

Dear Executive and Members of Theatre New Zealand,

20 September 2026

I am writing with considerable sadness to resign as President of Theatre New Zealand, **effective immediately.**

I have been dealing with a serious, debilitating, and progressive health condition which has increasingly affected my ability to meet both the physical and cognitive demands of the role. Over recent months, its progression has made it considerably more difficult for me to deliver the objectives and commitments I have undertaken on behalf of Theatre New Zealand.

I have pushed myself relentlessly to ensure that our current projects remained achievable and that the organisation continued to move forward. I have done so because I deeply believe in these projects and what they represent for Theatre New Zealand. However, I have reached the point where continuing to push myself in this way is no longer sustainable.

In particular, I must recognise that the World Festival, with all its complexities and the enormous personal commitment required to bring it to fruition, is now unrealistic for me to continue to lead in my present circumstances. This is particularly difficult for me to accept given the amount of work, planning and personal commitment that has already gone into establishing the Festival and its international relationships. Nevertheless, I have to recognise that my health must now take priority.

I need to step away and give myself the time and space to come to terms with these changed circumstances and to reconstruct my life around their consequences.

This has been an extremely difficult decision. Theatre New Zealand, community theatre and the people who make it happen have been an enormously important part of my life. I have always believed passionately that Theatre New Zealand should be a strong, purposeful and focused national organisation: one that advocates for community theatre, creates opportunities, develops pathways for young people and practitioners, and connects New Zealand theatre with the wider international theatre community.

The road to achieving that has, at times, been bumpy. Change is rarely easy, particularly in a volunteer organisation with limited resources but enormous aspirations. I am deeply grateful to the Executive members who have supported me as we have navigated that road together, and to the many members throughout the country who have shared my belief in what Theatre New Zealand can become.

We have achieved a great deal. I sincerely hope the organisation continues to build upon the foundations we have established and remains ambitious about its place within New Zealand theatre. Theatre New Zealand has an important role to play in supporting the people and communities who create theatre from the ground up.

To my Executive colleagues, thank you for your patience, commitment, friendship and support. To our members, thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your President and for supporting the direction we have worked so hard to establish.

I leave the presidency with considerable sadness and disappointment that circumstances beyond my control mean I cannot complete everything I set out to achieve. But I also leave with pride in what we have accomplished together and with a genuine belief in the future of Theatre New Zealand.

For me, the priority must now be my health, my family, and learning how to rebuild my life around circumstances I neither expected nor wanted.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve Theatre New Zealand. It has been a privilege.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Percy', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Paul Percy
President
Theatre New Zealand Inc.