

## ISPOR SPEAKS

## Important Opportunities and Challenges

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Kia Ora!

I am delighted to have this opportunity to be ISPOR President for the 2019-2020 term. Past-president Professor Federico Augustovski was ISPOR's first president from Latin America and its first president from outside North America and Europe. My presidency continues to reinforce ISPOR's truly global nature: I will be ISPOR's first president from Australasia (partly because I shifted to the University of Melbourne this year, but also because I am a very proud New Zealander!). The representation in ISPOR's leadership from different regions is important, as different people bring different perspectives. And seeing the world differently (literally...as shown by this map!) can bring new insights.



(Image courtesy of MapCo NZ Ltd.)

I am somewhat in awe of the achievements of our past presidents, whose work and service to ISPOR I greatly admire (and some of whom—such as Professor Mike Drummond—are my personal heroes) and welcome the challenge of living up to their combined legacy of leadership.

As I look ahead to the coming year, I am mindful that ISPOR presents

both important opportunities and some interesting challenges for a new president. I touch on these here because I hope these comments may be of interest to those considering leadership roles in ISPOR and may encourage still others to consider putting themselves forward.

The organization is exceptionally well run and actively managed by its mainly US-based professional staff, led by CEO Nancy Berg. This means that the support which is provided to those serving as president is outstanding. It does also mean, as a new president, carefully navigating and clarifying the dividing line between governance and management roles which, in the context of a US-based organization, can sometimes

feel culturally a little different than Board roles in Europe and elsewhere.

The role of ISPOR president also differs from leadership roles I have previously held in other organizations in that it is for 1 year only. The presidential term is preceded by a 1-year run-in as president-elect, during which time the objective for the president-elect is to learn as much as possible

and to understand, 'from the inside,' the workings of what is a large and very complex global membership organization. And, within that period, the additional challenge is to find the best way to prioritize efforts to make a difference within the limited time span of the presidency, and to achieve things that improve ISPOR's services to its members and its wider impact on health economics and outcomes research (HEOR).



As I pick up the presidential gavel (and yes, there is an *actual* gavel!) for the first time at our Board of Directors meeting in San Diego in late July, I am extremely grateful to ISPOR's immediate past presidents, Professor Federico Augustovski and Professor Shelby Reed. They have been generous in their support over the past year, as they have gently passed the baton to me, and are excellent role models. I know I can count on their continued guidance during the coming year. In turn, one of my objectives will be to welcome and support Jens Greuger as president-elect to ensure that his presidential term is as successful as possible.



### WHAT DO I HOPE TO ACHIEVE DURING 2019-2020?

It seems like a long time ago that I wrote my vision statement (<https://www.ispor.org/about/our-leaders/nancy-devlin>) for the ISPOR elections—and that's because it is: I wrote it at the start of 2017. My >

understanding of ISPOR has improved since then and I am sure I will continue to learn over the coming year, but the things I highlighted in that statement continue to be a good reflection of my priorities.

- To ensure that we continue to grow not just the scale of our activities, but also the stature, relevance, and impact of ISPOR as an organization.

As a not-for-profit organization, ISPOR's mission—to promote health economics and outcomes research excellence to improve decision making for health globally—lies at the heart of all that we do. ISPOR's success should ultimately be judged by its impact in improving science and improving decision making. We will continue to strengthen efforts to show, both to members and to potential members, that resources generated from income-earning activities (such as our conferences) are directed to the achievement of those ends. Strengthening the future of the science of HEOR and being proactive as well as responsive in doing that is of key importance.

- ISPOR has been very successful in

to the achievement of ISPOR's mission to improve health globally.

- To continue efforts to ensure that ISPOR conference plenaries and panels are representative of our membership, and that ISPOR conferences serve as opportunities to highlight and develop emerging talent and research leaders.

I delivered my address to the ISPOR 2019 conference in New Orleans partly in te reo (the language of the indigenous people of New Zealand), including in it a well-known Māori Whakataukī (proverb) shown below. I think this phrase nicely captures the fact that people, and our treatment of people, is central to ISPOR as a membership association.

My first act as president has been to respond<sup>1</sup> to an article by ISPOR members<sup>2</sup> highlighting the issue of 'all male panels' at ISPOR conferences. ISPOR is very diverse in some ways that other organizations would envy (for example, see the composition of our Board of Directors). But in other ways, particularly regarding the diversity of speakers at our conferences, ISPOR needs to improve. Actions have

2019/2020: unusually, and as a product of the cycle of Board elections, I will be chairing a board comprising 10 members who are continuing from the previous year and who are 'hitting the ground running.'

Finally, I am interested in hearing your ideas and thoughts, as its members and its stakeholders, about ISPOR's direction. During 2019, I will have the privilege of speaking at and participating in the ISPOR Europe 2019 conference in Copenhagen, meeting local members of ISPOR chapters in Mexico, Australia, China, and New Zealand, and plan to visit further chapters in 2020. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during the next 365 days. •

## REFERENCES

1. Devlin N. All male panels and other diversity considerations for ISPOR. *Pharmacoeconomics Open*. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s41669-019-0169-5] Accessed July 22, 2019.
2. Bouvy, J.C. & Mujoomdar, M. All male panels and gender diversity of issue panels and plenary sessions at ISPOR Europe. *Pharmacoeconomics Open*. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s41669-019-0153-0] Accessed July 22, 2019.



**Ki mai ki ahau, he aha te mea nui o te Ao?**

*If you were to ask me, what is the most important thing in the world?*

**He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata**

*It is people, it is people, it is people.*

bringing together health technology assessment organizations, the pharmaceutical industry, patients, academics researchers and regulators, and is truly unique in the extent to which it has created an effective dialogue between these groups. This model should be expanded to further engage healthcare budget holders, policy makers and healthcare system leaders in ISPOR's work, as their concerns and HEOR needs are crucial

already been taken over the past year (including a formal diversity policy and the establishment of Women in HEOR), but there is still a long way to go. As I concluded in my article, our aim is to reflect ISPOR's diverse membership in its conferences and other activities and, ambitiously, I would like ISPOR to become a beacon of good practice in this respect. This will require efforts from *all* ISPOR members—men and women. I anticipate a highly productive Board for