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## Editorial

In this 1998 edition of the NZAP Forum, the fourth now to be published, the articles come largely from papers that were presented at the Auckland Conference held in February. The conference organisers chose as the theme *Boundaries and Space, Structure and Creativity*. The papers collected in this volume attest to this wide-ranging yet contained abstraction. They also mirror in their own way the Association's nature as an umbrella organisation which holds space for different creative expressions of psychotherapy, while holding firm to common core competencies of practice, and increasingly clear professional definition in the community it serves.

The Conference theme was also reflected in its structure. There were fewer formal presentations of papers and workshops in order to make space for us to come together in small groups and in the large group of the whole Conference. I suspect that in the life of the Association this was a necessary developmental process.

With the Association having grown quickly larger of recent years, there were impassioned murmurs that we were in danger of no longer knowing who we were as an organisation. In Auckland we were offered the creative opportunity to come together several times over the course of the weekend in order to engage the process of remembering ourselves for this time. The fact that we could all sit together was vital, as was the recognition that this was a process we had begun but by no means completed. We must take care now that we do not emulate the narcissistic splitting too often manifested in our profession when practitioners of different modalities have come together. There are healthier ways of developing our professional identity.

Our professional identity also needs a strong voice in the wider political environment in health. Political philosophies in this environment are characterised by the funding of treatment options that are outcome drive from a predominantly behavioural, because statistically supported, standpoint. As practitioners we do attend to our outcomes, but need to produce much more in the way of research material. I look forward to reports on such projects appearing in this publication in the future. In doing this we must take care that we do not compromise the need to preserve the space at the therapeutic core of our professional practice and become simply outcome driven ourselves.

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We have to be mindful that in taking care with our professional identity, we preserve space around our professional constructs as well. This space is the essence of our professional creativity. We listen well. I hope that the articles in here will be read with this in mind. That way there can be some experiencing of what Theodore Zeldin has called a 'good conversation', characterised by a sense of real engagement, by a sense of being deeply satisfying, of being intimate, and being unafraid to manifest heart and humour. I would hope our clients and patients experience good conversation with us in their therapeutic sessions. I hope that we experience this collegially. I trust you will find it in these pages.

Peter Hubbard

### **Editorial Group**

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