



About us

Advance the public interest in the provision of Assistive Technology, that contributes and supports New Zealanders through funding and promotion.

To give the Assistive Technology industry a voice.

To improve the quality of equipment provision and develop alliances with all industry stakeholders.



this issue

ATSNZ Disability Expo 2024 **P.1**

Therapeutic Products Act **P.2**

Ministry for Disabled People **P.3**

Upcoming events **P.4**

ATSNZ Disability Expo 2024

The planning for ATSNZ Disability Expo 2024 is already in full swing. The prospectus for the Auckland expo (6 & 7 November) was sent out to ATSNZ members on 30 January and to other potential exhibitors on 6 February. We shared our excitement about hosting a second expo this year in Christchurch (20 & 21 November), by sending the prospectus out to ATSNZ members on 27 February. The initial uptake has been excellent, and bookings have been rolling in.

We strongly encourage early decision making, while bookings are only open for ATSNZ members. Next week we'll be sending the prospectus out to others who may be interested.

The Due Drop Centre is a great venue for Auckland. So we went searching for a venue in Christchurch, not too large, that would meet our high standards. Phoebe Mascull from Medifab was able to view the options and recommended the Air Force Museum for our inaugural Christchurch expo. We think that the museum will add a level of interest to visitors in attending our expo.

We are taking the full offering we provide at our Auckland expo to Christchurch. Feedback from the sector encourages us to take a leap of faith and bring the full offering to our second location. Having the 2 days increases opportunities for the relevant audience to attend and we see this reflected in our numbers attending our Auckland expo..

The offerings that set us apart from other relevant industry expos in Auckland and Christchurch are:

- the quality seminar programme,
- the 5-minute product promotion stage,
- the 'have a go area',
- the opportunity for marketing products and services through the monthly newsletter,
- informative data gathering on attendees,
- the networking drinks & nibbles,
- a professional event management team,
- the café area in the main hall

We host a networking event for all exhibitors and invite representatives from funders to attend. With a new government in place, invitations will also go to ministers and party spokespersons with responsibilities for health, disability issues and regulation. Do come and join us!

Pharmac Review

There is ongoing work in relation to the Pharmac Review that has been reported on, in the past few years.

Pharmac are developing the new processes that will be used to make changes to the Hospital Medical Devices List.

These include how:

- changes will be received and tracked
- requests will be triaged, progressed, and implemented
- to get timely and equitable advice
- to rank investment choices and use health technology assessments
- to make funding decisions
- to publish accessible information.

MTANZ has been discussing HTA for over 10 years with Pharmac.

Early discussion with the current government and the new person responsible for Medical Devices within Pharmac, Catherine Epps indicates that there may soon be progress made in adopting appropriate models.

“Our decision-making process will be informed by internationally recognised health technology assessment processes, expert advice, and our Factors for Consideration.

We will need input into our decision making, so we understand the full cost and value of a potential change.” – Pharmac.



Where are we heading with the Therapeutic Products Act 2023?

An overview from the media and what we've learned from other industry organizations.

It may feel like a distant memory, but last year ATSNZ spent considerable time, in collaboration with 7 relevant industry organizations, on the Therapeutic Products Bill. The bill was rushed through a few months before the general elections and became the Therapeutic Products Act on 26 July 2023.

The 54th government of New Zealand, a coalition between National, Act and New Zealand First have announced that the TPA will be repealed in the first 100 days of parliament.

The Minister for Health, Shane Reti, has delegated the responsibility for the technical lead on this to Casey Costello (Associate Health Minister), with David Seymour (Associate Health Minister) informing and providing an overview of the TPA.

Although the commencement of the repeal is very soon, we should expect a long lead time, while the relevant ministers are fleshing out what the plan is post repeal.

“The Therapeutic Products Act was not fit for purpose.”

Assisting David Seymour in areas of regulation, i.e. the TPA, Pae Ora and the Pharmac review is Act List MP Todd Stevenson who has firsthand experience in dealing with Pharmac.

There is an expectation amongst industry organizations that Natural Health Products and Digital Health will be removed from the legislation that will replace the TPA.

MTANZ have advised that they recommend an improved WAND System in pace of the TPA, but Medicines and Medical Devices will likely both be covered in the new legislation.

With the repeal of the TPA, regulation will revert to the 1981 Medicines Act while a new piece of legislation is being developed.

There is a bit of pushback from other political parties and some patient organizations towards the repeal, but most of the industry is supportive.

The following is extracted from the Hansard report relating to questions asked on 27 February 2024 of Hon Casey Costello:

“Appropriate regulation of medicines and medical devices is vital to ensure that these products do what they claim, are high quality, and that product approval pathways do not make them inaccessible or unaffordable.”

“I have received advice that implementing the changes required to meet the commencement date would've been extremely challenging. This poses the real possibility of poor outcomes for New Zealanders.”

“The Government has an opportunity to replace the Therapeutic Products Act with legislation that protects consumers without creating unnecessary red tape on industry. We know that communities, the health sector, and industry have concerns, and we intend to listen to those concerns as we develop new proposals.”



Ministry for Disabled People-Whaikaha

Eight people have recently been appointed to the Transformation Management board to sit alongside Chief Executive Paula Tesoriero and two Whaikaha executives.

The community members are:

- Barry De Geest
- Delia Nolan
- Kellie McGrath
- Pati Umaga
- Peter Allan
- Ray King
- Renata Kotua
- Robbie Francis Watene

The Transformation Management Board will initially focus on building the infrastructure needed to transform the disability support system. That will include improving data and insights to guide investments and ensuring disabled people's leadership in communities. The board will meet five times a year.

On 9 February there was a signing of a new formal agreement between Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People and the National Enabling Good Lives Leadership Group (NEGL). We look forward to seeing what this brings to the sector.

Whaikaha Chief Executive Paula Tesoriero says formalising an agreement with the National Enabling Good Lives Leadership Group sets the foundation for a lasting and meaningful relationship as Whaikaha begins to transform the disability support system.

National Enabling Good Lives Leadership Group chair Jade Farrar says the group has focused on partnering for tangible, positive change since its formation in 2013 and is pleased to formalise a collaborative approach with Whaikaha.

EYE ON IT Current Industry Trends

The Ministry for Disabled People/Whaikaha is capping EMS spend to the budget set for 23/24.

Repeal of the Therapeutic Products Act 2023 pending.

Data from the latest New Zealand Health Survey from the Ministry of Health includes child disability statistics for the first time.

New Members Link Assistive

We welcome to Link Assistive as our newest member.

Link Assistive New Zealand Ltd was founded in February 2024. "With a strong reputation in Australia, we hope we can also make a difference for individuals in need of Assistive Technologies in New Zealand. We provide product demonstrations, training for specific software programs (e.g. TD Snap), and ongoing technical support for equipment purchased through us. This training can assist you in working with treating health professionals to support student goals."



Member Focus

ATSNZ Committee

In this section of the newsletter, we will focus on new developments that our members wish to share with the rest of ATSNZ.

It can focus on a new product, new event, new relationship, new initiatives, or anything else that's newsworthy.

It will help us to get to know each other and what's happening around us.

For this issue we'll introduce our committee to you:

- Andrew Short (chair) – Permobil
- Phoebe Mascull (secretary) – Medifab
- Aaron Morgan (treasurer) – Medix21
- Jeremy Glazier – Able Axxess
- Chris Ross – WS Medical
- Wayne Turner – Allied Medical
- Levi Murray – Cubro

The committee is currently finalizing the Strategic Plan for ATSNZ and we'll update you on this in the next issue and share it via email and on the website in the interim.



Professional Development

Wheelchair and Disability Equipment Technician training can be done online via <https://myskill.co.nz>.

It provides foundational training across a range of wheelchair and disability equipment which can be supplemented by manufacturer specific training – a great way to get technicians upskilled and working independently whilst learning at their own pace.

Upcoming Events

- **ATSA Independent Living Expos - Adelaide**
6-7 March 2024 – Adelaide Showground
- **ATSA Independent Living Expos - Sydney**
22-23 May 2024 – Sydney Showground
- **ATSA Independent Living Expos - Brisbane**
29-30 May 2024 – Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre
- **Healthtech Week 2024 – MTANZ Conference**
24 - 25 June 2024 - The Pullman Hotel, Auckland.
- **ATSNZ Disability Expo - Auckland.**
6-7 November – Due Drop Events Centre, Manukau.
- **ATSNZ Disability Expo - Christchurch.**
20-21 November – Airforce Museum, Christchurch.