

REPORT TO TBHS OBA – NATIONAL SURVEY, 2018/2019

Introduction

Over the past few months a number of reports and updates on the National Survey have been furnished to the National Executive and our National President.

As we all know, the National Executive formed a Membership and Marketing Sub-Committee in 2017 and in 2018 agreed to undertake a National Survey of the OBs, albeit that the survey was limited to those OBs for whom the OBA had current email addresses. The survey was undertaken late 2018 with reminders and updates undertaken early 2019.

While the purpose of this brief paper is to bring the Executive 'up to speed' with the selected findings from the survey, it is emphasised that this is neither a detailed analysis nor a comprehensive appraisal of the survey results. Such detailed analysis is a matter for the National Executive and the various branches to determine how and what additional analysis is deemed both necessary and desirable. In order to assist in the selected, albeit limited, analysis, the National Executive agreed to retain Ace Digital Marketing (ADM) to provide some initial findings from the survey which they had managed on behalf of the Sub-Committee.

Any further analysis beyond what is included in the Tables attached to this overview paper is a matter for the National Executive and in all probability, the various branches in NZ and overseas. ADM will provide the necessary access to the survey raw data results which are incorporated within detailed spreadsheets.

It may transpire that ADM should be retained for further analysis as and when considered prudent by the National Executive and/or branches. It is also assumed that each branch would ideally be keen to explore the survey results as they relate specifically to their respective regional area which in turn suggests that OB volunteers might be prepared to undertake analysis and/or retain ADM to assist.

Current Findings

In June, 2019, the OBA was provided with initial summaries which were circulated to the National Executive. This report has been updated (July, 2019) resulting in some slight amendments and is now attached as part of the transmittals plus the various data sources from ACM's analysis.

- The total numbers of OBs both in NZ and overseas have been set down in various documents with the latest submitted to the National Executive in June, 2019 which provides an overall summary as it relates to the National Survey. This document is attached under the heading '*Summary of TBHS OBA National and International Survey Responses as at June, 2019*'.
- An initial summary of NZ respondents to the survey was also prepared and simultaneously submitted to the National Executive with the above-mentioned document. This paper was titled '*Brief Initial Summary of NZ Respondents to National Survey*' and is also attached, with the afore-mentioned amendments, to this paper.
- Following instructions to ADM and confirmed by the National Executive, further limited analysis was undertaken in the form of summaries of selected responses to those matters deemed to be of highest interest to the OBA and the various branches. This limited analysis was agreed to by the National Executive along with the estimated cost for such assistance from ADM.
- As stated, it is not the purpose of this paper to delve too deeply into the survey results, but rather to highlight some of the more salient findings which have relevance to the OBA in its quest to broaden the membership base and initiate or suggest activities which appear to relate to those matters which have attracted OB support and interest.
- There is a minor variation in the response survey numbers in two tables – as the difference is only 3 (i.e. 1%) it makes no difference to the key findings. The 245 responses to the survey from a total circulation of 1250 amounts to a 20% 'hit rate'.
- It has to be said, this has been a disappointing result despite repeat encouragement letters to all contactable OBs which extended into 2019. The slightly lower number to those indicated in earlier papers resulted from a number of duplicated responses which ADM has eliminated and corrected the overall summary tables.
- The following tables are separate amalgamations for both NZ and International Survey Respondents – these were not included in the original survey analysis and were deemed important in order to provide overall pictures of the national and international 'scenes' as it were. Tables 1 and 2 provide both the raw numbers (Table 1) and the resultant percentages (Table 2) and relate specifically to the level of interest shown by OBs in NZ and overseas in some more formal relationship with the association through becoming involved in OBA Committees/sub-Committees.

Interest in Assisting the OBA in Committees/sub-Committees (Tables 1 and 2)

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- Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the overall response from all regions (NZ, Australia, Asia, UK and USA) re an interest in becoming involved in OBA committees/sub-committees was approximately 27% which, as shown, infers that 73% of respondent OBs have no such interest.
- While these numbers need to be assessed with some caution given the low numbers in many of the branches/regions, there are sufficient positive responses from several of the branches as clearly demonstrated in the afore-mentioned tables. Again, specific and detailed reference on these topics by branch/region can be accessed by referring to the major document (see attached) identified as *Timaru OBA – Data Analysis*.
- Of the 65 ‘Yes’ responses to this question, 83% or 54 respondents are from NZ and these are summarised in Table 1 with Table 2 showing the percentage numbers by comparable branches/regions.
- In NZ, the branches which stand out as having real or absolute numbers which would facilitate ‘recruiting’ of OBs to become involved – even if the response rates are low when compared with the number of OBs who were surveyed in these regions – include: South Canterbury, North Canterbury, Auckland, Wellington, Hawkes Bay/East Coast and Marlborough.
- In the international arena, 11 (44%) of the 25 respondents indicated an interest in becoming involved with the OBA and none more so than Australia which registered a nearly 50% positive interest rate with 7 out of 15 respondents. This will be of interest to Bill White in particular.

Extra-Curricular Interests and Activities in which OBs would be interested in assisting OBA (Tables 3 and 4)

- Table 3 relates to OBs areas of extra-curricular interest and while basically seen as providing an ‘enriching’ and ‘enhanced’ knowledge of our OBs, if used with prudence and discretion, could provide some insight into those areas in which OBs might be prepared to assist.
- That said, this particular question warrants investigation at the local or regional level in order to make some meaningful observations as to how such interests could be harnessed in order to benefit the OBA and assist in determining the format and content of annual OB activities and functions. This was done in relatively broad terms in the June 18 summary and updated with some slight amendments in the past couple of days. As previously stated, this updated version is attached to this Report for the President’s and National Executive’s attention
- A general observation is: at the national level, OBs’ principal extra-curricular activities include travelling, sport and/or administration and reading/writing. These three most common pursuits are followed by community work, music and theatre and adventure activities. This highlights and emphasises the need and value in analysing at the branch or regional level which is available on the national survey spreadsheets (see attached ‘*Timaru OBA – Data Analysis*’) but might also benefit from some further analytical assistance from and by ADM. Naturally, there are costs for retaining such services.
- Table 4 is of prime interest to the OBA and the attendant ‘agencies’ which include the National Executive and the respective branch organisations. Again, the analyses and value outcomes from the survey would benefit from addressing these matters at the local or branch level but for the moment, the findings in Table 4 relate solely to the national and international levels.
- That said, the local or regional level analysis of Table 4 are available in the attachment, titled ‘*Timaru OBA – Data Analysis*’ which is a detailed 20 page summary of each national and international region and should be examined by the respective branches as well as the National Executive.
- This particular data analysis is considered the most important and instructive question and response segment of the entire survey and while this writer is prepared to undertake further analyses as and when time permits, the National Executive is recommended to request local branch analytical support in examining these particular matters.
- At the national level, those areas identified as being of interest to OBs to assist the OBA attracted 201 positive responses from a total of 1980. This amounts to 10% of the total respondent responses and clearly indicates multiple responses from each respondent.
- In descending order, the following activities were identified nationally (it is noted that locally these were summarised in the writer’s June 18 report): Helping with Functions, Reunions, etc; Mentoring and Career Advice; History of School, Memorabilia, etc; Regional and/or National Role with fellow OBs; Business Opportunities with fellow OBs; Sport; Education and Curricular Matters; and Recruiting and Marketing, OBA Membership.

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- Whilst acknowledging that these absolute numbers are small, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that subject to appropriate ‘coercing’ there are OBs who have indicated a genuine interest in assisting the association at both the national and local levels.

Interest in Receiving Copies of Timaruvian – Electronic, Hard or Neither

- Table 5 provides a collective summary of the 245 respondents (national and international). In the broadest terms, the following observations can be made with respect to this important annual OBA activity.
- As we know, it is the association’s largest annual expenditure allocation and regardless of what happens at the local or branch levels, the OBA is destined to consider, as part of a longer term policy, how it intends to deal with what is currently a relatively evenly matched preference between hard and electronic copies, i.e. 46% (112) of respondents prefer an electronic copy, 41% (101) prefer a hard copy with 13% (32) having no interest in receiving a copy, regardless of whether electronic or hard.
- Of greater significance is that the average of start year at TBHS establishes the fact that it is the younger OBs who have indicated a preference for electronic copies with the average start year being 1969 for this cohort.
- By contrast, the average of start year at TBHS for those indicating a preference for a hard copy is 1961, i.e. some 8 years earlier.
- The average of start year for those with no interest in either format is 1970.
- It requires little if any great investigation of these figures to conclude that with the passage of time, fewer OBs will be interested in receiving hard copies.
- With the accelerating introduction of electronic transactions becoming the norm rather than the exception over a whole range of business and personal activities, the production of hard copy *Timaruvians* will become increasingly unnecessary and ultimately, in all likelihood, unwarranted.
- In effect, it is not unreasonable to conclude today that at 59% (i.e. the 46% electronic preferred and 13% no interest in either copy format) already constitutes a majority of OBs moving to contemporary techniques. The savings in the cost of hard copy productions could be directed towards other forms of OBA budget deliberations.
- In that regard, the National Executive will face some hard but essential decision-making with respect to what time frame, if any, it determines that a move away from hard copies can be justified. This might be phased in over a 4-5 year period.
- Again, I would encourage each branch or region to look at the raw data and determine where they might stand on this ‘contentious’ issue. That said, it is a well-established fact that a number of schools in NZ have already moved away from the production of hard copies and in the case of TBHS one of the realities has been the protracted delays in actually producing the magazine such that it is relevant to the recipients.

For the information and actions as required by the National Executive **David R. McInnes**

July 19, 2019