



Chairperson's Annual Report 2025/26

Kia ora koutou katoa.

Welcome all to the second Annual General Meeting of the End of Life Doula Alliance of Aotearoa.

- **Acknowledgment:** Recognising and thanking the doulas across Aotearoa who have supported whānau through death, dying, and bereavement. Let's take a moment to remember all those who have died with our support, and all our own friends and family who have died.

Today I would like to thank the founding members of ELDAA. Sarah Carberry from Marlborough Sounds, Annie Meredith from Gisborne, Danielle Mahoney from Auckland, and Melanie Humphries-Connolly from Paraparaumu. In February 2024, we all travelled to Poroporoaki in the beautiful Marlborough Sounds, and decided to form ELDAA. We said we'd 'give it a go' for a year or so, and began our hard work with meetings every two weeks. And that was 2.5 years ago.

Sarah stepped off the Committee last December, and the other three amazing wahine are set to follow her from this AGM. I thank them most sincerely, and will miss them. They all took on jobs they knew nothing about, but were prepared to learn and to make this work.

What we've achieved is phenomenal... and we heard this in your feedback from our Survey. I look forward to working alongside the next team, as we continue to grow and flourish.

Membership

ELDAA has experienced steady growth of our membership, and we are now recognised as the 'go-to' organisation for those seeking Doulas to walk alongside them on their EOL journey, and by the health sector.

End of Life Doula Alliance Aotearoa, Inc
19 Waiho Tce, Elsdon, Porirua 5022, New Zealand
info@eldaa.org.nz www.eldaa.org.nz +21957255

- **Total members:** 30 professional and 112 associate members.
- **Regional representation:** We now have active members across many regions of New Zealand, including many rural communities.

We believe that one of the key advantages of having an EOL Doula, is that person will walk alongside you for the whole journey, from go to woah and after death as well. Building trust, companionship and connection with all involved. We have worked hard to develop our 'Core Competency' strategy for our Professional Members, endeavouring to instill trust and credibility to those in our health system who seek to propose our services to their patients. International celebrities have recently helped escalate knowledge about EOL Doulas globally, however, we strive to ensure that those seeking to do this work, are coming with the heart and soul to carry it.

We also fully support our many Associate Members, many of whom are also providing some Doula services in their communities. We look forward to as many of you as possible moving into Professional Membership, but we also appreciate that many of you cannot proceed to Professional Membership for many reasons, including the ability to make a sustainable living from this work, and family commitments among other things.

We hope this will change in the future, and meantime juggling a flexible part-time job, while creating space for Doula work, seems to be the MO for most of us.

As we grow we will continue to create guidelines for our members to ensure high-quality care for those they serve, as well as our members' obligations to ELDA as their national organisation.

The regional 'Doula hubs' across the country are also growing, and are a great opportunity for members to meet in person and share knowledge, mentorship and friendship.

Thanks to many of you who responded to our recent survey. Some key factors from the responded cohort are:

- 50% of our PM's receive occasional supplementary income from EOLD work
- 50% find our PM area and resources useful
- 80-90% have attended some of the educational or PM mentorship meetings.
- Continuing Mentorship opportunities, peer support and practical guidance would be beneficial
- 80% rated their ELDA membership as very high value
- Many Associate Members have completed End of Life Doula training and are at varying stages of readiness to practice, with barriers



including time, confidence, financial sustainability, and family commitments.

- Importantly, 80% of Associate Members who responded intend to move into Professional Membership in future, showing a strong pipeline of future doulas and confidence in ELDAA's pathway.
- Survey results also highlighted the extraordinary level of community engagement already happening across Aotearoa, with members leading Death Cafes, Dying Matters Week events, ACP workshops, hospice volunteering, grief support, education, and compassionate community initiatives. Incredible mahi from everybody involved.

Training and Professional Development

ELDAA continues to collaborate with our international training partners, and we hope to have some of our own training modules available in the next year.

There has been a surge in people interested in training to become End of Life Doulas recently. Our Q&A sessions are very popular, and we will continue to hold these bi-monthly.

We have received positive feedback about our bi-monthly Education Series for all members. Over the last year we have heard about Organ Donation, Tess Moeke-Maxwell's research on Assisted Dying and working with Maori at EOL, and Liz Fukushima from the USA spoke about VSED.

We had our first 'lunchtime pop up' recently, and Tilly Stevens spoke to us about her research about EOLD's globally. Watch out for more of these in the future.

Next Monday is our presentation by Elisabeth Price on Children and death. We encourage you to join these sessions whenever you can, and we welcome any suggestions for speakers.

In the next few days we will have both a PM and AM resources page for members on our website. Some of the recorded sessions will be available to members there.

Partnerships and Collaboration

We continue to seek new 'friends of ELDAA', where we can promote each other's mahi, as well as create opportunities to give presentations to our Friend's members, promoting the role of Doulas.

We are grateful for the support of Wayne Naylor, CEO of Hospice NZ, and his team, who distributed an email inviting collaboration on our behalf late last year, to many of the Hospices around NZ. There are many within Hospice who see the value of our role,



but also many who don't understand it, and feel that 'they do all of that'. By continuing to support our Clients, we will find opportunities to walk alongside hospice in their care, and little by little, they will realise our value.

ELDAA is now listed as a resource on such sites as Go With Grace, Citizen's Advice Bureau, and Eldernet among others.

ELDAA is also a member of GELDAN, the Global End of Life Doula Associations' Network - established recently to connect and support EOLD Associations globally through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and development of shared frameworks that strengthen practice, consistency and collective voice.

Advocacy, Community and Education

As far as our communities are concerned, we have noticed a shift in public perception, not only an increase in knowledge about Doulas, but also a small change in societal attitudes towards Death and Dying. I believe this is partly due to the consistent and hard work of our members across the motu.

ELDAA continues to seek opportunities to promote the role, both as an organisation, and also supporting our members individually to do the same in their respective regions.

ELDAA attended and presented at the Public Health Association's International Conference last year, Assisted Dying Conference in Wellington in February, ANZSPM in March. We addressed the committee of the End of Life Choice Society. We are booked to present at HNZ Palliative Care Lecture Series in July, attend and speak at GPCME (GP's) Conferences in Rotorua and Christchurch, and also hope to be accepted to attend and hold an Abstract workshop at the HNZ Conference in November. We will also have representation at the Compassionate Communities Hui in Hastings in July.

Dying Matters Week 2025 saw many ELDAA Doulas across the motu hosting events in their communities, including ACP workshops, presentations, panel discussions etc. And preparation for DMW 2026 is already underway and expected to be even bigger and better.

Media Engagement: Dying Matters Week was a great vehicle to attract attention. TVNZ, Radio NZ, NZ Herald, The Post, Stuff, Pacific Media Network and others published interviews with Doulas.

Thanks to Sarah Campbell-Simpson and Belinda Price for driving our social media presence. And to all of you who continue to collaborate with each other via our private members FB page, and also share knowledge with the public via our Dying and Death Conversations NZ page. This is an important part of our mahi also.

Our members continue to deliver Community presentations and workshops in their



areas. Sometimes these are linked with Compassionate Communities projects, Death Without Debt workshops, Death Cafes or other related events. Many are scheduled within Dying Matters Week, but our Doulas are working throughout the year to educate and support their communities also.

We proposed a member for the Te Whatu Ora Palliative Care Work Programme working group, but were declined. But we will continue to seek opportunities like this.

Quality Assurance and Standards

ELDAA continues to develop and adapt to support our growth. We have a defined Scope of Practice, a Code of Ethics, a set of Core Competencies for Professional Members, and mentorship and practice support.

ELDAA PM's have completed Doula training currently with international educators who provide a comprehensive framework covering all aspects of this work.

Our Doulas have also completed local training modules of the Fundamentals of Palliative Care, Assisted Dying in NZ, and Advance Care Planning to meet NZ standards.

ELDAA Doulas must also continue their personal professional development.

Financial Overview

Mel will explain our financial position shortly, but once again I would like to express our gratitude for a second kind donation by the Hugo Trust, to allow us to bring an 'Administrator' on board, for 4 hours per week, to support the work of the Committee. More news on that soon.

We are proposing a small increase in our membership fees this year, in line with other organisations and what we provide for our members. We are implementing some technology to help with the administration load also, namely Google, Youtube, Stripe for payments. We will move to a pro-rata fee structure with this technology in place.

We are seeking funding for the many aspirations we have for the future, so if you know of any philanthropic people or organisations, please introduce them to us.

Also a reminder that sometimes families who you are working with may be willing to bequeath a donation.

In the future, and as we grow, we will also focus on Government and Policy Engagement.



Looking Forward: Strategic Priorities for 2026/27

ELDAA has reached an important milestone. We are now firmly established in NZ, and it's time to look to the future. How do we continue to support the growth of the Doula profession? How do we gain acceptance by our Hospices, Palliative Care teams, and GP's so that they are confident suggesting Doulas where they see a need?

One step at a time. We keep talking about our mahi. We keep showing up alongside our Clients. We support each other as the Doula community.

Priority Areas for ELDAA:

1. **Strategy:** We will continue to work on a robust strategy for all the things we want to see in Aotearoa in the future of end of life care.
2. **Organisational structure:** We will look to advice on whether to become a registered Charity to help us achieve our goals.
3. **Healthcare Integration:** We will continue to seek partnerships with healthcare providers and advocate for formal recognition of end-of-life doulas within the healthcare system.
4. **Succession Planning and Leadership Development:** For the year ahead, ELDAA will adopt a Co-Chair arrangement. We will also explore the benefits of creating a 'Board of Directors' – a small group of industry leaders in different sectors who would mentor our Committee and help grow the organisation.

Acknowledgments

We have come to where we are today, through the collective effort of many.

Committee: I extend my deepest gratitude to our board members who have given countless volunteer hours to advance our mission. Annie Meredith, Melanie Humphries-Connolly, Danielle Mahoney, Sarah Carberry, Belinda Price, Sarah Campbell-Simpson and Sherie Sullivan.

Sub-committees and friends: who also help us with jobs from time to time.

Other contributors over the past year : Sincere thanks to Mila Barach for looking after our website, Brian Sheridan for our accounts, Thomas Berger who assists us with our IT and technical bamboozlement, & Sean Thompson who held some ACP workshops for our members. We thank them for their generous contributions to our growth.

Speakers: Thanks to all who gave of their time and wisdom to address and teach us.

Members: To our members who serve families with dignity, skill, and aroha - you are the heart of our organisation. We are all here to support each other. Please reach out if



you need support, and let us know how you'd like our organisation to grow and develop. We've heard from many of you in our survey, and the door is always open to further korero.

Families Served: Most importantly, we acknowledge the families who have trusted our members during their most vulnerable times. You teach us, inspire us, and remind us why this work matters.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have come a long way in 2 years. Your responses in the survey, encouraged us that we are on the right track. Many of the suggestions you made were already firmly in our sites. And we know how hard it is out there, because we experience it ourselves every day.

We are buoyed by the international research proving the value of Doulas. And collaboration with our friends and partners internationally is telling us that strong relationships and partnerships with Hospices are also forming in some places, and working well.

However, there are many in our communities who do not even reach hospice, or are not eligible for hospice care. That's where we can focus our energy.

I urge you to 'stick with it', even though it's hard. I am deeply grateful for every single person I've walked beside in their last days, and if we keep coming back to the heart of our work, we will succeed.

Thank you all for turning up today to support us, and for your ongoing commitment to this vital work. Together, we honour life by supporting death.

Ngā mihi nui,



Treza Gallogly
Chairperson

