

ROGER Over And Out

Murray Horton

I must sadly announce the end of the Roger Award. The 2016 Roger was the last one and the April 2017 gathering in Auckland was the last Roger Award event. Why? Rest assured that it wasn't because transnational corporations (TNCs) have started behaving better. Regrettably, that is not the case. No, the organisers (the Committees of CAFCA and the former GATT Watchdog) made the decision to end it because, basically, it had had its day and run out of steam.

In recent years we had received a smaller and smaller number of nominations and were having to research and write more and more of them ourselves. That small Auckland event which attracted no mainstream media coverage confirmed for us that we had made the right decision. It was time to get out while the going was still good. The Roger Award had been a fantastic weapon in CAFCA's armoury to use against the TNCs and had a real impact throughout its nearly 20 years of existence (the first Roger Award was for 1997).

It had an impact both in terms of very regular mainstream media coverage, sometimes extensive; we know that it definitely impacted on its targets (because some of them bit like sharks); we never had any trouble attracting very good judges, some of them very high profile indeed. The quality of the research, both in the nominations and the *Judges' Reports*, was extremely high. Taken all together, it comprises a fantastic resource, which can be accessed at <http://canterbury.cyberplace.co.nz/community/CAFCA/roger.html>.

And it is a resource which continues to be used – twice in the past 12 months I have been contacted by people who had either found or were seeking material from our Roger Award treasure trove (coincidentally, both inquirers were after stuff on the same TNC, but from different years). So, the Roger Award is no more. But, my God, it was a lot of fun while it lasted. Serious fun; fun that delivered a well-deserved kick up the arse to the TNCs and their Kiwi collaborators.

The hideous trophy itself, inside its specially built travel case, is back in our garage (which serves as a props museum for both CAFCA and the Anti-Bases Campaign). The company that engraved the winner's name on the plaque every year is walking distance from home and I pass their premises every day on my walk to our local café – so I simply called in recently to break the news to them that we no longer require their services. They took it in their stride, although they said they'd miss finding out, in advance of anyone else, who each year's winner was. But I don't think the loss of our annual one-line job will threaten their profit margin.