



## 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.



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## Whaikaha

On 14 August the minister for Disability Issues, Louise Upston, delivered a bombshell on the fate of the Ministry for Disabled People-Whaikaha, following the critical review of the young ministry. The core function of administering Disability Support Services is to be moved to the Ministry of Social Development, where the minister believes that control of spend will be better facilitated.

### CEO Paula Tesoriero's response to the shift.



Paula states that the transition of the Disability Support Services into the Ministry of Social Development brings with it the additional resources that a large agency can offer.

She welcomes the announcement to establish a powered up stand-alone agency where they have the opportunity to drive real change for the more than one million disabled people in New Zealand.

The soon to be stand-alone Ministry will lead strategic policy, be a source of government information and advisory, system level monitoring, and work to bring about societal change for disabled people. They will focus on removing the many barriers experienced by disabled people.

### Disability Rights Commissioner responds.

Prudence Walker, DRC, is concerned by the return to placing disability support services within an agency that is not specifically designed to meet the needs of disabled people. She states that they had begun to move beyond this approach, to one that is specifically designed for and respects the right to dignity and participation of disabled people. She observes that this is being discarded before Whaikaha had the chance to demonstrate enduring success.

### Sir Maarten Wevers rationale for the shift.

The review panel led by Sir Maarten Wevers stated that the ministry, as it has been established, lacks many of the public sector disciplines and operational practices seen in other government agencies. They perceive that it is difficult to gain a clear understanding of how well disabled people are being supported through providers the ministry has contracted. They state that the monitoring of contracts and reporting of performance is inadequate, and that risk identification and management, need to be strengthened.

## Equipment and Modification Services

In our most recent conversations with the funding providers EnableNZ and Accessable it has been made abundantly clear that the EMS budget for 24/25 will be tightly managed and there will be no increase above the 23.24 budget to account for increased demand for these services, nor the cost increases experienced by suppliers and providers alike.

Providers are currently managing the capped budget in several ways including:

- Forecasting previous commitments (e.g., in flight purchase orders and trials).
- Prioritising refurbishment and reissue activity to increase the rate of reissue instead of new purchases.
- Managing new equipment purchases by having a daily and monthly cap (which will be adjusted regularly to ensure balance across the programme as a whole).
- Operating a waitlist for equipment.
- Working with Assessors to encourage value for money decisions.

The waitlist for equipment is steadily growing as demand continues to emerge but the funds available are inadequate to service the growing demand.

ATSNZ has prepared a statement supporting an increase of the EMS budget within the Disability Support Services, by 15-20 MLN. The 24/25 budget represents a 20% decrease in

## Disability Advocate

Dr Huhana Hickey, a Māori lawyer and disability advocate, said there were some good elements in the changes in terms of making the policy element stronger, but transferring the funding over was a worry. They knew it was going to be a problem because it's always been underfunded.

Hickey/s concerns are round ensuring that Māori were a part of making decisions and that Māori and Pasifika groups that had become more engaged may now be lost.

## Words of NZDSN's Peter Reynolds

"The disability community fought long and hard to have a Ministry focused on the needs of disabled people with control of its own budget. Whaikaha is not perfect, but it is a big step in the right direction. Now, the Government is taking us back to the days of the Office for Disability Issues, making Whaikaha a toothless 'advisory' agency that will have no budget for helping disabled people."

"If the Government refuses to fund the real cost of providing disability support, it will find that more and more support providers have to stop taking on new clients, especially those with complex needs, or shut their doors entirely. That doesn't make the cost go away – it just puts it on to disabled people, their families and the health system instead.

## Member Focus – NZARC, our newest member



NZARC Health Limited is a healthcare focused company based in New Zealand.

They specialize in sourcing, supply chain and digital health care solutions and services, with a particular focus on facilitating trade between China and New Zealand and developing global relationships.

Their mission is to provide comprehensive, one-stop smart solutions for companies, leveraging digital healthcare innovations and advanced technologies to optimize processes, enhance efficiency, and improve customers outcomes.

They offer a comprehensive suite of services and dedicated support to the community.



# ATSNZ Strategic Plan

## Our Purpose

A trusted advocate delivering value to the Assistive Technology sector and disabled people of New Zealand.

## Our Vision

A clear pathway to provide Assistive Technology to New Zealanders.

### Our strategic objectives – our three focuses:

#### Advocate and Represent Members

- Interpret and streamline funder and government policies to effectively support members.
- Prioritise involvement with Whaikaha and the roll out of Enabling Good Lives nationally.
- Lead sector improvements by addressing major industry challenges, prioritising the overhaul of the trial process.
- Collaborate with key industry organisations to support their initiatives and ensure that ATSNZ's involvement in significant discussions and projects impacting our members and stakeholders.

#### Promote Sector Improvements

- Monitor and evaluate the trial process to ensure consistent solutions across funders, that is both scalable and sustainable for assessors, clinicians, therapists and users.
- Share best practice across the sector to remove roadblocks and challenges.
- Rebate information prior to contract renewal for members.

#### Provide Leadership in AT Education

- Improve AT outcomes through ongoing training, ethical business practices and product standard training.
- Annual ATSNZ Expo in expanded geographic locations.
- Website development – members only online portal including up to date funder information.
- ATSNZ member only events either side of the show (online or face-to-face)

Our ATSNZ committee works on establishing our strategic plan, focusing on what is important to our members. Further detail in terms of targeted activities is included in the document that has already been circulated amongst members and is also available on the members only part of the ATSNZ website. Feedback on our approach is always welcome.

## Upcoming events

- The Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Conference, Melbourne, 27 August
- Rehacare, 25-28 September, Dusseldorf, Germany.
- Home Care & Rehabilitation Exhibition, 2-4 October, Tokyo, Japan.
- ATSNZ Disability Expo Auckland, 6-7 November, Due Drop Events Centre, Manukau, Auckland.
- Australian Assistive Technology Conference, 6-8 November Goldcoast.
- ATSNZ Disability Expo Christchurch. 20-21 November, Airforce Museum, Christchurch.

**Auckland | 6-7 November**

Due Drop Event Centre,  
Manukau, Auckland

**Christchurch | 20-21 November**

AirForce Museum of New Zealand,  
Wigram, Christchurch



## ATSNZ Disability Expos

Click here  
to find

### **Auckland**

Since 2019 ATSNZ has been hosting an annual Disability Expo in Auckland. The inaugural event was held at the Ellerslie Convention Centre and was a one-day event. Although it was a successful event the need for a better venue was felt and the opportunity to expand to a two-day event presented was pursued, shifting to the Due Drop Event Centre in Manukau.

This year the ATSNZ Disability will return to Auckland for the fifth time and the event is gearing up to be another highlight in the ATSNZ calendar.

We have 49 exhibitors signed up to take part and expect that more will join us. The main hall is already full, and we've expanded into the annexe where the conference rooms are, to create more opportunity for additional exhibitors.

We have two conference rooms available for our seminar sessions. The call for abstracts closed at the end of July and the programme committee are in the process of selecting the successful candidates for both the expos.



### **Christchurch**

This year we will also be hosting an expo in Christchurch at the Airforce Museum of New Zealand. This venue is new for us, and it looks very promising.



We have 29 exhibitors signed up to take part and there is still room and time for others to join this inaugural expo for Christchurch.

We have been receiving good feedback from the southern based allied health professionals that this event will attract an audience from further afield than Christchurch.

We will also have two conference rooms in Christchurch as we have had a great offering of quality presentations for our attendees to enjoy.

Please help spread the word by inviting your customers and contacts to attend!