

Te Kāhui Kaiwhakatikatika Reo Kōrero o Aotearoa
New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association

Annual Report 2025



**New Zealand
Speech-language
Therapists' Association**
*Te Kāhui Kaiwhakatikatika
Reo Kōrero o Aotearoa*

Contents

● Our Vision, Values and Mission	3
● President's Report	4
● Executive Directors Report	6
● Kaumātua's Report	7
● Financial Summary	9
● Meet the Board and Representatives	11
● Aspiration 1	13
● Aspiration 2	17
● Aspiration 3	23
● Aspiration 4	27
● Aspiration 5	30

Our Vision:

A thriving profession working in partnership to enhance lives.

Our Values:

- **Kotahitanga** - Work in partnership with integrity, respect and humility.
- **Rangatiratanga** - Share our expertise in the field of communication and swallowing.
- **Whanaungatanga** - Be person and whānau centred with a focus on connection and relationships.
- **Aroha** - Empower others and provide an equitable and excellent service to all.

The Mission of the NZSTA is:

- To be responsive to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and act as a resource for the profession of speech-language therapy in cultural safety.
- To empower speech-language therapists to provide excellent and equitable services to our communities.
- To represent the interests and views of speech-language therapists.
- To promote quality evidence-based practice and research.
- To guide and govern the educational, clinical and ethical standards of speech-language therapy practice.

President's Report



Tēnā koutou,

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata - What is the greatest thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people.

Reflecting on the past year, we acknowledge our members' dedication, resilience, and commitment to advancing speech-language therapy across Aotearoa. 2025 has been a year of significant milestones, bold decisions, and meaningful progress. We have always believed that when you lead with your values, you will always lead with tikanga and mana. This year, that belief has been woven into every piece of work we have undertaken, from the foundational documents that will guide our profession into the future to the warm and committed people who have joined us along the way.

Tūturu o whiti whakamaua kia tīna, tīna! Hui e, tāiki e! - Let what has been revealed be firmly established, secured and made permanent.

2025 was a year of building. Not just in the practical sense of updating frameworks and policies, but in the deeper sense of laying groundwork that reflects who we are and who we aspire to be as a profession. We undertook significant constitutional work to ensure NZSTA is aligned with the Incorporated Societies Act, strengthening the legal and operational foundations of our association. Alongside this, we accepted the new Programme Accreditation Framework, a milestone that reflects our ongoing commitment to excellence in the education and training of speech-language therapists across Aotearoa. Once again, thank you to the team who worked tirelessly on this mahi.

We are particularly proud to have launched our very first Te Tiriti o Waitangi Responsiveness Policy this year. This is a document long in the making, and its arrival signals a clear and public commitment to honouring Te Tiriti in all that we do. Ngā mihi mahana to all the members who helped shape this foundational policy. Finally, we updated our Scope of Practice framework to ensure it remains relevant, responsive, and reflective of the breadth and depth of our profession.

Looking ahead with intention, NZSTA launched our Strategic Plan for 2026-2030 - a document shaped by member voices and grounded in our collective values. It sets a clear direction for the years to come, and we look forward to walking that path together.

NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

A few more highlights this year include:

- Our annual conference in Ahuriri, Napier, brought members together under the theme Ūe ki te Taiao, Ūe ki te Whaiao, Tika Tonu Ūe: Navigating the Changing Landscape, a fitting reflection of the year's mahi.
- We welcomed Suzanne Purdy as our new PAC co-chair, bringing valued expertise and leadership to that important work.
- Jane and Emily joined the NZSTA board whānau, and their contributions have already been warmly felt across the organisation.
- NZSTA hosted the annual hui-a-tau for Māori SLTs (and future SLTs) at Omaka Marae in Blenheim. Thank you, Carleen Hemi, for your manaakitanga. Tēnā rawa atu koe.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our members, volunteers, and partners.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you for your contributions, leadership, and unwavering commitment to our profession. As we move into 2026, we do so with a clear plan, a strengthened foundation, and a deep sense of gratitude for the collective effort that has brought us here.

Ngā mihi maioha ki a koutou katoa.



Katrina McGarr
Co-president



Emma Quigan
Co-president

Executive Director's Report

Tēnā koutou katoa,

2025 has been a year of strong progress for NZSTA. We have advanced important strategic, policy, and operational work while continuing to support a profession that is trusted, future-focused, and committed to excellent and equitable outcomes for the people and communities we serve.



A major highlight was the development of the **NZSTA Strategic Plan 2026–2030**, shaped by member feedback and designed to give clearer direction, stronger accountability, and a sharper connection between our vision, values, and actions. We also formally adopted and launched the **Te Tiriti o Waitangi Responsiveness Policy**, marking an important step in strengthening NZSTA's commitment to Te Tiriti in both principle and practice.



This was also a year of strengthening the systems that underpin professional quality. The launch of the new **Programme Accreditation Framework**, alongside updated standards, guidance, and position statements, reflects NZSTA's ongoing commitment to public safety, professional accountability, and high-quality education and practice.

At the same time, we continued to invest in connection, learning, and advocacy. Our conference in Ahuriri, Napier, the Leaders' Summit at Parliament, the growing uptake of **Te Rito**, and our Election 2026 advocacy campaign all demonstrated the energy, leadership, and vision within our profession.

None of this happens without people. My sincere thanks to our Board, committee and working group members, area and student representatives, expert advisers, editors, PAC members, conference organisers, staff, secretariat, and the many members who contribute their time, expertise, and care to NZSTA. Your commitment is what enables this Association to thrive.

NZSTA remains in a strong position — financially stable, growing in membership, and clearer about our direction. There is still much to do, but we move forward with confidence, strengthened by the collective effort of our members and guided by a shared commitment to the future of speech-language therapy in Aotearoa.



Siobhan Molloy
Executive Director NZSTA

From our kaumātua

Tēnā tātou katoa. Preamble

NZSTA has about 1300 members, of whom the vast majority are non-Māori and have limited knowledge and access to Māori language and culture. Within NZSTA, there is also a very small group of Māori SLTs, the majority of whom were not raised with their own whānau, hapū, iwi, and marae, and who had varied and limited access to their own Māori language and culture. Therefore, it is incredible that, despite the physical, intellectual, and psychosocial gaps within the association, the spread and depth of Kaupapa Māori topics, themes, and actions in SLT and NZSTA work in NZ and international contexts are remarkable. Below are some of the kaumātua highlights.



NZSTA and KAUPAPA MĀORI

Leadership

Māori leadership starts from the top, and it has been awesome to have Māori co-presidents, Katrina and Emma, leading NZSTA in 2025. By their side are non-Māori and Māori board members discussing all key issues, including kaupapa Māori matters across projects, studies, and strategies within NZSTA work. We also see the board leading Māori issues across many fronts, including media forums.

Our Communication Matters publication and Facebook pages allow board members and association members to present relevant topics. Despite our own

government actively opposing kaupapa Māori, the NZSTA board and members are showing what bi-cultural leadership should look and sound like in an Aotearoa New Zealand organisation. *Ngā mihi nui ki a Siobhan me ngā mema o Te Pōari. Kia kaha tonu.*

Wānanga in Blenheim/Wairau

2025 began with a Māori SLT wānanga at Omaka Marae in Wairau. What a beautiful venue and what an amazing programme for participants to learn about culture and what that could look like in SLT work. Without trying, it also allowed participants to be Māori, when most of the time, in our lives and work, we become somebody or something else.

These wānanga are essential for Māori SLTs. I think these wānanga and noho marae are also essential for non-Māori SLTs. The 'Why' is the NZSTA strategic plan. The 'Who, Where, What, How, When' should/could be led by each region. It is not that hard to do IF YOU ARE READY.

E hoa mā, kia kaha, kia maia, kia tere! = Friends and colleagues, be strong, be brave, and hurry up!

NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

Treaty of Waitangi Policy and Programme Accreditation Framework

What does the Treaty of Waitangi policy look like in SLT work? The new Programme Accreditation Framework (PAF) is a great example. It was created by SLT experts from both cultures, who wove Māori and English into bi-cultural models and tools, and presented in a non-threatening way to all universities and staff delivering speech and language degrees to benefit their students and our future SLTs. This might involve a change in some quarters, but that's what progress is.

Ngā mihi nui ki a Carleen me te whānau PAF.

NZSTA Conference

The Napier conference was an amazing celebration of what an NZSTA region can do. Located in a big facility right next to the mesmerising sea, with local iwi and community engaged from the beginning to the end, and SLT projects, studies and work with bicultural and multi-cultural approaches and methodologies that make up the diversity of NZSTA work and membership.

He mihi nui ki te whānau o Ahuriri me Te Tai Rāwhiti. He mihi anō ki ngā rangatira i tū mai.

Whakakapi/Closing

Good leadership comes in many forms across countries and cultures around the world. The challenge is to find one that fits all and benefits all - and one that we can agree to.

To me, people come first, and that is what NZSTA leaders and leadership should be focused on. My kaumātua 2024 AGM report finished with "invest in our own by how we think we should and can, and let's just do it". That still applies in the 2025 AGM report.

In closing, below is a proverb that Manuhua Bennett shared at a symposium about Māori Leaders and Māori Leadership. The previous speakers mainly focused on models from within 'the business sector'. Instead, Uncle Manu focused on the human values of tika, pono, and aroha (i.e., to follow what is right, to have faith and hope, and to trust and believe in others). He closed by noting that we all descend from great leaders we already love and know, as we grew up in our families and communities, e.g., mum, dad, grandparents, uncle and aunties. Leaders and leadership do not just sit in positions or with wealth, but are, in fact, all around us. We just need to see and do.

Ko te kai o te rangatira, ko te kōrero = Communication is how a leader leads.

Ko te tohu o te rangatira, ko te manaaki = Care and support is what a leader shows.

Ko te mahi o te rangatira, ko te whakakotahi i te iwi =

Uniting the people is what a leader does.

He tau anō kua taha nei. Nāreira, tēnei te mihi nui ki ngā rangatira o NZSTA puta noa i te motu.

Kia tau mai ngā manaakitanga o te Mea Ngaro ki a tātou katoa.

R. Haupapa.

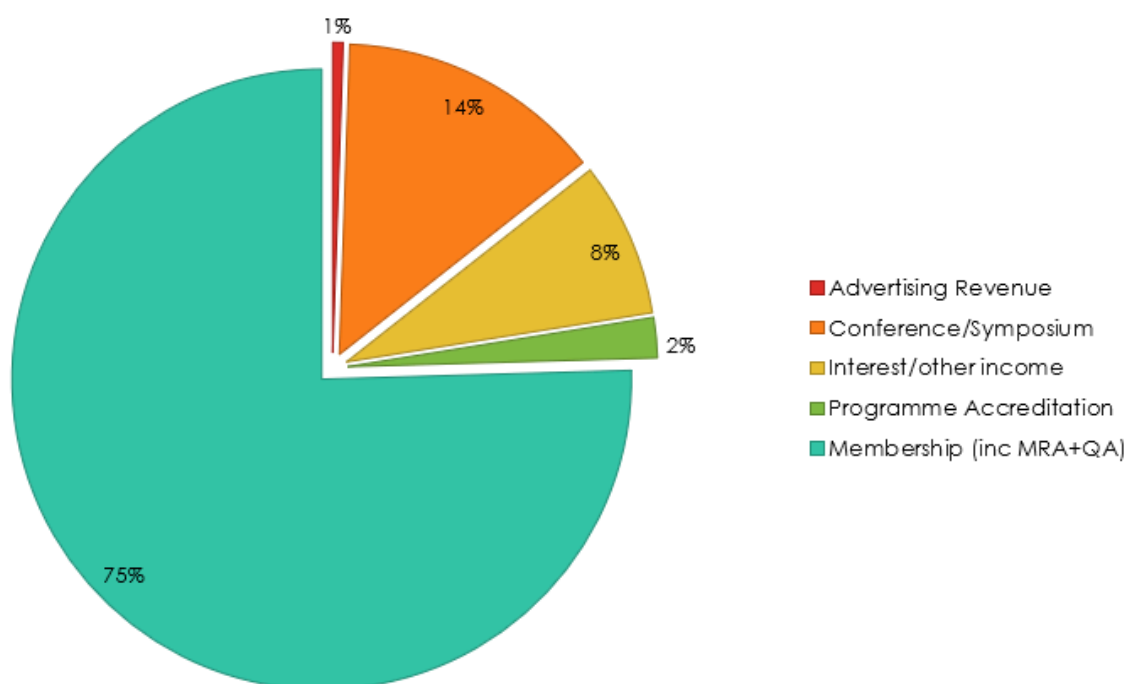
Hei kōnā

Rukingi Haupapa - Kaumātua

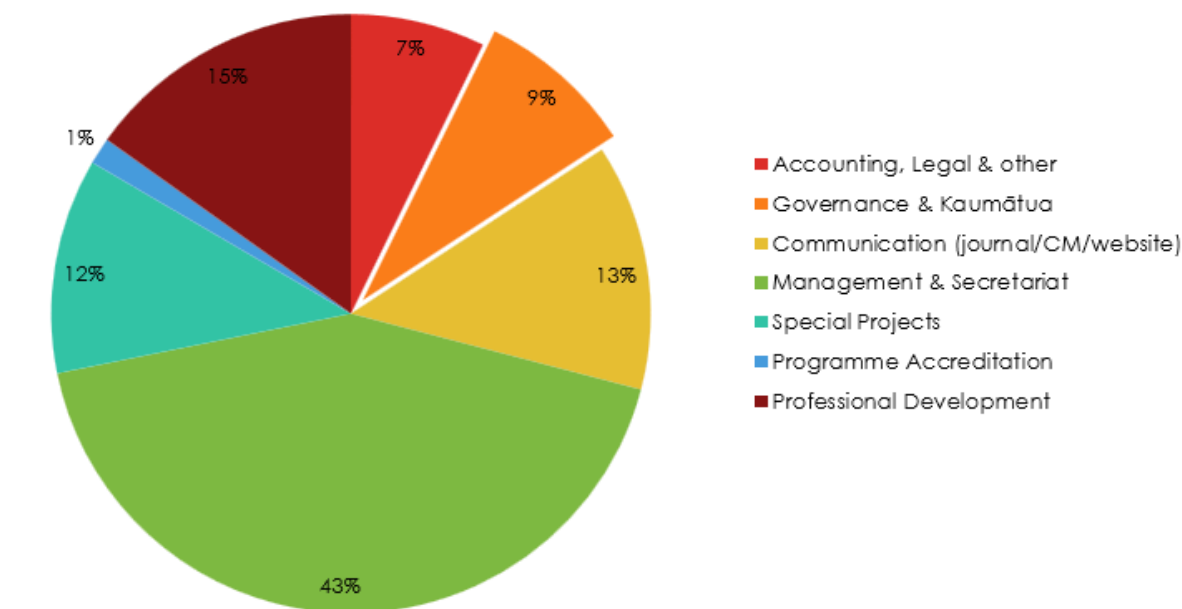
Financial Snapshot

Summarised financial statements					
Statement of Profit and Loss			Balance Sheet		
	2025	2024		2025	2024
Total income	802,952	685,248	Total assets	1,754,596	1,613,091
Total expenses	723,922	640,000	Total liabilities	804,832	742,357
Net surplus (deficit)	79,030	45,248	Equity	949,764	870,734

NZSTA Income 2025- Breakdown



NZSTA Expenses 2025 - Breakdown



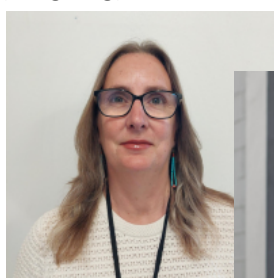
The 2025 Performance Report reflects a year of strong delivery across NZSTA's strategic aspirations and careful stewardship of Association resources. Highlights included increased uptake of Te Rito, a substantial lift in advocacy submissions and workforce priorities, successful delivery of conference and online learning activity, and the publication of the new Programme Accreditation Framework. NZSTA also remained financially strong, ending the year with revenue of \$802,952, a net surplus after tax of \$79,030, and net assets of \$949,764.

The stronger 2025 result reflects a combination of membership growth, successful conference delivery, sustained investment income, and careful financial stewardship. It also reflects a year of high organisational activity, with strong delivery across NZSTA's strategic aspirations and visible value for members.

Thank you to all members for your continued support. Your contributions directly enable the advocacy, professional development, and sector leadership that NZSTA delivers.

Meet the Executive Board and Representatives

*Image on right: From left to right:
Siobhan Molloy (executive director),
Amy Scott, Kaumātua Rukingi
Haupapa, Libby Coates (outgoing),
Katrina McGarr, Emma Quigan, Alice
Redamare, Jo Mitchell, Suhui Lim
(outgoing)*



Images above: New Board members in 2025: Emily Jones & Jane McKinnon

NZSTA Executive Board 2025

Co-presidents:

Professional Standards:

Professional Development:

Member Networks:

Māori and Cultural Development:

Communications:

Katrina McGarr & Emma Quigan

Suhui Lim/Jane McKinnon

Libby Coates/Emily Jones

Jo Mitchell

Alice Redamare

Amy Scott

Executive Director

Siobhan Molloy

Member Engagement Coordinator

Amy Oughton

Kaumātua

Rukingi Haupapa

Qualification Approval Officer

Anna Miles

Patron

Judge Andrew Becroft

Communication Matters Editor

Emma Wollum

Social Media Coordinator

Caitlin Go/Amy Oughton/Amelia Robertson

Programme Accreditation Committee:

A/Prof Felicity Bright (chair), Suzanne Purdy (incoming co-chair), MaryBeth Williams (private practice sector rep), Aoife O'Reilly (health sector rep), Fiona Cook (education sector rep), A/Prof Clare McCann (University of Auckland rep), Gina Tillard (University of Canterbury rep), Su Hui Lim/Jane McKinnon (NZSTA professional standards portfolio holder), Marie Jardine (Māori academic rep), A/Prof Sally Clendon/Mershen Pillay (Massey University rep).

Area Representatives

Northland/Tai Tokerau	Suanna Smith & Anahera Lauterbach
Auckland	Claire Crooks
Waikato/Bay of Plenty	Kate Zame
Central	Alicia Scott
Wellington/Marlborough	Catherine Campbell & Hannah Timms
Canterbury/Westland	Nic Gibbons and Charmain Moyle
Otago/Southland	Alex Major

Student Representatives

Massey University (Albany)	Riya Bhatia & Tamanna Bhatia
The University of Auckland	Ashleigh Stove, Alycia McGray & Ben Twinn
University of Canterbury	Kate Tyson, Madeline (Maddie) Potter & Jiajie Chen

Expert Advisers

Adult Dysphagia / COVID-19 - Anna Miles
 Adult Neurodegenerative Conditions and Palliative Care - Fiona Hewerdine
 Alternative and Augmentative Communication - Prianka Parusnath
 Aphasia - Robyn Gibson & Patty Govender
 Autism and Neurodiversity - Shannon Hennig
 Child Language - Jayne Newbury
 Cleft Palate / Velopharyngeal Insufficiency (VPI) - Bryony Forde
 Clinical Ethics and Bioethics - Mascha Hoexum-Morenborg
 Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Rosie Lamb
 Dementia - Annabel Grant
 Head and Neck Cancer - Liv Thompson-Williams
 Hearing Impairment and Cochlear Implant - Liz Fairgray
 Justice, Care and Protection, Mental Health and Behaviour - Sally Kedge
 Paediatric Feeding and Swallowing - Emily Jones
 Speech Sound Disorders - Polly Newton
 Stuttering & Cluttering - Tika Ormond
 Supervision - Philippa Friary & Kristina Pinto
 Traumatic Brain Injury - Maegan VanSolkema
 Voice - Carlene Perris

Secretariat

ONZL Limited

Private Sector Representative

Elisa Mynen

Aspiration 1

The NZSTA and members are responsive to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The profession of speech-language therapy has resources and kaupapa to ensure culturally safe practice

Image: Emma Quigan (NZSTA co-president) with Mat Rope, Sam Te Maari-Cumming, Emma Bull and Ashleigh Perston at 2025 Hui-ā-tau for Māori SLTs at Omaka Marae, Blenheim.



Ensure Māori speech-language therapists are valued and supported to practise as Māori.

Increase the cultural diversity of the profession.

Ensure we have a culturally responsive and culturally safe workforce through the values of kotahitanga, rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga, and aroha.

Achievements - so many highlights this year

- **Te Rito** - NZSTA's complementary 42-module bicultural competency e-learning programme continued to gain strong traction in 2025. The programme supports members in deepening bicultural competence, better understanding Māori perspectives, and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi in practice. During the year, 161 members completed Modules 1–4 (up 52 on 2024), and 31 members completed Modules 5–7 (up 22). Feedback has been excellent, reflecting the value of Te Rito in supporting reflection, practice change, and more equitable outcomes.

NZSTA 2025 Annual Report



- NZSTA Hui-ā-tau:**
 10–12 July,
 Omaka
 Marae,
 Blenheim. 27
 Māori SLTs

and students participated from all over the motu. We were privileged to be hosted by Whaea Carleen Heemi, who thoughtfully organised a rich programme of connection and learning. This included a kōrero led by Matua Peter Pitama exploring the impacts and ongoing realities of colonisation. Those who attended also took part in a session focused on learning a karakia for our Matariki celebration using Te Ataarangi approach to support learning te reo. This was complemented by experiences in mau rākau and waiata, further strengthening our connection to te ao Māori and cultural knowledge. Everyone woke in the early hours of the morning for a Matariki ceremony guided by Matua Rukingi, offering a meaningful and reflective opportunity to further connect with our tīpuna and Māori heritage.

- The **Māori SLT Rōpū**, the special interest group of and for Māori SLTs and SLT students, brings together past, present and future SLTs who whakapapa Māori. The rōpū meet both online and in person once a year to support and guide each other in navigating mahi, research, and study as Māori. The rōpū also has a private Facebook group for members to keep in touch, discuss, and seek guidance outside the virtual hui. If you are a Māori clinician, researcher, or student and are not already connected with the rōpū, we invite you to join by contacting culturaldevelopment@speechtherapy.org.nz.
- Tiriti o Waitangi Responsiveness Policy** - the NZSTA Board formally adopted the Te Tiriti o Waitangi Responsiveness Policy, and it was officially launched at the NZSTA Conference in Napier. This marked a significant step forward in strengthening NZSTA's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, both in principle and in practice. We extend heartfelt thanks to the working group for their care, insight, and dedication in bringing this important work to completion. The policy provides a strong foundation for NZSTA's ongoing journey of Tiriti responsiveness and accountability.
- Three bicultural awards were awarded.

NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

Tohu Manaaki: Manaaki Award honours nurturing, respect, and recognising others' status.

- Awarded to **Tiahna Kingi** for contributions as a tuakana and emerging professional, being grounded in her own values, and including integrity, aroha, and a deep commitment to uplifting others through manaakitanga.
- Tiahna plays a pivotal role in supporting new ākonga Māori across both the BSLP and MSLP programmes.
- Her presence helps create an environment where students feel safe, valued, and connected to both the academic programme and to each other.
- In facilitating the Māori Stroke Group in Ōtautahi, Christchurch, Tiahna's natural leadership style is gentle yet effective, encouraging group members, her peers, and the ākonga she connects with to grow at their own pace while feeling supported.



Tohu Rangahau: Honours SLT research embracing mātauranga and kaupapa Māori.

- Awarded to Mershen Pillay.
- Is a visionary leader in decolonising speech-language therapy practice.
- Has demonstrated remarkable consistency and depth of commitment to rangahau, directly aligning with principles valued in kaupapa Māori, such as the emancipatory potential of community-based research.
- Has fostered relationships with Ngāti Te Ata for a unique project involving community-led dysphagia support out of Tāhuna marae



Tohu Kaupapa Māori: Awarded to Sally Kedge for her leadership and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi at Talking Trouble, a social enterprise improving services for children, youth and adults involved with care and protection, justice, mental health and behaviour services.

- Sally leads a team of speech-language therapists with manaaki and kaitiaki to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Her leadership demonstrates concrete action in decolonising practice and in creating culturally safe environments.
- Her work shows how speech-language therapy services can be transformed through genuine commitment to Te Tiriti principles. Her efforts have created safer spaces



NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

for Māori staff and clients, representing the systemic change needed to move towards fair outcomes for Māori in health, justice and social services.

- **Communication Matters** published several articles that added to the kaupapa to showcase and encourage bicultural and culturally safe practices:
 - Massey's speech-language therapy programme: Bridging distance through connection and culture • *Mershen Pillay and Emma Quigan*
 - He Whakatā – A moment to pause: *Tuihana Ohia (Ngāiterangi, Ngāti Pūkenga, Te Arawa, Mackisack)* • *Founder, T Kaupapa*
 - A critical Tiriti analysis of the New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association's key documents: *Alycia McGray (Ngāti Whātua)* • *Ministry of Education Contributions from Dr Karen Brewer (Whakatōhea, Ngāiterangi)* • *Waipapa Taumata Rau / University of Auckland*
 - Kaituku haumanu ngutu tūi A new title for our mahi: *Melva Ritchie* • *Speech-language therapist, Tongue Twisters Ruth Brehaut* • *Speech-language therapist, Word Nerd*
 - Mataora, my full-face moko: *Rukingi Haupapa* • *Kaumātua, NZSTA*
 - Tūwhitia te hopo Tōku haerenga reo Māori: *Siobhan McKinlay* • *Speech-language therapist, 2Bites*



In the pipeline:

- **Te Tiriti Responsiveness Committee** will be embedded within NZSTA's operational activities.
- **Next Hui-ā-tau:** Thursday, July 10, to Saturday, July 12, 2026, at Omaka Marae, Blenheim, hosted by Carleen Heemi - *now postponed to 2027*.
- Facilitators will be trained to deliver wānanga for the **Te Rito courses 5-7**.

Aspiration 2

The NZSTA membership will be engaged, diverse and valued.

To grow a workforce that reflects the Aotearoa context.

To have all practising speech-language therapists as members.

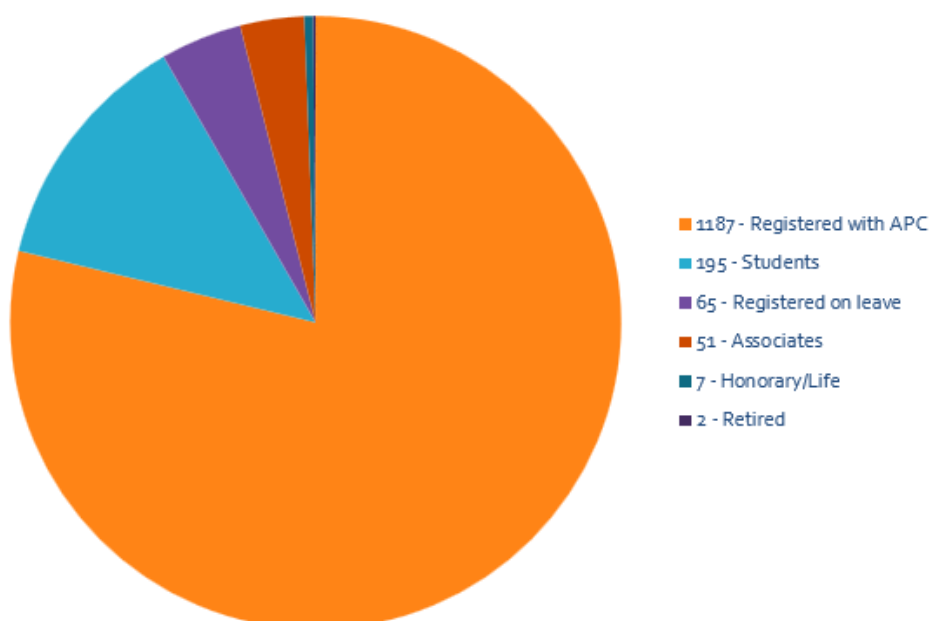
To provide benefits that are sustainable and of value to the NZSTA members.

Achievements

Membership: Numbers, gender, ethnicity and languages

NZSTA Membership :	2022	2023	2024	2025
Registered Members:	1055	1104	1201	1252
Student Members:	101	128	151	195
Associate/Life/Honorary/Retired members:	19	51	49	60
TOTAL MEMBERS:	1175	1283	1401	1507

Approval of New Members to the NZSTA:	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Mutual Recognition agreement successful applications:	14	20	20	24
Qualification Approval successful applications:	15	25	30	30
New Graduate to Full Member applications:	47	66	76	79



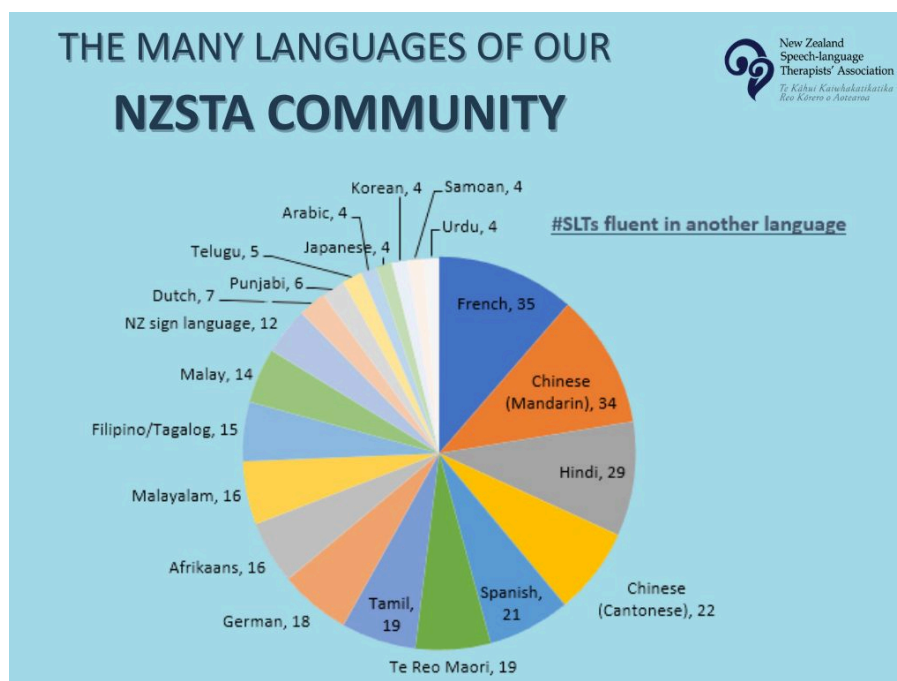
NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

Membership: NZSTA grew its membership by 5% to 1,507, with 1,252 registered members.

Gender: The gender ratios remain steady at just over 91% female/wahine (1381), almost 4% male/tane (56), and the remainder are a mix of gender-diverse/transgender/nonbinary and takatapui (or declines to answer).

Ethnicity: While most members identify as European (NZ, British, Irish, Australian, other), 57 identify as Māori, and there is a spread of other ethnicities from across the globe.

Languages: We have members who can communicate in NZSL, Arabic, Afrikaans, Bengali, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, Filipino/Tagalog, Finnish, French, German, Hindi, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, Te Reo Māori, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Samoan, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tamil (19), Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh and Xhosa.



Member areas: Seven member areas meet quarterly, usually via Zoom. Auckland remains the largest area, with Te Tai Tokerau being the smallest, with 47 members.

- **NZSTA Awards:** Ngā mihi to all our 2025 award winners.

Kāore te kūmara e kōrero mō tōna ake reka
The kūmara doesn't speak of its own sweetness

Tohu Awards - See Aspiration 1 for bicultural award winners. These awards honour service to kaupapa Māori, SLT research in mātauranga Māori, and manaakitanga in practice.

Grace Gane Memorial Lecture

This lecture honours significant contributions to the profession of speech-language therapy and commemorates one of NZSTA's founders.



Congratulations to **Associate Professor Felicity Bright**, who was awarded the 2025 Grace Gane Memorial Lecture in recognition of her exceptional contribution to the profession. Through her leadership in rehabilitation research, stroke care, communication, and wellbeing, Felicity has helped shape more inclusive, person-centred practice and services in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her work bridges research, policy, and clinical care and has made a profound contribution to the lives of people with stroke and other neurological conditions.

“Communication needs to matter in the health systems we are working in...we need to stop good clinicians from harming people inadvertently through the contexts that we work in.”

Associate Professor Felicity Bright,
Grace Gane Memorial Lecture

Emerging Practitioner Award for Research - Professor Sir Donald Beaven Memorial Award, supported by Stella Ward, honours Don Beaven, who was a champion of the profession and supported postgraduate study.

Congratulations to Fathima Shakeela Abdul Saleem on completing her PhD in a two-arm clinical trial on interventions for people with Parkinson's disease. Her research produced four peer-reviewed articles and presentations at leading conferences. Presented findings at the NZSTA 2025 conference in Napier. She led and co-led multiple trials, delivered invited talks to professional groups in New Zealand and overseas, and mentored Master's students in voice and swallowing therapy.



She also worked part-time as an SLT in acute care at Middlemore Hospital, actively bridging research and clinical practice.



Emerging Practitioner—Clinical Excellence Award

This award celebrates early-career therapists who show leadership, innovation, and excellence. As a new award, it lays the foundation for recognising the important contributions of emerging practitioners in the years ahead.

Congratulations to **Michelle Bonetti** for her outstanding contribution to speech-language therapy in Aotearoa. Her work is pioneering, system-changing, and firmly grounded in equity, collaboration, and service. Michelle is an innovator, a leader, and a tireless advocate who

NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

embodies aroha and clinical excellence, while advancing communication access as a fundamental right.

Clinical Field Supervisor's Award

This award recognises therapists who provide outstanding student supervision. In 2025, the nomination process was expanded to include student submissions, creating a valuable opportunity to strengthen engagement and further refine the award.

Congratulations to **Laura Silcock** for her exceptional supervision and mentorship. She created both a position and a supportive learning environment where students could bring their full selves, questions, uncertainties, and ideas, and have these met with openness, respect, and genuine care. Laura leads with integrity, authenticity, and aroha, and her impact on students and on the profession has been profound.



Community Communication Access Awards

The Community Communication Access Awards recognised **Paula Love, Ilana Edlin, Rachael Brodie,** and **Mane Allen** for their exceptional leadership in advancing communication access. Their work reflects a deep commitment to inclusion, advocacy, and practical action that supports fuller participation in community life.

Community Mealtimes Matter Awards

The Community Mealtimes Matter Awards recognised **Rescare Homes Trust** and **The Morning Kitchen Hawke's Bay** for their outstanding commitment to safe, enjoyable, and person-centred mealtimes. Their work demonstrates leadership, collaboration, and innovation in supporting equitable mealtime experiences for those they serve.

NZSTA Student Achievement Awards

This award recognises the work of one outstanding speech-language therapy student's final year of study from each NZSTA-accredited university programme.

Congratulations to:

Auckland University: Francesca Farmer

Massey University: Cydney Pattison

University of Canterbury: Jiajie Chen & Kate Tyson

NZSTA Funding Grants

NZSTA funding grants supported members in advancing professional learning, research, and innovation that benefit the profession. In 2025, grants were awarded to **Bryony Forde, Hana Tuwhare, Kate Cook, Paula Morrison,** and **Renee Taylor** for conference presentations and research projects relevant to speech-language therapy in Aotearoa.

Operational Committees

By the year-end, NZSTA began implementing a new operational committee structure to better support delivery of core work across the Association. This is intended to strengthen operational oversight, clarify responsibilities, and create more sustainable ways for members to contribute their expertise. These committees focus on professional standards, ethical standards & complaints, diversity, inclusion, equity & belonging, and responsiveness to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Focused on operations, the committees will help develop initiatives, advise on priorities, and strengthen NZSTA's ability to serve members and communities well. Each committee has its own terms of reference and will generally meet up to quarterly, with additional activity as needed.

Speech-language Therapy Leaders' Summit

In June 2025, NZSTA hosted the **Speech-language Therapy Leaders' Summit** at Parliament, bringing together 28 leaders from across the profession to reflect on current challenges and future priorities. The day highlighted shared concerns about workforce wellbeing, equity of access, neurodivergence and inclusion, Te Tiriti responsibilities, and system-level barriers, while also creating space for discussion on complaints processes, scopes of practice, disability, mental health, and member engagement. The Summit provided a valuable forum for connection, collective reflection, and the identification of priorities to help shape NZSTA's future work.



"He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata."
What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people.

NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

Kia ora rawa atu to all our incredible volunteers – you are the heart of NZSTA!

A special thank you to our outgoing area and student representatives for your dedication and contribution, and a warm welcome to those stepping into these important roles. Your mahi is invaluable in connecting our members and strengthening our profession.

Our area representatives are crucial to bringing members together and coordinating quarterly face-to-face and Zoom meetings to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing across regions.

Image: Tai Tokerau Pizza Picnic Party 2025



Their work ensures strong connections between members, the Board, and the NZSTA community.



We also deeply thank our hardworking committee and working group members, many of whose leadership and commitment shape key initiatives and drive meaningful progress. Your passion makes a real difference - thank you for all you do!

In the pipeline:

- A web-based connection platform for NZSTA SIG members.
- The Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Belonging committee will be embedded in the operational activity of the NZSTA.

Aspiration 3

Our communities and partners will be knowledgeable about the NZSTA and the needs of people with communication and swallowing disorders in New Zealand.

Increase public awareness of the NZSTA and communication & swallowing disabilities through annual national campaigns.

Amplify the voices of people with lived experience and have their consultation in the activity and policy of awareness and advocacy issues.

Have an accessible and user-friendly website.

Continue to develop our profile internationally.

Achievements:

Advancing Speech-Language Therapy Advocacy in 2025

Election 2026 Advocacy Campaign

During the year, NZSTA launched its Election 2026 advocacy campaign, calling for investment to grow the speech-language therapy workforce so people across Aotearoa are safe to eat and free to communicate. The campaign's first priorities focus on assistive technology and AAC, dementia care, and residential services for disabled people under 65. We have met face-to-face with the Labour Party, apprising them of the workforce issues at stake.



2025 Submissions Highlights:

- Submission on [Taxation and the Not-for-Profit Sector – Targeted Consultation \(November 2025\)](#)
- Submission on the [draft New Zealand Disability Strategy](#)
- Letter to [Hon. Erica Stanford](#) regarding the inclusion of te reo Māori in early reading materials

NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

- Submission on Healthy Futures (Pae Ora) Amendment Bill
- Submission to the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee Regulatory Standards Bill 2025
- Open letter calling for the publication of guidelines for gender affirming care
- Submission to Inland Revenue: Mutual Transactions of Associations (ED0265)
- Submission on Draft Guidance for Pasteurised Donor Human Milk Banks
- Submission on the Plain Language Act Repeal Bill
- Feedback on Pou Ora - Pillars of Health Model of Care
- Joint letter to Hon Simeon Brown: Health sector concerns with flawed regulatory review process and call for proper consultation
- Letter to Hon Simeon Brown about the 'Putting Patients First' consultation and sharing the NZSTA Business Case.
- Submission on Putting Patients First: Modernising health workforce regulation
- Submission on Universal Newborn Screening and Early Intervention Programme (UNHSEP) Service Standards
- Submission on Disability Support Services Consultation
- Submission on Taxation and the Not-for-Profit Sector Consultation
- Submission on Proposed Changes to Funding for Resource Teachers: Literacy and Resource Teachers: Māori

● Awareness Week 15-21 September 2025.

NZSTA celebrated communication diversity with the theme **Wellbeing Begins with Communication - Kōrero is Connection - He oranga te kōrero – Communication is wellness**

Speech-language therapists work in diverse spaces to support communication, swallowing, connection, and identity — all key to holistic hauora.

This campaign turned the mirror inward, encouraging SLTs to reflect on their own wellbeing and how we can support one another as a professional community.

Each day, the focus was on a different pillar of wellbeing:

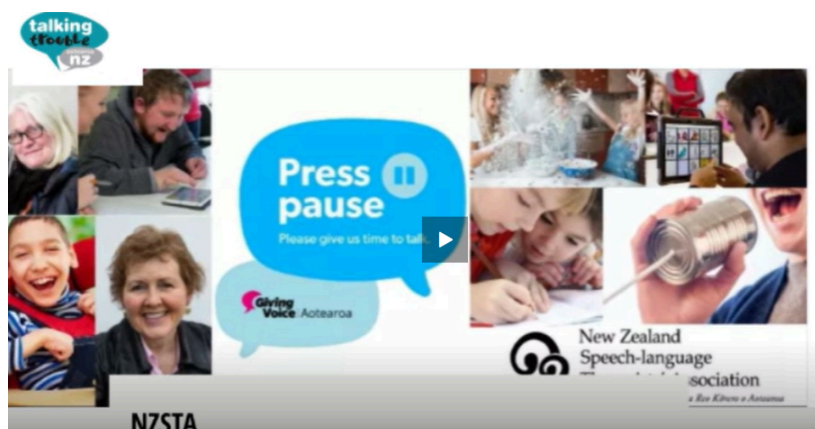
- **Star Space Speech Therapy and Connection** showcased outstanding client-led advocacy through its Mild Aphasia Group. Group members created a series of posters sharing their communication strengths, challenges, and strategies, as well as practical ways others can better support communication. This was powerful, strengths-based mahi that promoted awareness, connection, confidence, and wellbeing.
- **Video blogs were a highlight of the year**, with two groups showcasing the profession in engaging and meaningful ways. NZSTA thanks our University of Auckland student representatives — **Michelle, Kylie, Kirsty, and Sania** — for their energetic day-in-the-life vlog during Speech-language Therapy Awareness Week, including hosting an engaging event on the **IDDSI**



NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

framework and proudly promoting the profession to fellow students.

Image: Michelle, Kylie, Kirsty, and Sania from the University of Auckland



NZSTA also acknowledges **Talking Trouble Aotearoa** for their thoughtful contribution centred on **whanaungatanga** and the vital importance of kōrero and connection, as featured in the VLOG.

- SLTs from **Te Whatu Ora Southern - Ōtepoti Dunedin** celebrated tinana — taking a moment to recharge with fresh air and coffee, so they can provide the best care for their patients.

"Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini"

My strength is not as an individual, but as part of the collective 🙏



- NZSTA extends sincere thanks to editor Emma Wollum for her continued stewardship of **Communication Matters**. Produced each quarter, the publication keeps members informed with clinical and research insights and showcases the richness and relevance of speech-language therapy to the wider public.



NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

- NZSTA extends sincere thanks to Dr Anna Miles for her leadership as editor-in-chief of ***Speech, Language and Hearing (SLH)***, the Association's official journal. Published quarterly, the journal supports members with high-quality clinical and research content and strengthens the visibility of NZSTA and speech-language therapy research from Aotearoa New Zealand. NZSTA also acknowledges the contribution of members on the editorial board who support the peer review process and help maintain the journal's quality and relevance.



In the pipeline:

- Continue NZSTA's advocacy goal of building capacity in the workforce.
- **Awareness Week** will be held from September 14 to 20, 2026.

Aspiration 4

NZSTA members will be lifelong learners.

Support and strengthen the development of special interest groups and other professional learning communities.

Facilitate accessible opportunities for high-quality professional development.

Increase opportunities for online learning.

Recruit and maintain a cohort of expert advisers with diverse professional skills.

Achievements

- **NZSTA Conference 2025**

Ūe ki te taiao, Ūe ki te whaiao, tika tonu Ūe: Navigating the changing landscape



This year's NZSTA conference theme, Ūe ki te Taiao, Ūe ki te Whaiao, Tika Tonu Ūe: Navigating the Changing Landscape, was reflected by its location in Ahuriri / Napier, a part of Aotearoa where te taiao has been significantly changed most recently by the effects of Cyclone Gabrielle. Keynote speakers included Associate Professor Felicity Bright, Dr Heather Came, Dr Mershen Pillay & Mary Woodward.

We experienced three days of thought-provoking kōrero and workshops that reflected the wide variety of environments in which speech-language therapists contribute, and we discussed future directions and aspirations for the profession.

Left image: Day 3 keynote speakers Dr Heather Came and Associate Professor Mershen Pillay share perspectives on the art and science of decolonisation.

Post-conference survey responses showed very high satisfaction with NZSTA25, with 94% of respondents rating the overall experience 4 or 5 stars. Attendees particularly valued opportunities to connect with colleagues, the strong keynote programme, and the conference's emphasis on Te Tiriti, decolonisation, advocacy, AAC, literacy, and justice-focused mahi. Many also reported clear intentions to strengthen their practice through increased advocacy, more intentional decolonising action, stronger relationships with whānau, and greater attention to cultural safety and equity.

conference organising committee.



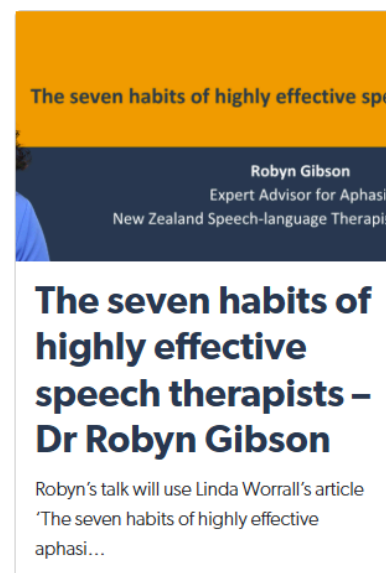
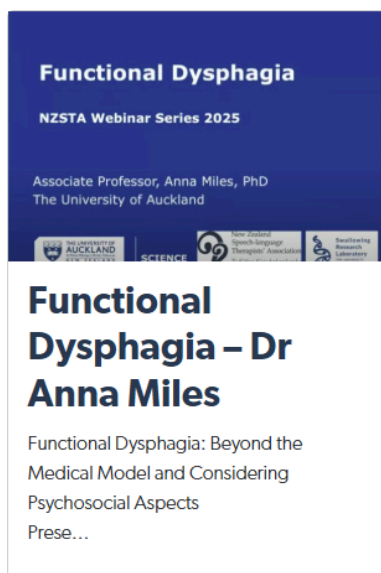
Above image:



Image: Conference attendees gathered for the dinner.

- **Online Learning Platform:** The online learning platform continues to grow, now offering 23 options, including our extensive 42-module Te Rito courses. A highlight of 2025 was the introduction of the Expert Advisor series.

An enduring MOU with Speech Pathology Australia continues to provide our respective members with discounted rates on our learning platforms and conferences. **Speech Pathology Australia's Learning Hub** offers over 400 on-demand learning options, including courses, podcasts, and external programs. These resources cover various topics such as adult language and cognition, dysphagia management, and paediatric speech.



- **CPD Audit:** The 2025 CPD audit provided useful insights into areas where some members would benefit from clearer guidance and support. In particular, these included the distinction between bicultural practice and multicultural learning, the requirements for structured professional supervision, and the importance of including meaningful reflection in CPD records. These findings will help shape future communication and resources to support members in meeting the CPD Framework confidently and consistently. 175

NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

registered members were audited for compliance with the CPD framework for the 2024 CPD year. 133 members passed initially, and a further 42 were asked for more information and were subsequently approved.

- **Speech, Language and Hearing (SLH)** is the official peer-reviewed journal of the NZSTA in collaboration with the Asian Pacific Society of Speech, Language, and Hearing (APSSLH), and the Hong Kong Association of Speech Therapists (HKAST). It publishes research on normal and disordered speech, language, and hearing for professionals in linguistics, communication, speech-language pathology, and audiology. The journal is now hybrid open access, which means articles will be free to access online immediately on publication, increasing the visibility, readership, and impact of your research.

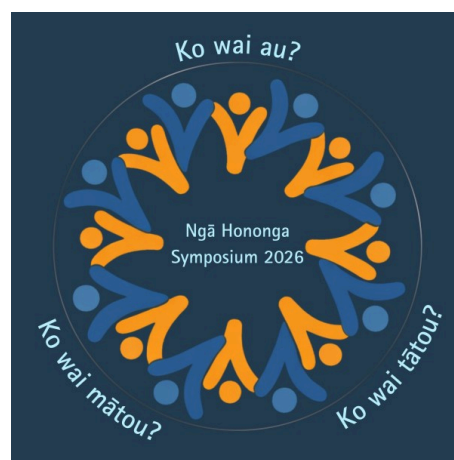


Image: Speech, Language and Hearing, Volume 28, Issue 1 (2025)

- **Member Advisories:** Our member advisories are designed to keep you up to date on essential information. Four new advisories were published: **Supervision is Mandatory for All Registered NZSTA Members, Interviewee Questions for New Graduates, Sensory Awareness and Regulation in SLT Practice, and Best Practices for Managing Health Records.**

In the pipeline:

- The **Expert Advisor** series continues.
- Volunteers will be sought and trained to serve as structured **Te Rito wānanga facilitators** — a practical leadership opportunity that will help strengthen safe, thoughtful learning spaces for our membership. These wānanga will create consistent, supportive spaces for members to deepen learning, reflect together, and build confidence as they move through Te Rito — while growing NZSTA's facilitator capability over time.
- **The NZSTA Symposium 2026** is being hosted by Te Tai Tokerau members and will be held at Waitangi in the beautiful Bay of Islands, 3-4 September.



The wānanga-style symposium will bring together speech-language therapists from across Aotearoa to explore Te Tiriti responsiveness, ethics, and supervision in depth. Over two days, we will learn alongside each other, reflect on our responsibilities as a profession, and leave with practical tools to strengthen everyday practice. *Now postponed to 2027.*

- **Conference 2027** has been booked for the Christchurch Town Hall - planning will get underway. *Now postponed to 2028.*

Aspiration 5

The NZSTA will promote excellent and ethical practice.

Have high-quality standards for all areas of speech-language therapy practice.

Have a high-quality, transparent and fair ethics process.

Have a high-quality, transparent, fair and future-proof programme accreditation process.

Achievements

- **Programme Accreditation Framework: Strengthening the Future of Speech-Language Therapy**

The revised Programme Accreditation Framework (PAF) was launched in 2025. It is NZSTA's way of saying: *this is what high-quality speech-language therapy preparation looks like in Aotearoa*. It sets expectations for university programmes, guides NZSTA's accreditation and support of them, and helps strengthen public trust in our profession. The PAF shapes the graduates who join our workplaces and communities. It matters because it supports:

- Public confidence and professional credibility (clear, transparent standards for entry-to-practice preparation).
- Workforce readiness (graduates prepared for real-world practice demands).
- Better supported placements (clearer expectations for practice education and assessment).
- Te Tiriti responsiveness (explicit expectations for culturally safe practice in Aotearoa).



Image: Carleen Heemi (Te Whakatōhea, Ngāi Tai) with the kete she wove, representing the three kete of Tuakiritanga, Te Haerenga, and Pūkenga that comprise the new Programme Accreditation Framework.

Image: Members of the Programme Accreditation Committee at the launch of the PAF with a waiata led by kaumātua Rukingi Haupapa.



NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

- **Policy, Position Papers and Guidelines:** The following documents have been reviewed or developed and accepted:
 - Competency Framework: Videofluoroscopic Swallow Study (VFSS) for Paediatrics
 - Above Cuff Vocalisation (ACV) Practice Standards
 - Competency Framework: Videofluoroscopic Study of Swallowing (VFSS) for Adults
 - Scope of Practice for Speech-language Therapists
 - New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association (NZSTA) Statement on the Term Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) in the Aotearoa New Zealand Context: Background and Considerations for Practice
 - **Programme Accreditation:** In 2025, the Programme Accreditation Committee continued its important work to support high-quality speech-language therapy education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Key activities included the implementation of the new Programme Accreditation Framework, the review of annual programme reporting, confirmation that all programmes continued to meet the framework requirements, and planning for the University of Auckland's reaccreditation under the new framework.
- NZSTA extends sincere thanks to Associate Professor Felicity Bright for her outstanding leadership and contribution as PAC Chair and Co-Chair. Felicity has played a significant role in strengthening accreditation processes and supporting programme quality, and we acknowledge her warmly as she steps down at the end of 2025.
- **Expert advisors:** NZSTA's expert advisers make a vital contribution by providing trusted clinical and non-clinical expertise across a wide range of issues relevant to the profession. Their knowledge helps NZSTA respond thoughtfully to emerging matters, support members, inform policy and advocacy, and strengthen decision-making. Through this contribution, our expert advisers help uphold professional standards and ensure NZSTA remains responsive, informed, and connected to the diverse contexts in which speech-language therapists work.
 - **Notifications:** During the year, NZSTA received two complaints or concerns regarding members' professional conduct or practice. One was subsequently withdrawn as it was considered an employment matter. The second matter was assessed in accordance with NZSTA's complaints processes. Matters broadly related to a breach of expected documentation standards. Outcomes included targeted professional support, strengthened documentation practice, and ongoing monitoring.

No identifying details are reported in order to protect confidentiality and procedural fairness.

NZSTA 2025 Annual Report

- **The Mutual Recognition of Professional Association Credentials Agreement (MRA)**

was established in 2004 between six speech-language associations:

- The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
- Speech-Language & Audiology Canada (SAC)
- The Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists (IASLT)
- The New Zealand Speech-Language Therapists Association (NZSTA)
- The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
- The Speech Pathology Association of Australia (SPA)

The agreement allows members of signatory associations (trained in their home country) to apply for mutual recognition of their credentials in another country. The premise of substantial equivalence underlies the agreement, i.e., under specific terms and conditions, an individual's credentials are deemed substantially equivalent (MRA updated 2022). This is not equality or reciprocity, as each signatory association has specific applicant requirements.

The Associations track the number of SLTs using this route each year. This year, 24 experienced SLTs arrived in the country through the MRA, and 32 NZSTA members used this route to work overseas in one of the other signatory countries.

- **Qualifications Approval:** This is the pathway for member applications from applicants trained overseas who did not meet the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) criteria. Thirty were processed in 2025.

In the pipeline:

- The **Professional Standards, the Ethical Standards & Complaints committees** will be embedded in the operational activity of NZSTA.
- The revised **Code of Ethics** is due to be launched.