



NZOPA

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025

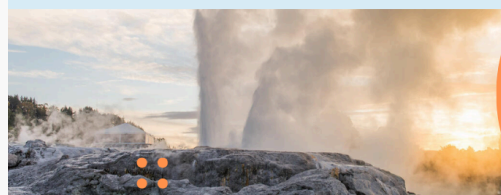
2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Conference Committee has worked hard to organise an amazing lineup of exhibitors and speakers, aiming to make this the best conference yet. Their dedication brings a diverse group of participants, offering valuable insights and innovative ideas. Through careful planning, they promise an inspiring and enriching experience for all attendees.



NZOPA

2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Vision to Reality:
Innovative P&O Solutions



5-7th September, 2025

Distinction Rotorua Hotel &
Conference Centre
390 Fenton Street Rotorua

REGISTRATION OPENS SOON
Further updates to be announced



www.nzopa.co.nz



Find us on LinkedIn and Facebook:
New Zealand Orthotic and Prosthetic
Association



MEMBER CERTIFICATES

2025-2026 Member Certificates are available for download. Once your member fee has been paid, and your CPD is approved (for our accredited members) you can download your member certificate directly from your member portfolio. You may notice an exciting new look! You can also download your member badge to add to your email signature.

NZOPA STRATEGIC PLAN



NZOPA

Strategic Planning Underway – We Want Your Input!

The Executive Committee is developing a strategic plan to guide the future direction of our organisation and the orthotics and prosthetics profession as a whole.

This strategic plan will shape our goals, initiatives, and advocacy efforts over the next several years. To ensure it reflects the real needs and priorities of our community, member feedback is essential.

We're asking for your insights on what matters most:

- What challenges are you facing in the field today?
- What opportunities should we pursue as a professional community?
- How can the NZOPA better support you?

In the coming weeks, we'll be sharing surveys and reaching out for your input. Your voice will help shape the vision, values, and priorities that define our path forward.

Stay tuned for more information—and thank you for being an essential part of the O&P community.

Together, we can build a stronger, more innovative future.



ISPO NEW ZEALAND

The NZOPA is reconnecting with ISPO and working to build the New Zealand Chapter. We are looking for members who may be interested in joining the ISPO Committee. We will have more information to share soon!



CONTACT US

NZOPA ACCREDITED ACTIVITIES

Jaśka Stewart has recently moved from the Website role across to the Education role as this is a major priority for the Association. Providing more NZOPA Accredited Activities is a goal for 2025. Stay tuned for more information on upcoming opportunities!



EXEC COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT

Hendrik Schoonwinkel

Role: President

Location: Orthotic House, Hamilton



“Whether I’m building orthoses or flatpack furniture, it all comes down to problem-solving, patience, and pretending I read the instructions.”

Can you tell us a bit about your background in orthotics and prosthetics?

Sure thing—my journey into orthotics and prosthetics started back in 2003 in South Africa, when I realised I could actually combine my love for problem-solving, working with my hands, and helping people into a single career. Magic, right?

Over the years, I’ve had the chance to work across a wide range of clinical areas, but compression therapy stole my heart early on (yes, I’m that person who gets excited about socks with science behind them). Now based in New Zealand, I’ve been fortunate to work with some amazing teams and even more amazing patients—people who remind me every day why we do what we do.

Today, I’m honoured to be serving as President of NZOPA. Some days it feels like herding cats in a wind tunnel, but I wouldn’t trade it for anything. It’s a privilege to advocate for our profession and support the incredibly skilled, passionate people in this field.

What inspired you to join the Executive Committee?

Honestly? A mix of passion, purpose... and probably a moment of questionable decision-making.

I’d been in the industry long enough to see where we were excelling—and where we were treading water. I joined the Executive Committee because I wanted to be part of shaping the future of orthotics and prosthetics in New Zealand, rather than just grumbling about things from the sidelines (tempting as that sometimes is).

It’s not always glamorous—there are more emails than anyone warned me about—but being part of a team that’s pushing for progress, advocating for our profession, and trying to make real, lasting change? That’s worth every Zoom call and midnight deadline.

What’s one goal you hope to accomplish through your work on the committee?

One goal? Just one? You’re cruel.

If I had to pick, I’d say I want to build stronger bridges—between clinicians, funders, educators, and our wider healthcare system. There’s too much brilliant work happening in silos, and it’s time we connected the dots.

I’d also love to leave behind a profession that feels more supported, more heard, and more united—where clinicians aren’t burning out trying to juggle patient care, admin, funding chaos, and the occasional existential crisis.

So yeah—big goals. But if you don’t aim high, you just end up writing a lot of minutes and wondering where the time went.

What’s something members might not know about you?

The Secret Life:

Something members might not know about me? I moonlight as a garage-based problem-solver. If it’s busted, seized up, or mysteriously leaking, I consider it a personal challenge. Honestly, I get the same satisfaction from restoring a rusty hinge as I do from getting someone back on their feet—both require precision, creativity, and the occasional strong word.

Any advice for new professionals in the O&P field?

First, never underestimate the power of good old-fashioned patience and listening. You’re not just fitting devices—you’re fitting into people’s lives, their stories, their struggles.

Second, get comfortable with uncertainty. Not every case will be textbook perfect, and that’s okay. Problem-solving on the fly is part of the job—embrace it.

Third, build your network—both inside and outside the profession. Relationships with funders, clinicians, and even patients can make or break your ability to get things done.

And lastly, keep your curiosity alive. The field is always evolving, but the basics—compassion, craftsmanship, and communication—never go out of style.

Oh, and don’t be afraid to get your hands dirty. Sometimes that’s where the magic happens.

JOIN THE EXEC COMMITTEE



Are you passionate about advancing the field of orthotics and prosthetics? Do you want to help shape the future of patient care, education, and innovation in our profession?

We are currently seeking dedicated volunteers to join the Executive Committee of the NZOPA!

As a committee member, you will:

- Help guide the strategic direction of our organisation
- Advocate for the profession at regional and national levels
- Collaborate with other leaders in orthotics and prosthetics
- Contribute to initiatives that support clinicians, technicians, and patients

The Commitment varies per role, but there are monthly virtual meetings and periodic planning sessions

We encourage participation from practitioners and technicians - any member who is passionate about the growth and integrity of the O&P profession

Let's work together to elevate the future of orthotics and prosthetics.



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