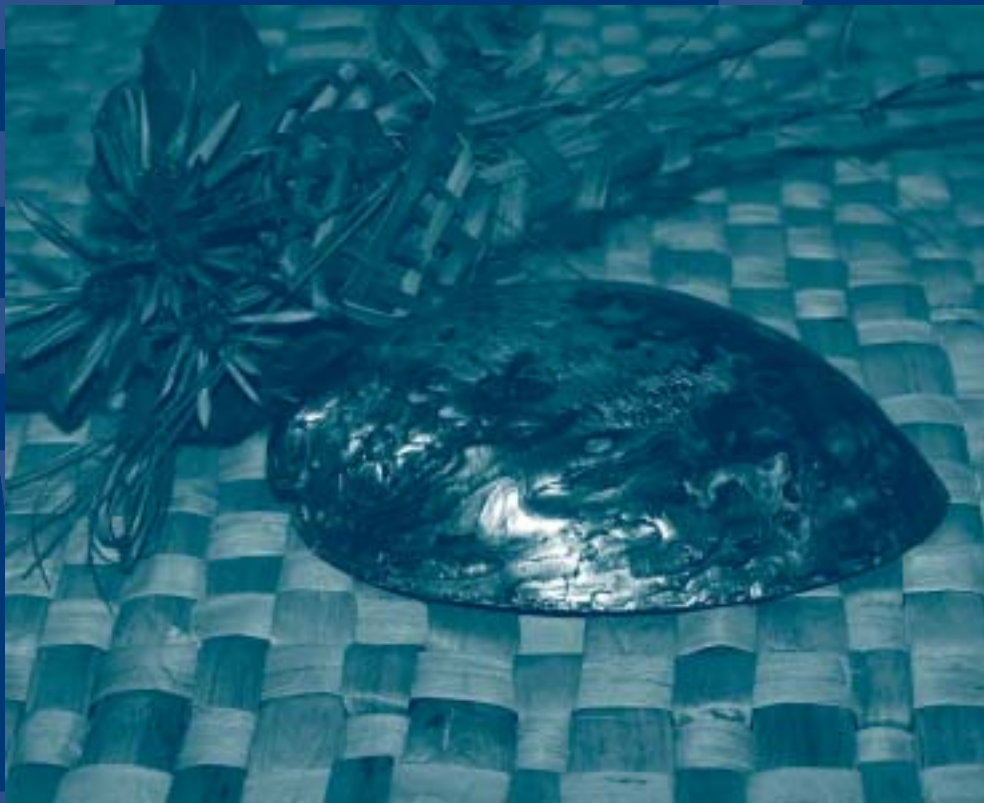


# Enable *newZ*

Newsletter of Enable New Zealand

Issue Eleven December 2003



[www.enable.co.nz](http://www.enable.co.nz)

## *A word from Heather*



I was looking at a CD the other day – the new one out with all the best Christmas Carols for the last few decades, but decided if I was going to take a trip down memory lane I would rather take it with some classic Led Zeppelin and bought the old Stairway to Heaven album instead. So, just like my CD purchasing behaviour, my warm up to Christmas is continually distracted by other things and I'll be really pleased when the 25<sup>th</sup> December rolls around and I can have a day off and peacefully reflect on the real meaning of Christmas.

Besides, there is still something else to get excited about before Christmas. "International Day of Disabled Persons" on 3<sup>rd</sup> December is a really important milestone in the year. Enable New Zealand strongly supports the aspirations of disabled people and demonstrates our support with a series of articles in a centre feature in this edition of the Enable Newz.

In the meantime, you guessed it ... we have been really busy.

With David Guest's departure, we decided to make one Manager responsible for both the Enable Information team and the Policy and Professional Advisory team. This will allow us to gain greater interplay between the functions of the two teams and therefore develop and deliver more cohesive integrated information and advisory services. Therefore, I am pleased to announce that Liz Goldie is now managing both teams assisted by Sarah Hamlin, as the Team Leader to both teams (previously our professional advisor). We have been recruiting for another Professional Advisor to join this team and look forward to being able to announce an appointment early in the New Year. This role is a really important one for Enable New Zealand, but also an integral link between Specialised Assessors, Enable New Zealand and the Disability Service Directorate of the Ministry of Health.

Other recent or impending staff changes include the permanent departure of Kelly Retter (she is heading off to Wanganui) and the temporary departure of Pauline Fergusson (who is heading off to become a mum) from Supportlinks. They are being replaced by Peter Grey and Myree Ahpene respectively. We wish Kelly and Pauline well and welcome Peter and Myree to their new roles with us.

ACC Assessors and Case Managers will also notice a change, as Chalyce Koschel moves from the Enable Rehabilitation team into the Enable New Zealand Administration team to become the Administration Co-ordinator for Enable New Zealand. So by the New Year we will have recruited someone else into the Enable Rehabilitation team.

Some of you may also have heard rumours that Enable New Zealand is intending to establish a wheelchair and seating store in Hamilton. It is true. In the New Year we will develop a small facility there. Over the next two years we will liaise closely with Wheelchair Solutions to see how it goes having a wheelchair and seating store in the Waikato.

Well, I have tried to avoid all the clichés that are bandied around at this time of the year. But there is no other way to say it.... I wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and hope that everyone has the opportunity for a peaceful break before celebrating the arrival of 2004.

Warm festive wishes



## Christmas Hours

Enable New Zealand will continue to operate over the Christmas and New Year period.

Our hours of operation will be:

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2003 close at 4:00pm

Closed Christmas Day and Boxing Day

9:00am until 4:00pm on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> , Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> and

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003

Closed Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> and Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2004

Usual business hours resume from Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2004

We sincerely hope you have a safe and relaxing holiday and we look forward to working with you in the New Year.

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## *Kaupapa Maori*

One of the key responsibilities for this service is to achieve a closer working relationship with iwi and Maori health and disability providers. Attendance at a number of hui, is seen as a positive move toward improving the profile of Enable New Zealand among Maori.

Since September we have attended hui in Whakatane, Wainuiomata, Masterton, Christchurch as well as local iwi meetings in Manawatu, Horowhenua and Tararua. The primary reason for these meetings is to forge links with Iwi, providers, District Health Boards and other key stakeholders.

Objective 11 of the New Zealand Disability Strategy mandates the further development of disability support services provided by Maori, for Maori. The objective also encourages the training of a workforce of Maori disability professionals. A Maori workforce strategy specific to Enable New Zealand is currently in development.

Constructive contact has been made with the Maori Development Manager of the Disability Services Directorate (MoH) as we explore mutually beneficial opportunities to work together. This could include undertaking research on disability issues for Maori, establishing consumer Focus Groups for disabled Maori and their whanau, and the dissemination of disability sector information to Maori.

In line with the recommendations made in the cultural competency review of Enable New Zealand, a Maori staff group - Te Roopu Kaimahi Maori, has recently been established. This group will have an immediate role in supporting Maori staff and Enable New Zealand's responsiveness to Maori. Te Roopu Kaimahi Maori eventual intention is to provide assistance in the review of strategic options and supplement advice sought on Maori issues. Under the guidance of the Kaupapa Maori Manager, an ongoing work plan is currently being developed.

## *England – Here I come*

There doesn't seem to be many opportunities "over and above" in health, but I was fortunate to find myself being asked to travel to England to evaluate a driving assessment rig designed in England and manufactured in Italy. (Would I need to visit Italy as well?)



The Disability Services Directorate of the Ministry of Health approached Enable New Zealand requesting a feasibility study to explore the development of a standardised process for driving assessment for New Zealand. Their request had been partly instigated by a visit from the England designers of a Static Assessment Rig and sought to identify if this tool was a suitable option for New Zealand. The Ministry of Health will be meeting with Driving Assessors to discuss the outcomes of this study.

Driver assessment in England has similarities to New Zealand, but also some interesting differences. Due to a shortage of occupational therapists, Driving Instructors conduct assessments at some of the Mobility Centres. Training is available, but not compulsory for all driving assessors. Many Mobility Centres in England are well supported by the motor industry, including the supply of loaned vehicles for on road assessment. The types of modifications available are greater than I've seen in New Zealand. Some centres even have private road circuits to enable on road assessment away from the public.

On the whole, I was welcomed at all the centres I visited (and even offered jobs at a couple). I found the British Rail and tube system a great means of transport. Shopping and eating was expensive especially when you factored in the exchange rate conversion.

And no, unfortunately, I didn't get to go to Italy!

*Christine West, Manager IT  
Enable New Zealand*



## Update

From the 1st October 2003 each District Health Board became responsible for the planning and funding of aged disability services. Aged disability support services is the care provided to people

over 65 years of age. The Ministry of Health will continue to plan and fund disability care provided to people under 65.

The Aim (ageing in midcentral) Sector Reference Group is a group of community representatives working with the MidCentral District Health Board to finalise a public consultation document on the *Health and Wellbeing of Older People – A Strategic Direction 2004 – 2010*. This is MidCentral District Health Board's response to the Ministry of Health's requirement to implement the Health of Older People Strategy in this region.

The Aim group has been meeting since May 2003 and has undertaken a public survey and work with district representatives from Tararua, Horowhenua/Otaki, Feilding and Palmerston North City. Identifying the priorities for change in the breadth of services that assist older people to live well and with choices in their community has been the primary focus of work to date.

Emerging priorities include transport, access to health services, information, reducing isolation and allowing people to stay in the community (home) of their choice. People have also reported services that are working well for them, including district nursing, Supportlinks, home help, subsidised transport vouchers and Age Concern to name a few.

The Aim group has developed a range of options for change, which include the co-location of various services so that people can access them in one trip, more support so people are not so isolated, and a high emphasis on information being taken to the older person. Respect and choice for the older person are key themes emerging from this work.

Residents of the Midcentral region can have their say on the identified options during the public consultation process to be held in February / March 2004. More information on the consultation meeting dates will be advertised closer to the time in local Midcentral region newspapers. A copy of this strategic document will be available from January 2004.



## Supportlinks

It has been both a busy and productive year for Supportlinks that has seen a number of changes and new initiatives. The significant progress we have seen achieved this year bears testimony to the hard work and effort of our dedicated staff.

A particular highlight among our achievements in 2003 has included the facilitation of the Respite Steering Committee. This Committee has:

- resulted in significantly increased inter-agency collaboration
- contributed to the opening of new respite facilities for children and young people with high and complex support needs
- developed Best Practice Guidelines for Family Support
- supported the development of a new resource kit for carers of children and young people with disability-related support needs.

Supportlinks have been involved in the Aim (ageing in midcentral) Sector Reference Group, looking at new strategies and initiatives to support our ageing population in the Midcentral region. Enable New Zealand will continue to lead this work through the public consultation phase on behalf of the MidCentral District Health Board.

Another local initiative has seen Supportlinks establish a liaison role at Palmerston North Hospital to assist with improving service delivery/discharge planning for clients. This role has been filled by Val Morgan, one of Supportlinks' existing co-ordinators.

Earlier this year the Ministry of Health initiated a national review of all Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination agencies. The final report yielded some extremely pleasing results for us, highlighting our strengths and the progress we have made.

Supportlinks continues to work with the Ministry of Health to complete a full review of all under 65 clients who reside in aged care facilities, and to identify age-appropriate service needs.

As we look toward 2004, Supportlinks will continue to work with the MidCentral District Health Board to improve and increase the range of services for older clients in this region. Ongoing work with the Ministry of Health and other agencies will see the development of an increasing range of services for clients under 65 years of age. The New Year will also see us further develop our relationship with local iwi so that services are more available and accessible for Maori.

## *Library*

Hi, my name is Llyvonne. I work in Enable Information and am responsible for the Library. Recently I attended the annual LIANZA (Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa) conference in Nelson. The LIANZA conference is one of the largest in New Zealand and an opportunity for librarians nationwide to meet and share information, network, find out about the latest innovations in the library world and listen to international and local speakers. The conference was a great way to find out what is available to improve our services.

For me, the conference was about ideas as I am always looking for ways to promote the Enable New Zealand library service.

In her address, Penny Carnaby, the National Librarian, highlighted the need for collaboration, and I think this is especially applicable to our library. In my opinion collaboration is probably one of the best ways to spread the word about the library service that we offer, especially to those who have not heard of our service before. This can be through a variety of ways. On a larger scale, this can be collaborating with other libraries and organisations to help people access our resources, and working with other organisations to increase the accessibility of our resources. On a smaller scale, collaboration involves spreading the word on an individual basis that the library is here to serve the information needs of people searching for disability information.

Being one of the few disability libraries that loan material nationwide, we are in a unique position to provide a service that can be accessed by anyone, no matter where they live in New Zealand. We look forward to further increasing our library collection and services in the coming year.

If you would like further information about the library services offered by Enable New Zealand, or would like to request books, videos or journal articles, please contact us on:

CallFree: 0800 17 1981

Email: [info@enable.co.nz](mailto:info@enable.co.nz)

Requests for library resources can also be made online at [www.weka.net.nz](http://www.weka.net.nz) or [www.enable.co.nz](http://www.enable.co.nz)

# International Day of Disabled Persons 2003 – 3rd December

## A Voice of our Own



In 1993 the United Nations declared the 3<sup>rd</sup> December to be International Day of Disabled Persons. The International Day of Disabled Persons aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also promotes the benefits of ensuring

that disabled people are integrated into every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

The theme for this year was “A Voice of our Own” and focused on giving a voice to the human experiences of disabled people. Disabled people and their organisations throughout New Zealand (and internationally) organised activities and events that promoted the many talents and skills within our communities, and reinforced that it is essential that disabled people be involved in any discussions related to disability. It is only by ensuring that disabled people are actively involved at all levels of society, expressing our thoughts and ideas that we can begin to bring about real social change.

The voice of persons with disabilities is seldom heard in the mainstream media. When disabled person are portrayed, they are either stereotyped or presented as an inspiration for “overcoming” a disability. This special feature for Enable NewZ focuses on issues and experiences of disability from the viewpoint of disabled people.

## Tell it like it is

*“I am looking for someone just like me...”*

*Jean*

“Tell it like it is” a five week literacy programme developed in the Manawatu region for women with disabilities has recently been completed. Held every Friday at the Learning Shop in Palmerston North a group of local women have been meeting to write and to share their writing and company.

This programme was organised by tutors, Mary-Lynn Boyes, a Women’s Literacy Tutor from Te Whare Akonga -The Open Learning Centre and Tracey Dick a part time social worker and part time co-ordinator of The Learning Shop.

*“I’m able  
And disabled  
Arranged  
And re-arranged”*

*Maia*

*Jen and Me  
“Partnership  
Friendship  
Sharing abilities  
Sharing successes  
The good times, the bad times  
Abilities/disabilities  
That’s us, that is our friendship”*

*Trace*

According to Tracey the goal of this programme is for women to explore options for writing about their life experiences or an aspect of their life. For many of the women this was the first time where they had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences of living with disability and how this has impacted on their social and emotional well being.

For information on the next course due to start in the New Year, contact Tracey Dick on (06) 357 4882 or visit the Learning Shop, Cnr Rangitikei Street and The Square, Palmerston North.

## Are You With Us?

Who can remember the catchphrase of the health reforms of the early 90's: 'consumer empowerment'? I certainly can. Railing against 'provider capture', the then Minister of Health Jenny Shipley promised to make services accountable to consumers, to make services consumer driven and to empower people. People 'with disabilities' were promised a new deal.

A decade and several governments later, and we can look back at that period with some degree of cynicism. Leaving aside the impact of those health reforms in general and the argument (which we lost) about whether disability support services should go over to the health vote, we can attest to the fact that the period was characterized by a number of shortcomings – to say the least.

- In a competitive tendering environment, disability support services were fragmented, duplicated – and stakeholders took on an increasingly patch protectionist stance.
- Organisational continuity and knowledge were lost as people who knew the history and had built up expertise in the area were displaced.
- The process of consumer 'empowerment' was flawed, in that it relied on the very people who were the recipients of care to lobby on their own behalf, putting themselves at risk of service reprisal.

Some balance has been restored to the system in the last few years. The expertise and commitment of many who work in support agencies is being recognised once again, rather than being dismissed as 'provider capture'. More importantly, the recognition of disabled people as potential and actual experts in the delivery of services is, thankfully, gaining traction. On the consumer side, the passage of the amended Human Rights Act and the establishment of the Health and Disability Commissioner have boosted consumer rights. And – through the New Zealand Disability Strategy and Pathways to Inclusion document – the current Government has signalled its intention to help pave the way towards a fully inclusive society.

But, (and I'm reminded of the warning that everything after the 'but' is doo doo), there are still a number of flies – to carry on the analogy – in the ointment!

The problem with consumer 'empowerment' and its flipside, the opposition to 'provider capture', is that it locks in the notion of disabled people as permanent recipients of care. In other words, looked at it from that angle we can never be perceived as possible or actual participants in the delivery of services. We are always being done to.

Consumer involvement has also had its shortcomings. Firstly, it reproduces what I've observed above: the permanence of disabled people as recipients, never providers of services. Secondly it reduces advocacy to an individualised level, burdening the most vulnerable with the most essential task: changing systems. Such individualised advocacy denies the need for what I've heard described as 'issues wide' or 'systems-level' advocacy. A good example of this is seen when it comes to winning the right to accessible public transport. When the issue is reduced to the level of individual complaints, the disabled complainants are pitted against a transport operator that



*Mike Gourley is a broadcaster and educator from Wellington. He is national president of DPA and earlier this year was appointed to the Enable New Zealand Governance Group.*

has, more often than not, huge organisational and financial resources to draw on. The resulting defeat, qualified or not, is inevitable. A better strategy is to mobilize the collective power of disabled people, through organisations like DPA, and our allies to win the right to accessible public transport – whether that's achieved by government action or the adoption of a national transport strategy, or a mix of both.

A more fundamental problem with notions of consumer involvement is that it assumes our lives are defined by services. By that I don't just mean that those of us who rely on specific disability support services are so defined, which is true enough. What I'm getting at here is the assumption that our very identity as disabled people is determined by our role as consumers of services. Not true.

Of course, like most people I'm a consumer true enough – but of good coffee, wine, theatre, job opportunities, education, various health services and so on. From time to time I've had to avail myself of occupational or physiotherapist services thanks to my primary impairment – deformed upper limbs – and as a consequence some secondary impairments: overuse syndrome and arthritis. It is my potential or actual exclusion from any or all of the above that defines my identity as a disabled person. In other words disability isn't something that I have; it is the consequence of facilities, systems and processes being designed in ways that prevent me – because of my impairments – from benefiting from them.

So too for those who are reliant on a range of specific support services, whether that is home support, residential accommodation, job support, or whatever. When those support systems are inadequate, inappropriate or oppressive then they lead to the disablement of those who use them. Disabled people.

For all these reasons we need to move beyond ideas of consumer involvement to the notion of disabled people as leaders; as active participants in the design of systems and processes that impact on our lives, and as active commentators on all other aspects of policy and practice that affect our capacity to live well in our communities.

Objective 5 of the New Zealand Disability Strategy provides us with a central organizing tool. It talks of fostering disabled people as the leading voices in matters that concern us. We need to assert that objective incessantly and at every opportunity.

It is still being ignored as people continue to pursue consumer involvement at the expense of leadership. In the disability 'sector' we are often viewed as stakeholders, of equal weight alongside other stakeholders – usually provider agencies and staff. This view is not acceptable. It would certainly not be acceptable these days to have women's issues determined by men, or Maori issues determined by Pakeha. Both situations were true in the past, but have rightly been overturned.

Thankfully there are signs of change. The recent 'Nothing Special' supported independent living conference and launch of People First as an independent organisation of intellectually disabled people all point to the reality of disabled leadership capacity.

The challenge to non-disabled people and organisations is simple: are you with us?

*Mike Gourley*

## People First Goes Independent

The People First group, a self-advocacy group for people with intellectual disabilities, was officially launched as an independent national organisation on 16 October 2003 in Wellington. The formal launch function was attended by a number of dignitaries including the Minister for Disability Issues, Ruth Dyson.

People First groups are run by and for people with an intellectual disability. Members speak up for the rights of people with an intellectual disability. They advocate for good services, for people to be treated with respect, and to have the right to be included in communities. There are also People First organisations in Canada, Australia, United States and other countries.

People First New Zealand was initially established within the IHC in the 1980's. The IHC employed a number of staff to support People First within the organisation, and a number of staff, including Kris Stevenson from Palmerston North volunteered their time throughout the regions to support members to attend People First activities. Support with transport and continuing involvement from volunteers will still come from the IHC until People First becomes more established.

Under its new independent structure, People First has six regions throughout New Zealand. Michael Aldridge from Nelson is the National President, and Bernadette Moses is the Chief Executive Officer based in Wellington. The new structure means that all people with intellectual/learning disabilities can become members and that it is no longer limited to just addressing issues within the IHC organisation. Kris Stevenson explained that as a volunteer she now supports people to be able to understand their human rights and responsibilities as citizens of New Zealand society. Recent issues have included understanding proposals for the Compulsory Care Act, where she and other volunteers assisted People First to make a submission. However, there is still plenty of opportunity for social functions within People First. Lyle Whitehouse, the Central Region President is looking forward to the region's launch party on 24 November where they will celebrate this important move.

### The symbolism behind the People First logo

Butterflies go through many stages before they fly free: starting as larvae growing to be caterpillars, making cocoons, taking a long sleep and then breaking out of their cocoons to become butterflies. The People First logo is based on these stages. The symbol shows the freedom of the butterfly, after its protection within the cocoon for a long time. The logo shows the butterfly, having shed its cocoon of protection, ready to take the world, full of life and new experiences.

For further information about People First, visit their web site [www.peoplefirst.org.nz](http://www.peoplefirst.org.nz) or contact the national office at P.O. Box 9199, Marion Square, Wellington, Freephone 0800 20 60 70.



*Central Region President, Lyle Whitehouse, has been part of People First since it began in 1987.*



## *Policy and Professional Advice*

What a year 2003 has been for the Policy and Professional Advice team.

We achieved our main goal of introducing the new process for all housing modifications and applications funded through Enable New Zealand. This process was systematically introduced to various District Health Board regions across the Hamilton, Wellington and South localities of the Ministry of Health. The first meeting to discuss the changes was held with Specialised Assessors in Nelson on the 28<sup>th</sup> July, and the final meeting in New Plymouth on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

The response to the new process from those who attended the meetings, including Specialised Assessors and building contractors, has been extremely positive. The main change to the housing process has seen Enable New Zealand formulate agreements with a specific list of approved building contractors, with only those contractors now able to undertake housing modifications funded through Enable New Zealand. There are now nearly 170 registered building contractors undertaking housing modifications, covering the country from the Waikato District Health Board (DHB) to the Southland DHB.

Under the new housing modification process clients can expect to receive their housing modifications in a more timely and efficient manner, and Specialised Assessors are able to focus primarily on assessment issues where they have been involved in a project management role in the past. Specialised Assessors and approved building contractors have all received new manuals explaining roles and responsibilities, procedures and schedules for various modifications.

During the past year we have continued to develop relationships with health and disability sector groups and individuals, including attending and presenting at a range of national conferences. Nominations have been received for the three national advisory groups – adult, paediatric, and sensory, and two local advisory groups for the NASC service, Supportlinks.

The in-house work continues in developing a web based knowledge database that will become publicly accessible in 2004. Known as Funding Information & Decisions, this web site will be used to look up and ask questions concerning funding decisions, frequently asked questions, handy hints and general information that relate to Environmental Support Services funded through Enable New Zealand.

We continue to provide professional advice and input into applications to Enable Funding, and encourage Specialised Assessors to continue to contact the Funding Teams, Professional Advisors and Housing Advisors to discuss any issues and questions they may have regarding applications for funding.

The Policy and Professional Advice team will be available over the Christmas and New Year period for consultation.

## *Enable Information*

The last year has been one of collaboration, communication, and technology for Enable Information. These are exciting times as we adopt the technology that allows us to provide the disability information you seek electronically.

Since its launch at Parliament in April, Weka has taken off. ....

Members of the New Zealand Federation of Disability Information Centres (our partners in the Weka Model of Information provision), have taken advantage of “hands-on” training offered at Enable New Zealand and at their AGM mid year in Christchurch.

Visitors to the website are now at 4000 per month and still climbing. It is also not unusual for Weka to pop up in other parts of the world judging by the hits on the site.

There are numerous instances in which Weka benefited New Zealand families living with disability. Talking to these families their issues have been remarkably similar regardless of the type of disability, impairment, age, needs, wishes and funding. The top three issues are:

1. Obtaining information easily
2. Accessing services and
3. Communication between the many and various service providers who enter their lives and homes.



Gone are the days when Enable Information could only provide documents by post or fax. Increasingly you have requested that these be sent by email, and we have responded. Documents, images, abstracts, web pages and newsletters can now be sent by email, the only limit being the size of the file you or your organisation is prepared to accept. Our recommendation is that the file size is limited to 1 Mb or less – that's about 3 content rich pages, particularly for remote rural enquirers for whom downloading large files can take an age.

Another big achievement this year has been the introduction of emailing therapists with their confirmation advices. This is proving to be a more efficient way of communication and enables therapists to respond quickly if any alterations to their records are needed.

Thank you to the Professional Standards Monitors who responded to our request for updated address information regarding the therapists they monitor. The information we receive back is invaluable for keeping our records up to date.

Our community of Seating Wheelchairs Knowledge Centre website users is still growing. In the last year we have welcomed The Occupational Therapy School at Auckland University of Technology, Debra Hilborn, the Home Action Team in Christchurch, and the Independent Living Centre in Victoria, Australia. If you would like to know more about membership to this website contact Tracey Detrey at Enable Information on CallFree 0800 17 1981 or email: [tracey\\_detrey@enable.co.nz](mailto:tracey_detrey@enable.co.nz).

## *Show Your Ability 2004*

Preparation for New Zealand's premier specialised disability equipment display is once again underway. Show Your Ability travels throughout the North and South Islands visiting six main centres.

This event often attracts over 1200 visitors across New Zealand including: Disabled People, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Specialised Equipment Assessors, Visiting Neurodevelopmental Therapists, Specialised Housing Assessors, Needs Assessors, Service Coordinators, District Nurses, Rest Home Managers, ACC Case Managers...

Those interested in participating should contact Show Your Ability Organisers, 3am Ltd on (021) 667 254 alternately email [david\\_guest.3am@ihug.co.nz](mailto:david_guest.3am@ihug.co.nz)

Dates and venues for Show Your Ability 2004:

**2 March 2004**

**3 March 2004**

**4 March 2004**

**5 March 2004**

**8 March 2004**

**9 March 2004**

**ASB Stadium, Auckland**

**Mystery Creek Events Centre, Hamilton**

**Arena Manawatu, Palmerston North**

**Overseas Terminal, Wellington**

**Pioneer Stadium, Christchurch**

**Edgar Sports Stadium, Dunedin**

## Store Speak

It seems to be a continuing cry but “Where did the year go?” It hardly seems believable that it is nearly Christmas 2003.

Once again it has been a busy year. Particular highlights have been the completion and implementation of subcontractor contracts and registration process, and the introduction of a new Subcontractors Manual for the repair, maintenance and modification of equipment.

Changes to the Subcontractor Network has seen Enable New Zealand assume the repair and maintenance of equipment role where we have a local presence. This has been necessary in order to minimise the confusion that was occurring where Enable New Zealand was undertaking wheelchair repairs and modifications with all other equipment repair and modification being directed to another local Subcontractor.

Enable New Zealand conducted a Satisfaction Survey of those clients who recently had contact with their local equipment/wheelchair subcontractor. Questions ranged from the level of communication they received from the Subcontractor to the accessibility of the Subcontractor's premises. The results of this survey were extremely pleasing with the majority of respondents indicating that they felt the service they received was of a high standard and met their needs. Enable New Zealand will continue to work with Subcontractors and follow up where any suggestions for change may have been indicated.

This year has also seen us welcome the use of e-business transactions which are now in place and working well. This enhancement will see an improved level of service and enable us to provide a more cost effective and efficient service. We thank those suppliers who have worked hard with us to see this achieved.

Enable New Zealand recently initiated a tender process for preferred suppliers of Shower Commodes and various Common List Equipment items. Our thanks go to Gill Ellwood from Christchurch, Jane Wilson from Tauranga and Emma Grace from Palmerston North for their assistance on the evaluation panel.

We are pleased to welcome Kerry Evans to the Palmerston North Stores Team, Kerry fills the position left by Noel Dyer's transfer to the Equipment and Wheelchair Maintenance Team in Palmerston North. We have also had Owen Henwood join our Christchurch Team as a Wheelchair Technician. Owen has substantial experience in wheelchair repair, maintenance and modification.

## Store Facts

Did you know that in the past twelve months, Enable Stores has:

- ordered by direct supply process 21,500 items of equipment
- reissued 10,000 common list items of equipment
- issued 5,100 non common list items from stores
- and reissued 1,104 wheelchairs.

## *The Wheelchair and Seating Outreach Service*

The Wheelchair and Seating Outreach Service has continued to grow over the last few months. Setting up these new clinics has been exciting but one of the challenges has been to maintain the increased volume of paperwork.

Diane Hill, the Stores Administrator at Lower Hutt, manages the process of receiving and returning trial equipment. Specialised Assessors utilising this service quickly realised that Diane is keen to see the product returned after one week's trial. With seven clinics per month we have to commit to having trial equipment back to the suppliers on time to enable us to keep accessing further products for the subsequent clinics.

With our new computerised pressure mapping system we have been able to offer accurate technical support with cushion selection. This system allows us to select the best product to meet the person's seating needs.

During October, Enable New Zealand conducted two Wheelchair and Seating seminars in Christchurch. Information presented at these seminars identified how the Wheelchair and Seating Outreach Service has developed since the pilot began in July 2001. Owen Henwood (Wheelchair Technician, Christchurch) gave some advice about wheelchair prescription and I presented my interpretation of the progression of a range of backs available with regard to the amount of support that they offer. We were delighted to have 74 Specialised Assessors attend these sessions, and have been pleased to receive an increased number of referrals since.

Enable New Zealand is currently working on, establishing a resource that will offer advice on what client needs might be met by a range of readily available cushions. Once complete this resource will be available through the Seating and Wheelchair Knowledge Centre. As more cushions become available on the market we will be able to update this list, adding notes based on the feedback received from Specialised Assessors. If you would like to know more about membership to this website contact Tracey Detrey at Enable Information on CallFree 0800 17 1981 or email: [tracey\\_detrey@enable.co.nz](mailto:tracey_detrey@enable.co.nz).

## *Enable New Zealand in the Mainland*

There never seem to be enough hours in the day let alone days in the year. With the continued increase in work we seem to experience I guess we can look back at the year that has passed and say that we have had a very busy 'business as usual' year.

Significant changes to the housing modifications process saw considerable input from the team. This included resolving issues identified during the pilot phase, communicating the proposed changes to Specialised Housing Assessors, meeting with building contractors and putting in place a system that will improve the timely delivery of housing modifications to disabled people. Current strains on the building industry that have been with us for some time now and result in delays outside our control have been frustrating for all.

Equipment requests continue to arrive and whilst 99% of these fall into the run of the mill bucket, there have been some highlights during the year, for example, a request for "Any Roho cushion." Much debate raged over this one, given the different available sizes and models, including the option of sending a two cell key ring. We elected to contact the Specialised Assessor for clarification.

This year has also seen the formalisation of the relationship between Subcontractors and Enable New Zealand for the repair and modification of disability related equipment ensuring the delivery of a professional service. Technicians employed by Enable New Zealand and our regional Subcontractors have a valuable knowledge and understanding of equipment. We encourage Specialised Assessors to make use of this knowledge especially in situations where the equipment is for people with high needs. It can only add to ensuring a better outcome for the person.

Specialised Wheelchair and Seating Assessors will have been aware of the South Island pilot Wheelchair and Seating Clinic offered for the Christchurch area. The ongoing operation and value of this service has now been confirmed by the Ministry of Health including extending the service through the lower half of the North Island.

We continue to enjoy the contact we have with you. Keep inviting us to come and visit, and keep the phones ringing and requests coming in. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

## *Enable Rehabilitation*

Enable Rehabilitation has recently completed the process of re-tendering with ACC for the provision of this service. As part of this process we conducted a stock-take of the way in which we are able to deliver this service. All accounts received confirm that we are consistently meeting and exceeding the needs of both ACC and Assessors.

In the year ahead, we intend visiting North Island ACC Regional Offices to meet the Case Managers we work with and discuss further enhancements we can deliver to improve this service.

As always, our reissue store has a variety of equipment available for reissue. If Assessors have any need for “weird and wonderful” equipment, they should contact us before they search more widely.

To enable us to keep our records accurate and up-to-date we ask that you advise us of any change to your contact details. This will ensure that we will be able to keep you informed of any new changes to this service. You can provide any corrections or amendments to your details by emailing us on [acc@enable.co.nz](mailto:acc@enable.co.nz) or by contacting us on (06) 952 0091.

## *Enable Funding*

This has once again been an extremely busy year for the Enable Funding Team that has seen our involvement in the launch of the new Housing Process across the Hamilton, Wellington and South localities of the Ministry of Health. In line with this, building contractors have worked through a process of re-registration and new Specialised Housing Assessor Manuals have been developed and distributed. The opportunity to meet with Specialised Assessors to discuss the changes to the housing process and observe the process in action has proved a great opportunity for the Enable Funding Team to learn more about the assessment process.

Ongoing contact with equipment suppliers has also provided the chance to further develop the working relationships needed to ensure the process operates in an effective and efficient manner.

Enhancements to the databases Enable New Zealand manage in our day-to-day operation continue. These are required to provide the Ministry of Health with the accurate statistical data needed to plan future services. Specialised Assessors will now notice that the provision of client NHI details have become a mandatory requirement on funding application forms. This avoids the duplication of client data held on our systems.

Having successfully completed the update to the Housing Modification Process we will be turning our attention in the New Year to the Equipment Application Process, and the update of the Equipment Manual and associated application forms. In line with this we will shortly be seeking feedback regarding what is currently working well and the potential changes that could improve the Equipment Application Process.

## Our Services

### **Enable**information

Providing disability information and referral

### **Policy and Professional Advice**

Providing an external/assessment point of view and rationale into service areas

### **Enable**rehabilitation

Managing the issuing of rehabilitation equipment to ACC claimants

### **Enable**funding

Administering funding for equipment, housing modifications and vehicle purchase and modification

### **Enable**wheelchairs

Issuing long term wheelchairs and their modification, repair and maintenance

### **Enable**stores

Issuing, recalling, refurbishing, repairing and delivering long term equipment

### **Supportlinks**

Needs assessment & service coordination provision

### **Enable**audio & visual

Administering national funding for spectacles and hearing aid subsidies

Return address:

PO Box 4547

Palmerston North

