunphy – NZ Youth Mentoring Network
Conference Opening Address
Tuesday 10 September 2013**

Kia ora koutou

Thank you all so very much for coming here today - from the length and breadth of Aotearoa and from three separate states of Australia. Your presence here illustrates a key truth of Youth Mentoring - that relationships matter and we really appreciate that you are giving your time for this most constructive purpose. Trustees Hau and Fuimaono will continue to take a lead role throughout the two days - and it is my pleasure now to introduce four others from our team of trustees - Bill, Joy and Chris are also Auckland-based, while our only mainlander Nathan from Christchurch, flew up last night and Steve from Tauranga will join us tomorrow.

NZYMN trustees are a group of volunteers, who saw an important need for developing communication and collaboration in our broad and diverse sector of Youth Mentoring. We totally share your commitment to awahi the growth and leadership of our rangatahi, as they undertake key developmental tasks of establishing their identity and place in today's complex world, working out how they can contribute to community and society. We are very grateful for the support of government, which permits us to employ wonderful Nicki as our General Manager running her first conference for us, and sincerely thank the range of helpers assisting with admin and IT tasks this morning.

Your bright green conference bags contain various documents that background areas we are covering over the next two days. Our programme aims to enable you to both widen your networks and deepen connections in your specialist fields. This year our US speaker comes via Skype, but your bag contains details of the new edition of the classic handbook that David Dubois co-edits.

Australian input has been an important part of all our biennial conference since we began in 2007. Our collaboration with the Australian Youth Mentoring Network means we run conferences in alternate years - and this year we are so pleased that there will be presentations from different parts of Australia on each day. The 8am BEAMS session on Wednesday morning is a later addition to the programme, so we have included their paper in your conference pack, along with information on NZ's Starpath programme, that also focuses on the crucial area of schooling support.

Youth Mentoring is a very big idea that is actioned in a wide range of ways - but at its heart are the human qualities of generosity and sharing. We pay tribute to the specialist providers who are rightly proud of what their programmes achieve, but who also see this as part of the wider picture and have been so positive about taking up opportunities for collaboration, by running sessions for us and contributing to key documents. A very recent publication in your pack addresses Youth Mentoring and the Children's Action Plan. And it was great to see the famous silos cease to be an issue, as we all collaborated with people from the Ministry of Health, who for the first time were taking a lead in this particular area of sector development.

Other documents in your pack are from Cognition, the pioneering education organisation represented by trustee Chris, who will be happily processing all your feedback, whether delivered online or on paper. And please make a point of personal conversation with us as well - all our team are wearing oblong badges and are really looking forward to chatting with you on whatever matters you wish to raise.

So what is our overview of Youth Mentoring in New Zealand today? Even after we made our small beginnings in 2000, the sector was described as **emerging, fragmented and competitive**. We see it

now as rapidly maturing, with very significant growth in links and collaboration. Much of this positive change comes of course from the development of the internet, which makes our mission of connecting and sharing infinitely easier to accomplish, but there has also been a major shift in awareness that we are all part of something bigger and that working together actually enhances creativity and initiative. Our backgrounds and programmes are very diverse, but shared values unite us, as we collectively seek to meet challenges of quality and growth.

Our NZ Youth Mentoring Network seeks to be an effective national organisation, with all the responsibility this brings for representation and regional voices. Population realities make Auckland our logical base, but we have always been conscious of our major northern imbalance. Then earlier this year we were so fortunate, when Sir Anand and Lady Susan Satyanand who are Wellington-based, graciously accepted the offer to bring a further dimension to our work by becoming founding patrons of NZYMN.

Today is their first official engagement with us and unfortunately Lady Susan is unable to be present, but it is with a real sense of history that I invite Sir Anand to make his inaugural address.

No reira tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

*Sir Anand began his warm and witty address, by referring back to Minister Bennett's tribute to her mentor - **The man who supports, loves you, stands next to you and picks you up.** He shared a delightful anecdote of how the mana of the late, great Dennis Wilmot Hansen could operate even by telephone over the hundreds of kilometres from his Henderson base to the courthouse in Palmerston North. Then on day two Minister Kaye also continued this theme of honouring a personal mentor - a new and valued element to our conference.*