**DISABILITY WORKING GROUP**

**Key Messages 21 March 2025**

Members: John Marrable, Kirsten Dixon, Paula Waby, Adam Hall, Jacqui Eggleton, Jaime Randhawa, Adam Hall, Te Aroha Aratangi,

Standing members: Kathryn Harkin,

Apologies: Philippa Henderson, Isabelle Jenkins

The Disability Working Group members met on Friday 21 March 2025

* Becks New and Sara Goff from Toitu te Waiora introduced themselves. They are a standard setting organisation who prepare qualifications for community, health and disability, social services. They are currently working on two new qualification. Also looking at micro-credentials which could be a professional development opportunity. They are doing this because through consultation it was identified that this disability education has been overlooked. They want to know what they should include in this training.
* Members suggested:
* Distinctions between disability, illness, disease etc. This is something people with neurological degenerative space struggle with. Assumptions regarding capabilities, e.g. person in a wheelchair.
* Better communication needed between whanau members and support workers to know how things are going and making it part of the training. Also professional/ethical boundaries.
* A lot of people don’t understand Deaf culture and people make a lot of assumptions.
* Allowing neurodiverse people time to get things out rather than jumping in and communicating for them. Shouldn’t take over just because it’s faster. Allowing appropriate independence so that people can grow.
* Understanding the role of a working dog.
* Becks advised that further webinars are being held and members invited to participate. Will be calling for interest in steering group members as well.
* Hidden Disability Sunflower is being rolled out on 31st March in Dunedin and Invercargill. Staff are enthusiastic and over 400 have completed the training so far. Rural hospitals will be rolled out later this year. Some lanyards available for consumers.
* John and Kathryn presented the revised Disability Action Plan for 2025. They have aligned this with the Te Waipounamu regional disability plan, as well as the Disability Capability Framework designed by the national team. Some actions have been removed – these are ones that are more likely to be implemented nationally such as accessibility changes to the website.
* Round Table:
* One member working with hospital around upcoming birth, to ensure that Deaf culture and NZSL are utilised. Has also had students working with her and hoping they will go on to use NZSL.
* Need for a whānau toilet in Invercargill hospital as members have reported negative feedback when taking older disabled children in.
* Compliment for the Southland audiology service.
* Members cited multiple examples of needing to repeat their needs several times to different health staff.
* Query as to whether there is a dentists body like WellSouth? Concern regarding accessibility as cannot get wheelchair in to a particular practice.
* Noted that the New Dunedin Hospital will have Braille on signage as well as Left Hand or Right Hand signage for toilets.
* Member has recently attended the national conference for intellectual disability which was very rewarding.