

Jon Warren, DHSc, MSc

Candidate Statement

Asian Western Pacific Board position

2023



It would be an honour to be selected for the Board position representing the Asian Western Pacific (AWP) region of World Physiotherapy.

As a 20-year-old, I graduated as a physiotherapist in New Zealand and thought this opened the world for me, and it did. This fantastic profession has taken me to work in nine countries and to appreciate how beneficial our education and skills are to all walks of life. My physiotherapy experience spans a broad spectrum of health, including the public, private, academic, and regulatory sectors. It includes working clinically in a spinal unit, a children's hospital and the Neonatal intensive care, running a private practice, and travelling internationally as a rugby team physiotherapist.

Education is vital for the strength of a profession. I have augmented my clinical skills with advanced education throughout my career, culminating with a Doctor of Health Science. As an educator, I have worked as a clinical mentor and advisor in my clinic. I also spent five years teaching at the University of St Augustine for Health Sciences in San Diego, California. Evidence-based practice is central to clinical expertise. I loved seeing students have their eyes opened to the amazing benefits of physiotherapy skills and knowledge. I love the quote 'Learn as if you were to live forever. Live as if you were to die tomorrow' - Mahatma Gandhi.

After working in the States, I spent four years as a Professional Advisor for the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand. Regulators always stress the importance of standards for safety and competence. I think this is the wrong way around. The person is competent and inherently safe if the standard is set at the right level. World Physiotherapy's work developing the Education framework has produced a valuable resource for all member organisations. This type of work needs to continue and develop further.

I have spent the last four years as a consultant with the Ukrainian Association of Physical Therapy. The complexities of a developing profession in a conflict zone cannot be underestimated. I am always amazed at people's passion for advancing their profession under the most challenging circumstances. I currently work as Senior Policy and Education

Advisor for the Health and Disability Commissioner. Improving health has been the driver of my professional life.

My professional life has been shaped by my membership and representation of the professional association, predominately in New Zealand but also other countries. Early in my career after four years of travelling, I settled into private practice in Napier, New Zealand and joined the regional physiotherapy committee. Over the years, my many roles included secretary culminating with seven years as President. This was followed by work on the Physiotherapy New Zealand (PNZ) National Executive and four years as President.

Leading the profession in New Zealand made me appreciate that advocacy is so important, starting at the local, then regional, national, and of course international levels. In public forums, the 'brand' physiotherapist (or Physical Therapist) is the key. It doesn't matter what the modifier is: paediatric, geriatric, sports, cardiothoracic... as long as it includes physiotherapist. When any part of the profession is highlighted, the profession as a whole benefits. As is often said, the more we work together, the more we can achieve better results.

I feel strongly about the importance of a distinctive brand. At the end of my term as President of the New Zealand association, we rebranded and changed the name to Physiotherapy New Zealand from the New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists. This rebranding included a new logo and by-line 'Movement for life'. The rebranding was enthusiastically received by the profession and is now well utilised. Advocacy and branding are essential for professional identification and public recognition to help advance the profession. Could there be a day when we have an international logo with international recognition? Most people know the product associated with 'Just do it'.

I attended my first WCPT Congress in Vancouver, Canada, in 2007. Seeing the workings of the global organisation further highlighted the importance of physiotherapy internationally. Representing the profession is vital work for all countries, which all have people who can benefit greatly from physiotherapy. All countries have common health challenges of access, equity, education, standards, and financial sustainability to a greater and lesser extent.

All countries have their own issues, which can appear unique but can benefit significantly from the resources of World Physiotherapy. I have been impressed by how World Physiotherapy has grown in membership, financial sustainability, and influence. This has resulted in more resources and benefits for member organisations. I believe sustainable growth is a crucial part of advancing the profession internationally, and I would like to be a part of continuing this work.

My Board and management experience includes strategy and policy development, project management and implementation. I have research and analytical skills to ensure evidence-based decision-making. I believe this experience and skills make me the best candidate for the AWP Board position.