



The New Zealand Society of Forensic Odontology (NZSFO) was formed in June 1984 by a group of dedicated dentists and specialist dentists, mainly as a result of the Mount Erebus Disaster involving an Air New Zealand aircraft in Antarctica, in 1979. Following this very unique and extremely difficult recovery operation in the Antarctic region, the need for a dedicated dental society with members to undertake forensic dental procedures and identification practices, was realized.

Today the NZSFO membership consists of dentists and dental specialists, complemented by a good number of associate members including pathologists, DSAs, dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental technicians and coroners. An elected executive oversees the general activities of the Society and around the country Regional Coordinators provide the police and coroners with local points of contact, facilitating smooth access to dental forensic experts.

The NZSFO meets annually (usually in early May) in the capital city, Wellington, for a two day conference and annual general meeting. On the second day, the Society conducts a unique regional “round-up” that offers the Regional Coordinators an opportunity to present all the cases for the year from around New Zealand for discussion, education and constructive criticism.

In 2009 the NZSFO celebrated its 25th jubilee year with a larger conference and invited well known international forensic specialist Dr David Sweet from Vancouver, Canada, as principal speaker. The theme for the meeting was DVI and the future of forensic dentistry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nearly 100 delegates from Australia and the Asia-Pacific region attended. The large Australian contingent contributed to the international mix of the meeting and some of their delegates also contributed to the speaking and workshop programme. Most importantly it reinforced the close bond between the countries and our Societies that will develop further as this century progresses.

The NZSFO works in close association with the NZ Police and Forensic Pathologists throughout New Zealand. While undertaking forensic dental work in New Zealand the NZSFO has been involved in DVI deployments overseas in Thailand following the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami and in Victoria Australia, following the Victoria fires of 2009.

The NZSFO will continue to expand its role in the Asia-Pacific region and develop stronger relationships with forensic and Police agencies both in New Zealand and throughout the world.

The NZSFO has a dedicated website for further information at [www.nzsfo.org.nz](http://www.nzsfo.org.nz)

**Dr David M. Antunovic Secretary/Treasurer NZSFO**