

DESIGN:**WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?****Noel Waite**

When Luke Wood approached me about the idea for a New Zealand journal designed to initiate critical debate about graphic design, I was excited by the opportunities such a journal might provide. My historical research into 19th- and 20th-century print and book cultures in New Zealand made me very aware that the history of New Zealand's design culture was largely unpublished. I suggested a companionable peer-reviewed academic journal might be a better option to disseminate research, but Luke and fellow editor Jonty chose to confront the lack of critical debate about New Zealand design practice more directly through the critical practices of The National Grid. We agreed about the problem, and with hindsight over the last 6 issues, Luke & Jonty were right about the design solution of a critical, constructive and creative practice journal. I've thoroughly enjoyed being a contributor to this designerly power network.

However, after corresponding with Luke across 2 years & 2 nations and reading Christopher Thompson's excellent essay, I'd like to repitch my idea that TNG includes ONE research-led article in each future issue – but only if it adds to or enriches the existing and future contributors' critical practices, just as Christopher's essay responded to one of the issues that initiated the publication of The National Grid. To do this we need 2 more North Island & 2 international editorial members to give us sustaining national & international peer review, each for a term of 2 years. We are committed to design as a craft practice, profession and 21st-century interdiscipline, but the focus for The National Grid would remain the same: to ensure the sustainment of histories, cultures and futures of New Zealand graphic and communication design in the global village.

Finally, as a member of the editorial board of an-ti-po-des, the first trans-national design research journal co-designed in New Zealand, I will also endeavour to ensure New Zealand design cultures are an active part of a global design research community, and welcome everyone on board our design waka.

Dr Noel Waite
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Design | Te Toki a Rata
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9 April 2011

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Poster promoting Scottish settlement in Dunedin, 1839, displayed at Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum, Glasgow.

Kelvingrove opened on 2 May 1901, and was a major part of the Glasgow International Exhibition.