

## Keynote Speakers NZCA 2009 Conference



**Grant Walker**, Barrister and Solicitor, Otago Southland Employers' Association, Dunedin . Grant joined the OSEA legal team in 2000. Grant brings a varied and wide skill base to the practice of employment law having been a partner in a long established Dunedin legal firm and leading that firm's commercial practice until 1990. He had business interests in the tourism sector in Central Otago for a number of years. Following further study Grant became a group facilitator in personal development and conflict resolution. Following a brief stint as a relieving tenancy mediator and researcher Grant also worked in poverty law for a number of years before specialising in employment law. Grant is the Business NZ representative on the Employment Relations Education Ministerial Advisory Committee, is a Board Member of ASCO and CIPT and has

served on the Board of a number of community organisations particularly in the mental health area.



**Laura Black**, the Chief Executive and Director of The Methodist Mission, has over 20 years experience in the community and voluntary sector including involvement in Samaritans and Welfare Rights Team (both Edinburgh), Women's Refuge, the Small Business Centre, Commerce Nelson, community radio, Whenua Iti Outdoor Pursuits Centre, The Hub, local body Youth Committees, Gateway Housing Trust, and the NMIT Te Tari Maori Programme Advisory Committee (all Nelson).

Laura has also held a national position in the UK union movement (NALGO), was Head of the University of Otago Alumni & Development Office, and was appointed to the Department of Internal Affairs Community Internship Panel (Government Board appointment) for Nelson. She has been a member of Association of Tertiary Education Managers, and the Council for Advancement and Support Education (International).

Laura is currently a member of the Institute of Directors, the Waitaki Coastal Otago COGS committee, and chairs the Dunedin Strengthening Families Strategy Group.



**Dr Mark McGuire** is a senior lecturer in the Department of Design Studies at the University of Otago, where he teaches communication design and digital media theory and practice. His publications focus on the design, social, and political aspects of virtual communities, online environments, social networks, blogging, podcasting, and digital games. Dr McGuire is also interested in interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and research, and in the growing open education movement. Before joining Otago in 1994, he spent ten years as the owner and principal designer at Mediatrix Inc. a Toronto-based company that provided design and consultancy services to the telecommunications and publishing industries.



**Meredith Caisley** has been an examiner in speech and drama for over 30 years and is Vice-Chairman of Speech New Zealand which is the national speech examining body. She is passionate about fostering spoken communication and delights in assisting the New Zealand population to find their voice and share their views confidently in their unique styles. Meredith is a lecturer at AUT in the School of Communication Studies. Her life-time career has focused on Speech and Drama with Presentational Speaking as her speciality area. Caisley Communication Consultancy covers a wide range of aspects of spoken English and performance and attracts students from 7 years of age. Currently the oldest student is in his 70's and is an international motivational speaker.



**Prue Cruickshank** is a life member and a past president of NZCA, and the founding editor of the Communication Journal of New Zealand – He Kōhinga Kōrero, which also prompted her current study related to a PhD studying the networking behaviour of immigrant entrepreneurs. She completed her LTCL in Speech and Drama after leaving school, and lived in Iran for 10 years as part of her OE, contracting as an ESOL teacher and completing the Cambridge ESOL Diploma. The Iranian revolution prompted a return with her daughter as her husband was 'delayed'. She worked for Rodney Council, before becoming a Community Board member for East Coast Bays during the challenging amalgamation of five councils into the North Shore City Council. She became involved in the

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) international research programme under Professor Howard Frederick, which led to her PhD enrolment. To balance her lifestyle, her pastime is poisoning rats as an *Ark in the Park* volunteer to restore the Waitakere habitat and enable the reintroduction of the rare hihi (saddleback), black robin, and kokako! Trying to live sustainably is challenged by her curiosity to observe different civilisations, as she will shortly visit Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka.