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ISSUE 32

# communication *matters*



**Thoughts from an AAC user**

**X Force • Chef training • Giving Voice Aotearoa Week of Action**

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**Cover:** Beautiful Dunedin, where this year's NZSTA Professional Development Symposium was held. *Photo credit: DunedinNZ*

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# From the editor

**Karen Watson** [editor@speechtherapy.org.nz](mailto:editor@speechtherapy.org.nz)

Welcome to our new look *Communication Matters* magazine. It's exciting to bring you a refreshed format following a month of learning, advocacy and action in the world of speech-language therapy. Thank you to everyone who provided photos of their Giving Voice Aotearoa activities and to the University of Canterbury student representatives for their photos of the NZSTA Professional Development Symposium.



During our week of action, I followed the NZSTA's campaign hashtags (accessible via searchable links on social media, for those who don't have social media accounts), #GivingVoiceAotearoa and #SLTAwareness, on Twitter and Facebook. Two main themes emerged. The first theme was education: raising awareness of communication and swallowing disorders. The posts covered ways to support language development in infants, the need to consider and meet the communication needs of young people involved with the justice system, the prevalence of acquired communication and swallowing disorders, and more.

The second theme was about human connection. Connection with each other and to our identities. There were some lovely quotes from people with communication difficulties gathered by our new communications portfolio holder Amy Oughton. One example is from Tracy who spoke of learning to "be patient, put in the effort to understand and invest in communication". Whether it's sharing a conversation or a cuppa, our work helps people to participate. This – the human connection – is why we do what we do.

In this issue of *Communication Matters* we hear Thane Pullan's voice. Thane uses AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) for everyday communication, speeches and has even used it to write a book. He presents the personal side to using AAC. He shares how this way of communicating shapes his interactions with others and reminds us that high-tech AAC use is screen time, something users and their families should consider and manage. We also hear about the development of the X Force – comic superheroes who save AAC users from the frustrations of communication partners unfamiliar with using alternative forms of communication.

This edition's IDDSI update summarises a chef training roadshow at Bupa care homes, with further resources including videos available on the NZSTA website. We also have a book recommendation for your summer reading list, *How to Communicate with Someone Who Has Dementia*, for both professional and personal learning.

We have updates from our new president, Annette Rotherham, and the board members, area and student representatives let us know what is happening around the country.

Noho ora mai,  
Stay well,

**Karen**



# President's report

Annette Rotherham [president@speechtherapy.org.nz](mailto:president@speechtherapy.org.nz)

Tēnā koutou katoa  
Nō Ōtautahi ahau  
Ko Rotorua tōku kainga inaianei  
Ko James tōku whanau  
Ko Gary tōku matua  
Ko Lois tōku whaea  
Ko Annette Rotherham tōku ingoa  
Nō reira tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou,  
tēnā koutou katoa



As I reflect on the past four years on the Executive Council, now called the NZSTA Board, many things have been learnt and have shaped me professionally and personally. I thrive on the shared energy and goals we have as a team and as a profession. I have had the opportunity to develop creative ideas into realities. I feel proud to have delivered some memorable awareness campaigns: "Making connections: whakawhanaungatanga" in 2014, "Access for All: he waka eke noa" in 2015 and to have nurtured the Giving Voice Aotearoa Campaign to its current position.

I thank you all for your participation, passion and enthusiasm demonstrated this year for our Giving Voice Aotearoa Week of Action and Awareness with the theme of *Speech-language therapy: making a critical difference*. Our daily themes on social media really encompassed the breadth of speech-language therapy practice and, wow, what a difference we can make!

As a team, the NZSTA Board have achieved some lofty goals in 2018.

“The opportunity to provide leadership to the NZSTA in the role of president, is an opportunity to serve to our profession.”  
– Annette

We are now a self-regulating, registered profession thanks to the hard work of Anna Miles and Clare McCann. We have engaged our communities to spread the word about communication access and this year we presented 10 organisations throughout Aotearoa with Communication Access Awards.

We have just gathered for a successful NZSTA Professional Development Symposium in Dunedin. Thanks to Claire Winward for organising and planning the entire event, and to Bev Jarvis for ensuring it all went smoothly. The keynote speakers, Jane Carroll and Sue MacDonnell, provided highly engaging and insightful presentations, and we were all left with food for thought. We had a strong turnout and much networking and connecting with old friends was had.

In our Giving Voice Aotearoa session, Geneva Hakaraia-Tino gave a professional and heart-warming presentation about the development of a Kiwi voice and the journey to having her own identity in AAC with a te reo voice. Geneva will be

leading another initiative from NZSTA with the formation of a consumer focus group. Watch this space!

The opportunity to provide leadership to the NZSTA in the role of president, is an opportunity to serve to our profession. It takes commitment to see projects through and to pull teams together for our common purpose. NZSTA have been successful in forming partnerships and closer connections with our allied professional groups and with our international associations thanks to the supportive and collaborative leadership of Philippa Friary.

I know that the current team will continue this mahi and look to our strategic vision of "a thriving profession working in partnership to enhance lives". Wherever you work out there in the world of speech-language therapy – as students, clinicians, teachers, researchers – take time to reflect on our "why?"

There are over 400,000 New Zealanders who appreciate what you do every day. Keep making a critical difference.

Ngā mihi nui,  
**Annette**

## Bupa IDDSI chef training & our role in food service

Anna Miles, NZSTA Expert Adviser – Dysphagia, [newzealand@iddsi.org](mailto:newzealand@iddsi.org)

In August, the NZSTA created a full-day workshop for the head chefs at Bupa, supported by their food provider, Bidfood. Bupa have 50 care homes across the country and arranged a chef training roadshow focusing on IDDSI (International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative).

Traditionally, speech-language therapists have focused on educating healthcare assistants and nursing staff – the feeders. Dietitians have always had a role in food service and are regularly employed to audit seasonal menus for their nutritional content against international standards. With the adoption of these new standards in New Zealand, the IDDSI working group and lead speech-language therapists in the health field are spending more time in kitchens assessing meals, and engaging and training chefs.

The full workshop content and explanations for activities are available to members as movie files. Please see the position paper on the NZSTA website if you are interested in using them in your area. •

If you have developed other IDDSI resources that you are willing to share, please send them to me.

Some of the activities undertaken in groups at the Bupa workshop:

- 1 What level am I?**  
Look at the list of meals and desserts. Discuss which level each one fits into.
- 2 Adjust that level**  
Choose a meal and drink on list and consider how you could adjust the level up or down?
- 3 The vegetable challenge**  
Pick one vegetable. Use the microwave to create a regular vegetable side dish, *soft & bite-sized* vegetable side and *minced & moist* vegetable side. Avoid defaulting to puree! Next, use the testing methods to test your vegetable sides and adapt them until they meet the IDDSI requirements.

# Communicating without “talking”: An AAC user shares his experience

Thane Pullan, adapted from his speech to speech-language therapy students at the University of Canterbury

If people don't communicate with others frequently it is not good for their mental health. It is essential that they can do this easily. Speech-language therapists should ensure that people feel as comfortable with communicating as possible.



Thane Pullan, author and AAC user

Some parents place more importance on the mobility aspect of disability by participating in programmes to improve walking, for example. I think that dealing with communication issues should also have priority and speech-language therapists can help parents to understand the importance of communication.

Communication access can lead to employment opportunities. For example, Lost Voice Guy is a comedian who delivers jokes using a communication device. The same assistive technology can be used to deliver speeches, or even write books.

I know a child who refused to use communication aids. Perhaps letting people know of famous people with disabilities, such as Stephen Hawking or Lost Voice Guy, could be a way of encouraging reluctant communicators.

Communication possibly affects empathy levels. People are more likely to understand what others are going through if they have face-to-face conversations. Sometimes I am less empathetic because I don't communicate with people often enough.

I am blunter than regular people because it takes me so long to communicate. I prefer to get my thoughts out quickly,

but this isn't always best, especially when dealing with carers and employees. However, this can also be an advantage as I was briefly a comedian and bluntness makes good comedy.

Slower communication can sometimes feel like a burden, so I don't routinely chat online.

Sometimes slower communication can be a burden to the other person. If someone you know is acting like your communication method is troublesome perhaps you can find another way to communicate with them (for example, via email).

Usually devices or people can predict what the person is spelling, so completing the entire word is not necessary. This can be useful, but some people constantly predict the wrong word, and this slows the conversation down.

Since communication is slow, sometimes the conversation shifts to a new topic before the person finishes typing what they were going to say. Most of the time, people will talk while someone is typing but I find this less stressful than having people wait silently. However, it can be annoying when you are typing a good point and someone else says it right before you have finished!

In conversations with multiple speakers, it can be difficult to find a time to jump. Especially if it takes you a few seconds to activate the speaking functions. I have accepted that sometimes I need to blurt out what I have to say. Hopefully, people understand why I do that.

## Communicating without high-tech assistive devices

Starting from a young age, children can learn to point to pictures on a tray. For example, they could have a symbol for toilet, yes and no. If they are not in a wheelchair, the symbols could be in a small book or they could press buttons on a device to communicate. If they later learn to spell, the symbols can turn into letters, so they can communicate effectively.

When some people see letters on a tray, they assume that they must point to the letters themselves. This is fine if you cannot hear but it can be annoying otherwise. Having a note saying that others don't need to spell is a good idea.

## Using technology to communicate

Some people can also use a computer or specific device to communicate. If they cannot type they can use an eye tracking or a scanning system, though

“Speech-language therapists can help parents to understand the importance of communication.”  
– Thane

these methods are typically slower than regular typing.

Eye tracking occurs when a camera is used to track someone's eyes to determine where they are looking. This is typically quicker than scanning but some devices only function well in certain lighting conditions. Since this can be slower than regular typing, chatting to another person can be time-consuming and other people can be impatient.

When I have a meeting, I sometimes type everything that I intend to say beforehand, especially if I'm the chairperson. There have been times when I have typed up a letter to my doctor to give him – this is useful if you need privacy.

If you want to communicate with a specific business, you can probably email them or text them. It can help to let them know you cannot talk and how you communicate. If you operate a business and want more information on being accessible, check out the People with Disabilities website.

It is worthwhile having a natural sounding voice and quality speakers to minimise problems hearing your device. This is important when you go to places like

restaurants. It can be good to have a person with you who can read what's on your screen in case problems occur.

You also need to be mindful of issues relating to addiction and overuse. I work on the computer about 15 hours a day with small breaks for meals, but this is my choice. I try not to communicate electronically after 10pm to help avoid insomnia.

## Which communication method works best?

I can tell you that having several communication methods works better than having one. Devices can fail, so having a technology-based method and a method that doesn't use technology is important. People who don't know the person with a communication impairment well might cope better when technology is utilised.

I primarily communicate over email or text by using eye tracking with nine predicted words to choose from. Most of my family can read my communication tray which mostly contains letters and numbers.

The key for effective communication is finding the systems that work for the individual. ●

# X Force: A communication solution for young adults

Fern Maxwell

At the end of 2017, we identified a gap in support for young Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) users. We had a number of teenagers and young adults who were not using, or were reluctant to use, their AAC systems because they felt they were the only person who needed to use them.

Many of these students used some verbal communication, however they were mostly only intelligible to familiar communication partners or were relying on people who knew them well to anticipate their needs. As a result, we invited a number of young people to attend a group at TalkLink Trust as a pilot project.

We have been able to run groups each term this year with great success. A primary aim of the group was to facilitate genuine and meaningful interactions between young people aged 14 to 24. The young people were fully engaged and took ownership of the group, giving it an awesome name: X Force! They identified topics they wanted to cover such as gaming, blogging, sharing their experiences and even investigating elements of social media such as Snapchat.

With the Giving Voice Aotearoa campaign in the back of our minds, we facilitated a conversation around "what does communication mean to you?" It was more successful than we could have hoped. The group of 10 young people wanted to share what communication meant to them, but they absolutely did not want to be in front of the camera! So, the group researched other awareness campaigns (mostly led by speech-language therapists) and came across *The Language Stealers* video made by a group of AAC users. Then our group's project was decided – a comic strip.



The group identified their main problems:

- Being interrupted part-way through a message
- Communication partners attempting to guess the message before it has been completed
- Communication partners underestimating their abilities
- Not being given sufficient time to complete their message in a conversation.

The group wanted the comic book characters, the X Force, to save their peers from these day-to-day problems. They scripted, narrated and illustrated a story book. The group are so happy with the final product and hope that it helps bring awareness of *their* voices. •

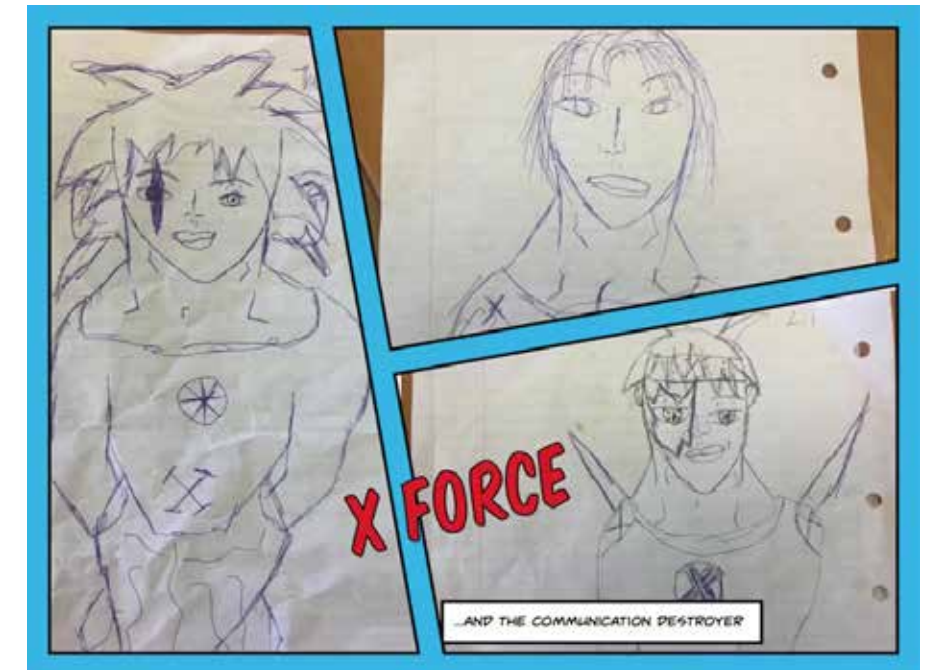


Opposite page and left:

The group worked together to make a storyboard and mind map their ideas for their own comic strip.

Bottom:

X Force to the rescue! The finished product.





# Way to Play: A case study

Julia Woodward, Practice & Implementation Advisor, Ministry of Education

Last issue we featured an article on Way to Play strategies implemented by the Ministry of Education and Autism NZ. This issue we learn more through an impact case study.

## What were things like before Way to Play?

Joe aged almost 3, attends daycare four days a week. His mother Mei reported that Joe was a happy child and emotionally regulated. His focus was on objects rather than people and he was not yet using words. Mei was worried that she was not doing enough. She was also concerned about the lack of social interaction and connection with her child. Mealtimes were a “nightmare”.

Priya, head teacher at Joe’s daycare, and her team wanted to know how to increase social interaction for Joe. They were concerned that he had little interest in people. It was challenging for Priya and her team to get Joe to follow centre routines.

Prior to Way to Play, Katryna, a speech-language therapist working with Joe, had few practical strategies to share with parents and families struggling to connect with their children with autism.

## What happened?

Katryna and Mei had a Routines Based Intervention (RBI) conversation to help Mei identify her priorities. Her goals focused on participation in daily routines, especially mealtimes, and communicating using words.

Mei attended a half-day Way to Play session and then talked through the strategies with Katryna at home. Initially, Mei found it difficult and spent a lot of time “being the entertainer”, but Katryna talked through “serve and return” interaction and following a little bit of video feedback, Mei tried again. Mei learnt to build a pattern with variations and a memory catchphrase that helped redirect Joe back to the pattern.

At daycare, Katryna introduced Way to Play through a one-hour session with Priya using videos and written resources. Priya then implemented the strategies with Joe and this was followed by a video-coaching session. They focused on establishing patterns that were engaging before introducing variation. Another coaching session two weeks later used videoclips that Priya had taken of herself implementing the strategies.

## What were the results?

In the four months since the RBI and the introduction of the Way to Play strategies there has been “a huge, huge change”. The interactions between Joe and the adults closest to him have been transformed: there is more connection, more trust and everyone is more relaxed.

The intervention has impacted all areas of learning. Joe is now using 13 words.

“Giving the family and the centre the power to do this ... has meant the progress has been incredible – it’s blown me away because I haven’t seen that amount of rapid progress [before].”  
– Katryna

Mealtimes are easier as he will sit and try different foods. He now interacts with the other children at daycare and plays with his siblings.

Priya and Joe have developed a “really beautiful” relationship. They were recently chasing each other on bikes using pattern, memory and variation as the basis for their interaction. The teachers also use the strategies to make routines easier. For example, they now use a memory catchphrase to get Joe to the table for mealtimes, previously a very stressful time of day. Joe is more aware of other children, and the teachers have included other children in games using these strategies. For example, the children have been jumping off a beam holding hands.

Mei is more confident as a parent. She is now feeling good about what she is doing for her child. She has stopped the one-to-one private speech-language therapy sessions and now says “I do speech therapy with him every day!”. Mei feels more in tune with Joe and has the skills to support her child’s development. She has introduced concepts like “all gone” and “stop” and Joe is now using these too.

The next steps are to involve Joe’s father more, to support more teachers at daycare

to implement the strategies, and for Mei to expand the strategies outside of the home, for example, going to the park.

## What contributed to success?

“Going in with the confidence from knowing that if we find the right pattern it will work – sharing that with the family was really helpful – give this a go – even if it doesn’t work the first time, keep going!”

Priya says “the videos are a fantastic tool to have as it helps you to see the interaction in a different way, pick up where you could improve ... and gives you extra confidence”.



## Way to Play terms:

### Pattern

A repeated set of actions

### Memory catchphrase

Like an advertising jingle, that reminds you of something. Used here to remind of joyful interaction

### Variation

Slight changes to the pattern

Source: [www.waytoplay.co.nz](http://www.waytoplay.co.nz)

Using the RBI at the beginning of service got everyone onboard and motivated. By focusing on social interaction as a foundation, goals in other areas have been achieved without doing specific intervention for them.

## Final thoughts from Mei

“Before Way to Play, I felt lost and had no knowledge or confidence to help Joe progress. I needed guidance [but] was initially sceptical about what Way to Play could offer me, but ... I quickly began to realise how much I could learn. I have a better understanding of Joe now, I learnt what autism really felt like for him, why children with autism do what they do, who are the best people to help him, how to tackle tricky situations and when to celebrate success.

“With these new skills I went home and got out of my comfort zone. I started acting silly with Joe, and immediately achieved an engaging playtime with him. We have celebrated with lots more fun play every day since.

“Pattern, memory and variation worked very well for Joe. My husband and Joe’s sisters also have adapted [these strategies] and Joe is now a much happier, playful and very cheeky boy.”

All names are pseudonyms.

# Giving Voice Aotearoa Awareness Week

## 16–22 September 2018

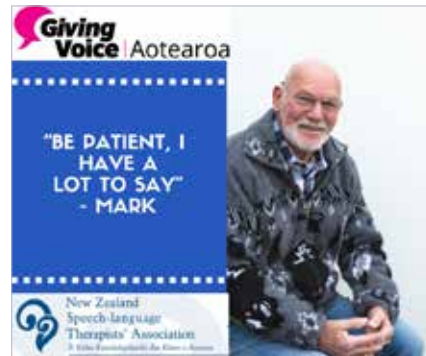
400,000 Kiwis have a communication disability, including an inability to speak and be heard easily, processing spoken and written language, and reading and following signs. Around the country, speech-language therapists raised awareness of communication disabilities and their role in ensuring everyone has a voice. •



**Top:** Canterbury University hosted a bake sale to fundraise for the Christchurch Aphasia Hub to ride another rail trail down south... never ever give up!

**Bottom left:** Message from NZSTA's Giving Voice Aotearoa social media campaign.

**Bottom right:** Aphasia education at Rotorua Library.



“ We learnt how to be patient, put in the effort to understand, and invest in communication.”  
– Tracy



**Quote and top right image:**

Messages from NZSTA's Giving Voice Aotearoa social media campaign.

**Left:** Communication stand at Kelston Deaf Education Centre.

**Far left:** The Speech and Language Therapist's Club at Massey University raised awareness using alternative communication methods with the public at their barbecue.



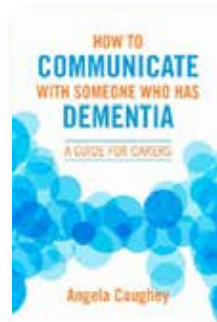


# “The person with dementia is still there inside”

Kate Hedworth

Angela Caughey joined Brain Day Auckland: The Amazing Brain. Angela was a panellist discussing the topic *Living Well with Dementia: research, community and care*. She talked passionately about her personal experience caring for her husband who had dementia for over 12 years, and generously provided heartfelt yet practical advice to Brain Day patrons.

Angela further shares her expertise in her book *How to Communicate with Someone Who Has Dementia: A Guide for Carers*. As a speech-language therapist, this book has given me valuable advice and insight into the journey taken by those caring for people with dementia. It has a unique perspective and is dedicated in its focus on making communication possible with people often seen as hopelessly unreachable. Angela writes not only of her own experience and suggestions, but shares the stories of others, illustrating the variety of situations and challenges faced by carers supporting their loved ones (or not-so-loved-ones as Angela writes with refreshing honesty).



**How to Communicate with Someone Who Has Dementia: A Guide for Carers**  
by Angela Caughey

Published by Calico Publishing, May 2018

128 pages

RRP \$35

“The person with dementia is still there inside” – a message repeated throughout this publication, and it certainly is a message worth repeating. Angela weaves empathy and compassion into pragmatic chapters educating her readers about common types of dementia and providing practical examples of communication strategies in action.

I recommend this book for professionals and carers alike, to find easy-to-read advice and support, as well as to gain insight into the experience of brave individuals who are getting on with whatever life throws their way. ●



## Area updates

### Northland

22 members

Eleven members attended our winter meeting. Everyone has been working away over the winterless north winter and is looking forward to warmer and sunnier days. We have welcomed Cindy Blades and Vallari Chavan to Whangarei Hospital on maternity leave contracts, and Caroline Bartholomew now has a permanent position at the hospital. Denise Poole has started at Blomfield School. Denise has recently moved to New Zealand from South Africa. ●

Lucy Schumacher

### Auckland

317 members

It has been my privilege to represent the greater Auckland region over the last year, carrying on from the great work done by Fern Jones. Auckland is home to the highest number of NZSTA members, who come from health, education, research, as well as private practice.

It has been a busy year for our members, particularly the last month. Our members participated in the Giving Voice Aotearoa Week of Action in various and highly creative ways. Several organisations around the city championed the Giving Voice Aotearoa posters and postcards, and two speech-language therapists from Middlemore Hospital ate only pureed foods for a week (I’m looking forward to reading about their experience). A strong contingent made the trip to Dunedin for the NZSTA Professional Development Symposium. We have welcomed many new members (including new graduates and new arrivals to our shores), and several have found the NZSTA’s information and support network highly useful.

The shift to a predominantly teleconference-led area meeting has been met with positive feedback from our members, who appreciate the flexibility and accessibility of the new format, although some have lamented the loss of the “social” aspect of meetings. The meetings have regularly have 45 to 60 participants, and though

not always the most verbose crowd they continue to engage and contribute to the member network on a regular basis. We also receive contributions from overseas members, who can provide an international perspective (for example, the IDDSI update and various awareness programmes).

The Auckland region has hosted many professional development courses, including an excellent workshop by Dr Caroline Bowen. We look forward to an exciting year ahead with upcoming opportunities in many areas including AAC, dysphagia, literacy and phonological awareness, and cleft palate and velopharyngeal insufficiency (VPI). There is also regular patronage to various special interest groups, and these continue grow year on year.

Thank you to all the members, both vocal and silent, who continue to advocate for us, our colleagues, and the communities we work with. I look forward to being of service in the year ahead – same Bat-time, same Bat-channel. I’d also like to take this opportunity to thank Philippa Friary for her



incredible contribution to the NZSTA and the profession. We have greatly benefited from her presence in our meetings. And finally, hearty congratulations to Annette Rotherham, our new NZSTA president! We look forward to an exciting chapter for the NZSTA. •

*Akshat Shah*

## Waikato/Bay of Plenty

72 members

Tēnā koutou katoa. This year has been another exciting one with lots of collaboration and change. Annabelle Hastings (née Blue) stepped down as our area representative and I have had the privilege of taking on the role. Our area covers a wide region. We continue to have attendance from both MOE, DHB employees as well as those in private practice which has taught us about the different challenges and successes across sectors.

There have been many staffing changes with new roles being introduced to further promote the speech-language therapy profession within allied health and beyond in the health sector. Meghann Grawburg has been appointed to the professional lead role at Bay of Plenty District Health Board (BOPDHB) and myself as clinical lead in Waikato DHB. Biddy Robb is now in a permanent role at Tairāwhiti DHB and they are involved in the rural interprofessional education programme (TIPE). BOPDHB finished their involvement with the VERSE research and are eagerly awaiting the

results of early intervention for patients with aphasia. Dr Robin Matthews from BOPDHB successfully defended his PhD in research around singing and its impact on voice in Parkinson's disease.

The members have been very supportive and enthusiastic which has been very much appreciated! It is an exciting time to be a member of the NZSTA and I hope to continue to share all my learnings and passion with my area members. Tama tu, tama ora; tama noho, tama mate kai (he who stands, lives; he who sits, perishes). The NZSTA has certainly been standing this year and we all need to continue to stand with them and appreciate all they do for us and our profession. Ngā manaakitanga. •

*Gwen Kerrison*

## Wellington/Nelson

89 members

For Giving Voice Aotearoa, we prepared a lesson plan to share with schools and passed out lots of posters to libraries, Work and Income New Zealand offices, Minister of Parliament offices, hospitals, and even a veterinary clinic!

Many in our area attended the NZSTA Professional Development Symposium. Naomi Bondi presented her research with the Wellington Aphasia Relaxation Group; Sarah Spence and Claire-Ellen Brewer presented *CommunicAprons: A Tool to Support Total Communication at Kimi Ora School*; Gabi Iseli talked about dysphagia following spinal cord surgery;

and I presented literacy instruction with adults with intellectual disabilities.

Amanda White's doctoral work continues with Talking Matters. Heather Drysdale's autism spectrum disorder teen girl meet up is going well at Hutt Valley Child Development Team. MoE's fluency group sessions continue in the Porirua-Tawa-North Wellington area with preschool, early school age, and pre-adolescent groups. REAP Wairarapa is starting an oral language initiative in early 2019. Nelson-Marlborough Child Development Service wishes Helen McLauchlan all the best in her new endeavour. They also are making changes following their communication access self-audit. •

*Shannon Hennig*

## Canterbury/Westland

184 members

This year of meetings have flown by! Thank you to everyone coming along in person, "Zooming in" or adding comments to the minutes – it's a great way to share everyone's thoughts and bring people together.

This year our practicing members have supported and provided professional development events, especially for our NZSTA student members. A big thanks goes to Brenda Sargent-Bradley, Jody Govan, Morgan Curry, Ashleigh Neumann and Carol Croy. They have shared their knowledge on topics such as "SLTs supporting with paediatric feeding in the community", "working overseas as

an SLT" and "working in private practice". Thanks also to Charis Siow, Helena Sincock and Livvy Pride for organising these well-attended events. We look forward to the student representatives running these events again next year. •

*Ruth Ramsay & Kate Cook*

## University of Canterbury

40 members

Our Giving Voice Aotearoa bake sale on campus was a highlight in our week of action. We worked with aphasia advocate Junelle Robinson and her friends to create a baking and scone stall to raise money for the Aphasia Rail Trail Fund. Across two days, we raised \$854 – this exceeded our expectations! It was fantastic to have the student speech-language therapist community rally together to donate baking and time. We were able to educate the university community on what we do as speech-language therapists, whilst also helping a great cause.

We aim to continue with our student professional development events next year. We are currently considering discussions on foetal alcohol syndrome, working in Paris, and working with Parkinson's disease. •

*Helena Sincock & Livvy Pride*

## Otago/Southland

54 members

Attendance at meetings has ranged from 7 to 9 members with a few attending remotely. At the end of June 2018 Kathryn Palmer stood down as area representative and I took over role. I would like to thank Kathryn on behalf of the members for doing a great job.

Area meetings continue to pose a technical challenge to ensure all members meeting via Zoom can hear adequately. We are keen to resolve this as effective remote access is critical for our very wide geographical region. Whilst our attendees work with a wide cross-section of client groups, we would welcome increased representation from Ministry of Education (MoE) speech-language therapists as most attendees work for Ministry of Health (MoH) or in private practice.

Members have embraced the Giving Voice Aotearoa campaign. We have passionate champions, Bridget McArthur, Alison Zani and Warren Cossou, who have some great ideas for raising awareness. There have been a range of initiatives already: articles in local newspapers, meeting with a local councillor, communication training for hospital reception staff and Driving Miss Daisy staff. Looking to the future, the Southern District Health Board (SDHB) team we would love to help make the new Dunedin Hospital as communication accessible as possible.

There have been many changes of staff in the region partly due to a high number of speech-language therapist babies arriving this year!

Members who attended the ISAAC (International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication) conference in Australia gave very positive feedback and shared some useful resources. Since the NZSTA Professional Development Symposium was held in Dunedin this year, we had good representation at the event. There was a wide range of high-quality presentations, made all the better by the opportunity to network with fellow speech-language therapists and the lovely food on offer to keep the grey matter working. Dunedin also came to the party with some lovely spring weather.

The Aphasia NZ group in Dunedin continues to thrive and grow due to the enthusiasm of Alison Zani, regional Aphasia NZ coordinator, and invaluable transport assistance from Driving Miss Daisy, who received a Communication Access Award at the symposium.

IDDSI (International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative) implementation is ongoing in the region, posing some challenges for the SDHB team due to the diet texture terminology currently used by their food service provider. •

*Meryl Jones*

# Member networks

Jodi White [membernetworks@speechtherapy.org.nz](mailto:membernetworks@speechtherapy.org.nz)



Kia ora koutou,

It was wonderful to see so many people at the recent NZSTA Professional Development Symposium. On a personal level, it was wonderful to meet some of our area and student representatives who are doing such a great job keeping us connected.

Thank you all for your continued support of the area meetings and feedback to the NZSTA Board's responses. We have addressed queries that arose from the recent round of area meetings. Please also remember to check the NZSTA website to access the national collated minutes as these are not emailed. If you would like your area's meeting minutes, please contact your area representative.

Ngā mihi,  
**Jodi**

## Member queries for the NZSTA Board

**Q:** What is the ratio of non-member to member SLTs?

**A:** Based on the most recent census, approximately 1200 people in New Zealand state they are speech-language therapists. NZSTA has a membership of just over 800 (including student members). This is a great membership proportion and enables us to have more power as a collective force.

**Q:** Can we have the second Giving Voice Aotearoa poster uploaded to the website, so members can then download?

**A:** We are not planning to do this as the quality of poster when downloaded from the website is quite poor. The banner will be available for use on Facebook and Twitter. This has been shared with members via the area representatives.

**Q:** Can the NZSTA provide upfront funding for invited speakers or presenters to member-hosted events? Often the initial cost is too much for members to pay personally and wait for reimbursement.

**A:** This is a great question. Some assistance may be available if the event meets criteria. Please check the professional development policy on the NZSTA website. For further advice, contact Claire Winward, the professional development portfolio holder. We are also looking at updating our professional development policy and will consider this request, as financial assistance of this type would need to be written into the budget.

## Update to last issue's queries

**Q:** There is a gap in service for students who use a communication system and have an ongoing need for speech-language therapy input after they leave school. What can we do?

**A:** This is something that NZSTA takes seriously and our previous response to this query was an error. There are several ways we are trying to support these students. NZSTA Board Members Annette Rotherham and Anna Miles recently met with Minister of Disability Issues Carmel Sepuloni to discuss communication access for people with disabilities. NZSTA is an active member

of the Access Alliance and the Access Matters campaign working towards better service to New Zealanders with communication disabilities throughout the lifespan. Also, TalkLink Trust can continue to be involved with clients after they leave school if they have a trust-issued device.

**Q:** Several queries have been received by members wanting to know how to obtain continuing professional development (CPD) points when working in a role such as a manager with minimal face-to-face clinical component.

**A:** There are plenty of ways to earn points without face-to-face contact. Please refer to the CPD Log Information page on the NZSTA website with links to policy and FAQ documents for more information. For specific advice, please contact Claire Winward, the professional development portfolio holder. ●

# Professional standards

Dr Anna Miles [professionalstandards@speechtherapy.org.nz](mailto:professionalstandards@speechtherapy.org.nz)



Thank you everyone who joined us in Dunedin for our annual general meeting and NZSTA Professional Development Symposium.

## Parliamentary & Government submissions

We have received the announcement of the Ministry of Education Draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan release. Feedback is due by 31 October. You can find the draft plan on [beehive.govt.nz](http://beehive.govt.nz).

This action plan is positive for our communities. There is a focus on increased support, early assessment, cross-disciplinary and cross-sector working, well-being and resilience, and improved coordination of services. The NZSTA, however, feel the voice of the speech-language therapist is critical to ensure the action plan truly works for children.

Members' opinions are greatly needed. The NZSTA Board and Expert Adviser Group have created a member survey

to support the NZSTA's response. Feel free to respond independently or from your workplace. You should have received the survey via email.

Thank you for your support in communication access advocacy.

## Registration & regulation

From 1 January 2019, all full members will be able to call themselves a "speech-language therapist registered member with the NZSTA".

The NZSTA are working with employers and encouraging the public to only engage in an agreement with speech-language therapists registered with the NZSTA. More information can be found on the NZSTA website.

## Upcoming NZSTA policy

- Prosthetic Surgical Voice Restoration (SVR): The role of the speech and language therapist.
- New Zealand speech-language therapy clinical practice guideline on children's eating, drinking and swallowing (paediatric dysphagia).

**Anna**



# Māori & cultural development

Renee Taylor [culturaldevelopment@speechtherapy.org.nz](mailto:culturaldevelopment@speechtherapy.org.nz)



Kia ora koutou,

We had a successful NZSTA Professional Development Symposium in Dunedin with a great turnout of members who gathered and shared their research and work experiences. Furthermore, we continue to support our indigenous whānau in Australia in preparation for our joint conference in Brisbane 2019. We also continue to work towards having an NZSTA kaumātua to help support and guide our association.

Being in this role for just over a year now I thought I'd take this opportunity to reflect and share with you the observations and challenges that I've encountered.

Firstly, I am very impressed with the commitment and eagerness from the NZSTA Board Members to embrace and support a kaupapa to address and improve Māori health outcomes.

Unfortunately, like many other organisations across sectors it appears that a tokenistic approach prevails. We talk about Māori in the third tense and, more concerning, in a deficit way. We are good at listing all the negative statistics but nowhere to be seen are examples of success. My current role has no specific description, no prerequisite of skillset or competencies. No outcomes or outputs. "Just do the Māori thing" – whatever that means. It seems the role is about ticking boxes, such as taking care of karakia, whakatau, pōwhiri or waiata at conference or seminar gatherings.

So my approach has been very personal. I am of Māori decent, I am also of Albanian, English and Scottish decent. I am monolingual. I was brought up agnostic/atheist but with Christian Orthodox values. I am passionate and will speak up wherever I witness injustice, unfairness or unethical behaviours or practices. I am also proud standing in the sun and casting my own shadow. I do not feel I need to fit in or become someone else's shadow. I will not be made to feel guilty or inadequate because I do not bless food or speak or write in fluent te reo Māori.

The success of this role will be measured by creating safe environments for participants from across the profession to feel free and valued, so they come forward, understand and actively engage in seeking, finding and implementing solutions to Māori inequity.

I will not support a "dial a kaumātua/kuia" or "only undertaken by Māori or only those who are proficient in te reo Māori" tokenistic approach.

I invite all our members to come forward and offer their support, experiences or suggestions, and to join me on this journey moving forward.

Ngā mihi,  
**Renee**

# Communications

Amy Oughton [communications@speechtherapy.org.nz](mailto:communications@speechtherapy.org.nz)



Kia ora from a very small town in South Canterbury!

This is my first update as the communications portfolio holder. Firstly, I would like to say that I feel very privileged and honoured to be given this opportunity and I look forward to working alongside the NZSTA Board and fellow speech-language therapists.

Seeing as many of you won't know me, I thought I would use this issue to tell you a bit about myself. I live in Twizel in the beautiful Mackenzie Country. I have a husband, a large and very loud dog, and a crazy but gorgeous one year old, Oscar, who keeps me on my toes!

I started my private practice almost two years ago and work across both health and education, offering services to all ages. Another part of my work is running the Mackenzie Performing Arts Academy for children and adults right across the Mackenzie Country. This academy aims

to inspire and develop children's and adults' communication skills, confidence and self-belief through drama, music and musical theatre performance. We also run a *Confident Communicators* holiday programme which is a combination of speech-language therapy, drama and musical theatre.

Prior to moving to Twizel, I worked at Christchurch Public Hospital. Christchurch is where I started developing my passion for awareness campaigning by getting involved in the International Communication Project and being the campaign lead for Giving Voice Aotearoa. After taking a break from these incredibly important campaigns to have my son, I am looking forward to getting involved again.

Accessibility is something that has always been important to me. Accessibility for those with a communication difficulty or disability, but also accessibility of service, especially for those living in a rural area. Where you live shouldn't restrict you from fulfilling your dreams, what you want to achieve, and especially from accessing services that you want or need.

I am very passionate about the work we do as speech-language therapists and believe we really do make a critical

difference in the lives of those we work with and within the communities we live in. We really are superheroes.

September has been a month full of inspiration and education, with the NZSTA Professional Development Symposium in Dunedin, Giving Voice Aotearoa Week of Action and International Accessible Information Day. After reflecting on this month, I hope many of you came away feeling just as inspired, motivated, educated and proud to call yourself a speech-language therapist in Aotearoa New Zealand as I did.

The last couple of weeks have been all about transition. Annette has been handing over her communications portfolio work and talking through new ways to drive awareness in 2019. I am really looking forward to working with Geneva, our Giving Voice ambassador, in our new consumer group, and designing a blueprint and a workshop for the next Giving Voice Aotearoa campaign. I have some big boots to fill! This will be a very exciting and busy nine months.

Take care,  
**Amy**

# Professional development

Claire Winward [professionaldevelopment@speechtherapy.org.nz](mailto:professionaldevelopment@speechtherapy.org.nz)



Kia ora koutou,

Well, it has been a busy few months organising the NZSTA Professional Development Symposium – I hope you’ll agree it was worth it!

The highlight of the symposium for me was seeing how closely aligned our seemingly diverse work can be. As we discovered, from newborn hearing screening to palliative care, the core skills that we bring to our roles are the same – empathy, collaboration, a passion for communication and, of course, lifelong learning. Every time I turned around, I saw speech-language therapists from different backgrounds and different areas engaged in robust practice discussion.

I would like to thank again everybody who took time out of their busy schedules to make this event such a great success:

- Our Keynote speakers – Jane Carroll (and her elusive brain) and Sue McDonnell. Thanks, Sue, for making me realise why I have never liked milk!
- All our other speakers – the standard was extremely high, as noted by Gaenor Dixon, president of Speech Pathology Australia (SPA). I hope some of you will join us across the ditch to share our homegrown research to a wider audience next year.
- Our student speakers – it was great to hear you share your research in such a confident and professional manner.
- Our student volunteers, Helena, Jacqui and Shauna – thanks for your willingness to take on every task we threw at you, and especially for writing all the personal thank you notes.
- All our session chairs – thanks for your help in making sure we could finish on time.

So, onwards and upwards! I am already looking forward to our joint conference with SPA in 2019 (especially as I don’t have to organise it). For those of you who are unable to make the trans-Tasman trip, we are in the throes of planning a Wellington-based NZSTA professional development event to coincide with our annual general meeting, so watch this space!

Ngā mihi mahana,  
**Claire**

## Contact details

### NZSTA Board Members

<b>President</b>	Annette Rotherham	<a href="mailto:president@speechtherapy.org.nz">president@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Communications</b>	Amy Oughton	<a href="mailto:communications@speechtherapy.org.nz">communications@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Member networks</b>	Jodi White	<a href="mailto:membernetworks@speechtherapy.org.nz">membernetworks@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Professional development</b>	Claire Winward	<a href="mailto:professionaldevelopment@speechtherapy.org.nz">professionaldevelopment@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Professional standards</b>	Anna Miles	<a href="mailto:professionalstandards@speechtherapy.org.nz">professionalstandards@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Māori and cultural development</b>	Renee Taylor	<a href="mailto:culturaldevelopment@speechtherapy.org.nz">culturaldevelopment@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>

### Area representatives

<b>Northland</b>	Lucy Schumacher	<a href="mailto:ar.northland@speechtherapy.org.nz">ar.northland@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Auckland</b>	Akshat Shah	<a href="mailto:ar.auckland@speechtherapy.org.nz">ar.auckland@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Waikato/Bay of Plenty</b>	Gwen Kerrison	<a href="mailto:ar.waikato.bop@speechtherapy.org.nz">ar.waikato.bop@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Central</b>	Elisa Mynen	<a href="mailto:ar.central@speechtherapy.org.nz">ar.central@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Wellington/Nelson</b>	Shannon Hennig	<a href="mailto:ar.wellington@speechtherapy.org.nz">ar.wellington@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Canterbury/Westland</b>	Kate Cook & Ruth Ramsay	<a href="mailto:ar.canterbury@speechtherapy.org.nz">ar.canterbury@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Otago/Southland</b>	Meryl Jones	<a href="mailto:ar.otago.southland@speechtherapy.org.nz">ar.otago.southland@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>

### Student representatives

<b>Massey University</b>	Jacqui Morgan, Brianna Oosterbroek & Bo Young Choi	<a href="mailto:sr.massey@speechtherapy.org.nz">sr.massey@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>University of Auckland</b>	Nicole Liley & Shauna Pali	<a href="mailto:sr.auckland@speechtherapy.org.nz">sr.auckland@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>University of Canterbury</b>	Livvy Pride & Helena Sincock	<a href="mailto:sr.canterbury@speechtherapy.org.nz">sr.canterbury@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>

### Other contacts

<b>National private practitioner members’ representative</b>	Bridget MacArthur	<a href="mailto:privatepractice@speechtherapy.org.nz">privatepractice@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>Administrator</b>	ONZL Limited	<a href="mailto:admin@speechtherapy.org.nz">admin@speechtherapy.org.nz</a> • +64 9 475 0214
<b>Speech, Language and Hearing Journal of APSSLH, HKAST &amp; NZSTA</b>	Editor: Anna Miles	<a href="mailto:professionalstandards@speechtherapy.org.nz">professionalstandards@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>
<b>NZSTA</b>	<a href="http://www.speechtherapy.org.nz">www.speechtherapy.org.nz</a> • <a href="mailto:admin@speechtherapy.org.nz">admin@speechtherapy.org.nz</a> • PO Box 302469, North Harbour, Auckland 0751	
<b>Communication Matters editor</b>	Karen Watson	<a href="mailto:editor@speechtherapy.org.nz">editor@speechtherapy.org.nz</a>



## Photos

# NZSTA Professional Development Symposium

The 2018 NZSTA Professional Development Symposium was held at Otago Museum, Dunedin, September 13–14. Copies of some presentations are available on the NZSTA website. •



### *Top left:*

Dervla Beaumont explains models of service delivery in her team-based approach for enhancing the vocabulary learning environment for children with language learning difficulties.

### *Top right:*

(Left to right) Jacqui Morgan, Helena Sincock and Shauna Pali, NZSTA student representatives and event volunteers, at the AGM.

### *Bottom:*

Philippa Friary gives her thanks and closing remarks as she stands down as president.



New Zealand  
Speech-language  
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*Te Kāhui Kaiwhakatikatika Roa Kōrero o Aotearoa*

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