

Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand

Pharmacist of the Year 2019 Citation

Joanna (Jo) Frances Hikaka

November 2022



Jo Hikaka is a mum, a wife, a daughter and an uri of the Ngāruahine tribe in South Taranaki. Jo grew up in Hamilton and completed her Bachelor of Pharmacy degree at the University of Otago in 2002 where she was named Top student and received the Pharmacy Prize for Pharmacy Practice in both her 3rd and 4th years. Jo has consistently continued to build on these professional distinctions with an impressive career as a clinical pharmacist specialising in Older Adult Health in primary and secondary care over the last 20 years.

Jo worked a short stint in London but has worked mostly in Auckland with the Waitematā DHB, advancing her clinical skills, knowledge, qualifications, and interest in older persons health. She has been involved in many clinical projects; "*Older people in retirement villages: unidentified need & intervention research*" and "*Safer Prescribing and Care for the Elderly trial*" to name just two. Her many achievements are an inspiration to those pursuing innovative practice; those striving to raise standards and to pharmacists who, through their professionalism, provide models for others in related disciplines, educational institutions, and government, industry, and community service.

As past President (2016 to 2019) and a long-term committed member of Ngā Kaitiaki o Te Puna Rongoā o Aotearoa - The Māori Pharmacists Association, Jo is a Māori pharmacist who consistently strives to fulfil the goals of the *Māori Health Strategy for the Pharmacy Profession*. Consistent national and regional advocacy whilst continuing with her significant clinical research work.

In 2017, Jo was the first pharmacist to be awarded the *Health Research Council Clinical Research Training Fellowship*. A prestigious award allowing her to build research skills to develop robust clinical pharmacy practice research to further elevate this field in Aotearoa New Zealand. In addition, she is one of just two pharmacists to have been awarded a *Fulbright New Zealand Science and Innovation Graduate Award*. Jo, her husband Jay, and children Huia and Pete travelled to Brown University in the United States for between 9 and 12 months earlier in 2022.

Jo has recently passed the final step in completing her PhD which aimed to develop a medicines optimisation service for community-dwelling Māori older adults. Applying a kaupapa Māori theoretical framework and engaging with stakeholders to develop the pro-equity model to support the ability for long-term implementation.

To conclude, Jo strongly advocates for clinical pharmacy practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, promoting the need for, and ability of, pharmacists to provide clinically and culturally safe services. She shows leadership, promoting excellence in service provision and supporting individual pharmacists to develop their clinical career pathways. Jo is committed, dedicated, ambitious, scholarly and resilient, along with more important qualities: *Manaakitanga*, her innate ability to show respect, generosity and care; and *Aroha*, demonstrating genuine concern, compassion and empathy for others.

We must therefore celebrate Jo Hikaka for her significant contribution to clinical pharmacy in Aotearoa New Zealand as the *Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand's Pharmacist of the Year 2019*.