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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



KIA ORA AND WELCOME TO THE END OF 2021!

This eVision is pretty policy heavy. The latter part of the year has seen some significant government announcements and PVI has been invited to be part of some key pieces of work happening behind the scenes. This work is time-consuming and somewhat tedious in places *but* has the potential to see a major shift in approaches to disability, education, and social services.

I really missed seeing everyone at our Annual PVI Conference this year – usually this eVision would be reflecting on Conference and highlighting key speakers and topics.

Reminder for parents to join our PVI parent facebook group to keep up to date with regular conversations and happenings: facebook.com/groups/194420327255

2021 AGM



KIA ORA TĀTOU,

Thank you very much to all who took time to attend our Zoom AGM and/or who provided us with proxies. We just had a quorum, which was fantastic and meant we could proceed with the AGM, which is a very important part of our entity's legal requirements!

Congratulations to:

- Cilla McEwan elected to the Tangata Whenua position
- Kay Matthews elected to Central North Island position (one-year term)
- Pascale Parenteau elected to Lower North Island position
- Judith Hyslop, elected to Lower South Island position.

The Upper North Island position remains vacant. Following the AGM, the PVI Board held a short meeting and duly elected the following officers:

- Judith Hyslop, Board Chair
- Stacey Dodd, Board Vice Chair
- Nick Mackay, Board Treasurer
- Rebekah Graham, Acting Board Secretary

The PVI Board also wishes to thank Linda Moore-Carter for her service on the Board and our regret that we cannot thank you in person. We appreciate and value all the time that you have given over the past years.

Thank you also to Nikki Stokes who resigned earlier in the year and who has also served on the PVI Board for several years.

Again, our thanks to all who took the time to attend/ provide proxies. We look forward to an in-person conference and AGM at the Distinction Hotel the 16-18 September!

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!



KRISTINA (KAY) MATTHEWS

BOARD POSITION: CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND

Hi everyone, thank you for giving me the opportunity to help other parents of children with visual impairments.

I am the mother to two wonderful children who both have additional needs. My daughter is vision impaired and we live in Tauranga.

We have had quite a journey over the last seven years. At times it has been difficult to navigate the school, ACC and health systems. It has inspired me to advocate for our children so that they can thrive and be the best that they can be. I want our kids to be accepted, included and cherished.

I am proud to be a full-time home schooling mum. It was the only option open to us in order to give our kids the support they need to learn. I love meeting new people and if I can help one person then that is the measure of a good day for me. I run the BOP Homeschool Group which organises fun, social or education activities for children and their families in the Bay of Plenty region. It is a volunteer role that I love (which I currently spend about 20 hours a week doing for the community).

I worked at Lion Nathan for 10 years as a procurement manager and contracts manager. I did strategic sourcing in the corporate environment in Australia and New Zealand. One of my strengths is negotiation and mediation.

I like a giggle and I used to perform in an improv theatre troupe. In the holidays I teach kids team building, problem solving, logic and social skills in my improv and Brain Game classes. I welcome the opportunity to work with the PVI board in any capacity that helps their cause.



PASCALE PARENTEAU

BOARD POSITION: LOWER NORTH ISLAND

Pascale is the mother of a visually impaired 15-yearold daughter who has nystagmus in her left eye, no three dimensions in her vision, and has been with the Wellington eye clinic since she was born. She currently works for the Royal New Zealand Ballet as their education, community and accessibility manager.

In this role, Pascale has worked with the senior management team of the RNZB to ensure that education activities play a key role in meeting the aims of both the artistic and marketing departments while providing inspirational opportunities for a life-long relationship with dance.

Of relevance for PVI is that Pascale instigated and implemented the new accessibility-related strand, Access For All. This included creating and introducing an Arts Access Accessibility and Inclusion Policy. The RNZB Accessibility Strategic Commitment which underpins this was approved by the RNZB Board on 20 June, 2017.

Alongside this, Pascale has worked to enhance the RNZB Education offerings through the creation of new accessibility and inclusion initiatives such as the Sign Interpreted Backstage Tours, Relaxed and Sensory Friendly Performances, Touch Tours and Audio Described Performances, Department of Corrections Workshops in Prisons, Subsidised Transport for low decile schools for all school matinees, free Ballet in a Box community events throughout New Zealand, and in all centres a free companion seat available for disabled ticket holders.

We are all delighted to have both Kay and Pascale on the PVI Board and to work together to support PVI.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

KIA ORA TĀTOU!

It seems a long time since our Annual Conference back in 2020 and the world continues to keep changing in these 'tricky' times. We can no longer expect the 'norm' and I guess that this is one thing that the Parents of Vision Impaired are very good at – adapting! I was thrilled that our 2020 Annual Parent Conference went so well and huge thanks to the Conference Committee for working in such exceptional circumstances to allow our parent community to meet and have such a great time together. Like yourselves, I am disappointed that we are not meeting in person this year.

For a number of families, parents and grandparents and loved ones have not been able to travel from overseas to celebrate the Christmas season – either last year or the one coming. This is another stress and disappointment we have had to accept along with the rest of the "Team of 5 Million". For our family, Christmas last year was a time of doing some serious section tiding and landscaping at Krystal's flat. Krystal and Tim got a lot of pleasure in getting involved and now have their own barbeque patio, raised garden for planting flowers, shrubs and more, and a new lawn pathway. Shrubs are certainly not cheap to buy so it is a work in progress.

To say they have been 'interesting times' over the past year is an understatement. The challenging behaviours of the RNZFB has taken up a lot of time and energy of both myself and Rebekah. Many of our monthly Zoom Board meetings have been focused on these issues. There has been a lot of correspondence between us and RNZFB and a video conferencing meeting has taken place. This has detracted us from our core business but could not be overlooked as a Consumer Organisation of Blind Low Vision NZ. I am grateful for the support and collaboration that Kāpō Māori Aotearoa has shown.



An immediate threat to PVINZ was the security of future funding for our organisation under the terms that the RNZFB had set out in their updated Consumer policy along with the perceived 'caving in' to another consumer organisation. We have been actively attempting to get clarity on this decision by RNZFB but it has been difficult. Our EO has had to work extremely hard to secure additional funding to keep PVINZ financially stable, and this has involved taking on external work to supplement her wages. I am certainly grateful for all of Rebekah's efforts in doing this as well as the day-to-day business. We are indeed fortunate to have such a competent EO with so many strengths.

This year we have had Cilla accept the vacancy of Tangata Whenua. A very warm welcome to Cilla and the Board has appreciated your input and contributions over this past year. We farewell Linda who has served the PVI Board faithfully for four years and has been an integral member of our team. We also farewelled Nikki, who has been a valued Board member for five years, firstly as an Anywhere in NZ representative and then in the Central North Island position.

Both Linda and Nikki have had increased family responsibilities during COVID and as always, family comes first at PVINZ. We continue to look for Board members with understanding of our financial accountabilities who can guide the PVI Board on financial decision making. I am hopeful this resource may come from a successful appointment in one of our Board vacancies. Have you got these skills? I'd be very happy to have a chat with you and share more information about this position.

Collaboration continues to be the key to achieving outcomes for our Parent organisation. This year Nga Pae o te Maramatanga funded a small research project between us (PVINZ), Kāpō Māori Aotearoa and the University of Waikato.

We have also actively worked alongside the Access Alliance, Office for Disability Issues, Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health.

We saw some fruit of PVINZ's ongoing efforts (beginning with Paul Manning, carried on by David Heather, and now continued by Rebekah) in the announcement by Minister Sepuloni and Minister Little last month, with the creation of a new Ministry for Disabled People, new Accessibility Legislation, and the rollout of Enabling Good Lives across the country. Advocacy for families accessing the Education sector for their children remain ongoing.

Our EO, Rebekah, has appeared at several Parliament Select Committees via Zoom. This gives us a real voice at the decision-making level whilst supporting our partners in the Blind sector. Rebekah has submitted on multiple Inquiries and Bills, as well at local government level. She has consistently kept the needs of our children in front of decision-makers and advocated for better services. It is encouraging to note that the invites to contribute to various pieces of work in the sector are increasing and a clear that Rebekah is held in such high regard.

Our last Board meeting (face to face) was in Dunedin and all enjoyed their stay in our lovely city. We look forward to hosting the 2022 Annual Parent Conference here, and hope we can all look forward to enjoying this time together next year.

STAY SAFE AND STRONG.

NGĀ Ā MIHI MAIOHA,

JUDITH HYSLOP PVI BOARD CHAIR JULY 2020 TO JUNE 2021: OPERATIONS REPORT FROM THE EO



Right: Rebekah and Julie (PVI parents) present a parent perspective to students at Massey University's specialist teaching training course.

WHAT DID PVI DO?

1. Governance.

- Held Annual 2020 Parent Conference
- Held 2020 AGM with 5 Board members duly re-elected
- Held Zoom Board meetings (x5) alongside face-to-face Board meetings (July 2020, September 2020, February 2021, May 2021)
- **2. Support and advocacy.** Individual advocacy and support provided directly to PVI families in the following ways:
- Emails of support written for parents advocating for inclusive sport opportunities in all areas of sport
- Drafting up letters of complaint for parents and providing advice on responding to exclusion and discrimination
- Funding applications for adaptive equipment on behalf of families
- Facebook and Messenger interactions and conversations
- Phone and Zoom calls with parents

3. COVID-19 response.

- The additional stress and cognitive demand of a global pandemic and the impact of lockdown left Board members and parents alike with reduced capacity and facing additional challenges at home.
- PVI continued to manage COVID-19 and related lockdowns, information dissemination, and vaccine-related details as an organisation and on behalf of members
- Continued to work through lockdowns and manage organisational matters
- Applied for in this period (and received in October 2021 - the next reporting period) a joint project with Kāpō Māori Aotearoa and Blind Low Vision NZ from the Ministry of Health vaccine communications funding.
- Published PVI's COVID-19 response in 2020 in the SPEVI Journal¹.
- **4. Funding requests** (n=8) submitted to external funders.

¹ Graham, R. (2021). Barrier free supports for parents of a vision-impaired child during COVID-19. Journal of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment. 13(1) pp.52-57. Link: spevi.net/jspevi/

5. Submissions made to governing bodies: National (government) level written submissions. In every submission PVI centres the needs of blind, deafblind, low vision and vision impaired children and young people, and their parents/whānau. Doing so ensures that decision makers are aware of and have the needs of our families in mind when creating and implementing policies and laws. In many instances we were the only group presenting specifically from a vision-related perspective, and the only group advocating on behalf of children with vision loss:

- Education and Workforce Committee inquiry into school attendance
- Government Policy Statement on Housing and Urban Development
- Holidays (Parent-Teacher Interview Leave)
 Amendment Bill
- Incorporated Societies Bill written and oral submissions made
- Judgement of Debtors with Disabilities Amendment Bill 2020 - written and oral submissions made
- Long-Term Insights Briefing on youth at risk of long-term limited employment outcomes.
- Ministry of Education: proposal for the Education Review Office (ERO) to review professional learning and development (PLD) accessed by schools, kura and early learning services.
 Ministry of Education: Review of Interventions for Students with the Highest Level of Learning
- Support Needs. Individual submission on behalf of PVI and organised group submission by the ODI parent/whānau group.
- Ministry of Education: School Board elections review
- Ministry of Health: Feedback on next steps for transformation of the disability support system NZEI Pūaotanga: An independent review of primary school staffing in Aotearoa
- Oranga Tamariki (Youth Justice Demerit Points)
 Amendment Bill
- Petition of Citizens Advice Bureau New Zealand: Leave no-one behind - Campaign to address digital exclusion. Joint submission made with Access Advisors, Blind Low Vision and Kāpō Māori Aotearoa
- Productivity Commission Terms of Reference
- Social Security (Financial Assistance for Caregivers) Amendment Bill
- Teacher Aide paid hours, submitted in support



5. Regional level Advocacy:

- Arts 10-year plan submission for Wellington City Council
- Auckland Regional Long Term Plan submission
- Hamilton City Council Innovating Streets submission
- Hamilton City Council submission on e-scooters
- Otago Regional Council long term plan submission and transport plan submission
- Transport Plan Submissions for Dunedin City Council

5. Organisational level representation:

- PVI representation at Carers NZ 5-year strategic planning meeting
- PVI representation at Education for All (EFA) meetings
- PVI representation at Access Alliance meetings
- Letters to RNZFB Board regarding child representation
- Presentation to RTV students regarding working with families (Massey PG Cert)

6. Communications and online events.

- Email newsletters via MailChimp (n=12)
 eVision sent out in August 2020, December 2020,
 March 2021, and July 2021
- PVI website links with communications, emails, eVision, and is a key site for information
- Online events: BLENNZ webinar, Nan Jensen's education rights webinar, online event with Paula
- · Tesoriero the NZ Disability Rights Commissioner
- Facebook group and Facebook page as a key site for connecting parents and providing support and information

Above: This year PVI sponsored blind and low vision school students to attend the Royal New Zealand Ballet. Students had a "touch tour" of the costumes and set, and then attended an audio described performance of Firebird!

EO REPORT CONTINUED...

7. Collaborative working. Continued involvement with the wider blind and disability sector:

- PVI representation at Carers NZ 5-year strategic planning meeting
- PVI representation at NZEI Education for All (EFA) meetings
- PVI involvement with Access Alliance as
 a Steering Group member. The recently announced
 Accessibility Legislation by Minister Sepuloni is a
 significant win for the Access Alliance and for PVI
 as a founding member
- PVI representation at Blind Sector Network Aotearoa
- PVI representation at BANZAT meetings
- Founded the ODI parent/whānau group, which is now a key site for Ministry officials seeking feedback and consultation on issues
- Nga Pae o te Maramatanga Research Collaboration with Kāpō Māori Aotearoa and University of Waikato PVI input into future of children's services with BLENNZ and BLVNZ
- Aotearoa Collective parent programme co-design process with McKenzie Centre
- Application to Health Research Committee for a collaboration with Kāpō Māori Aotearoa for a series of hui in early 2022 to create a research programme for blind and low vision whānau.
- Collaborative book chapter published with EO's from Deafblind Aotearoa, Blind Citizens NZ and Kāpō Māori Aotearoa²

How well did PVI do it?

- 2020 AGM & Parent conference went well, PVI Board continues to function well
- · Members feel supported and empowered
- Information disseminated to parents in a timely and accessible fashion
- · Reduced success with funding this year.
- Submissions well received and information provided incorporated into national and regional strategies
- Increased number of electronic communications leading to increased engagement with parents members. Online events well received
- Collaborative working relationships exist across networks and continue to be developed to promote and meet the needs of members

Is anyone better off?

- Yes. Parent attendees at conference upskilled and connected. PVI Board now competently using Zoom, Google docs, and electronic communications
- Yes. Parents felt supported and empowered to advocate for their child as a result of their conversations and communications with PVI
- Yes. Member able to access relevant and timely COVID-19 and vaccine-related information
- Yes. Funding means PVI can continue to support parents and run our annual parent conference
- Yes. Needs of PVI parents are kept before decisionmakers and are considered with regards to legislative change at a national and a regional level
- Yes. Increased communications has seen an increase in connections across the membership and contributes to a sense of belonging. Facebook group membership continues to grow steadily. Attendees at online events provided positive feedback
- Yes. We are stronger together. Working collaboratively eases the individual load and means PVI can continue to have long-term impact

Financial report

If you want a copy of PVI's most recent audited accounts, you can find them here, on our website:

Financial report pvi.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/PVI-FS-Review-Report-2021.pdf

² Graham, R., Masters-Awatere, B., Cowan, C., Stevens, A., Wilkinson, R. (2021). COVID-19 and blind spaces: Responding to digital (in)accessibility and social isolation during lockdown for blind, deafblind, low vision, and vision impaired persons in Aotearoa New Zealand. In B. Doucet, R. van Melik, & P. Filion (Eds). Global reflections on COVID-19 and urban inequalities. Volume 1: Community and Society. Chapter 21. pp 234-244. London; Bristol University Press. Available via bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/volume-i-community-and-society

SOCIAL COHESION WORKING GROUP



THE OTHER SIGNIFICANT PIECE OF WORK
THAT PVI'S EO (REBEKAH) HAS BEEN INVITED
TO PARTICIPATE IN IS PART OF A MUCH LARGER
PIECE OF WORK RELATED TO SOCIAL COHESION.
THE SOCIAL COHESION WORKING GROUP HAS
BEEN TASKED WITH CREATING A FRAMEWORK
THAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN USE ACROSS ALL
ITS POLICIES AND PIECES OF WORK TO CREATE
AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY THAT IS RESISTANT
TO EXTREMISM.

The work initially grew out of the wider response to recommendations from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain (mosques). However, the focus of the working group is to consider all the ways in people are excluded and how this can be more effectively addressed in policies and work approaches.

It is pretty policy-wonk heavy! But great to see the high value being placed on PVI's voice and the voices of our parents and families, and the recognition being given to the family/whānau experience.

Press release on the social cohesion programme: beehive.govt.nz/release/social-cohesionprogramme-address-incitement-hatred-anddiscrimination

NEW MINISTRY OF HEALTH FUNDED PROJECT - KĀPŌ VACCINE COMMUNICATIONS!











KĀPŌ MĀORI AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND (KMA), PARENTS OF VISION IMPAIRED - NZ (PVI) AND BLIND LOW VISION NZ (BLVNZ) ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THEIR COLLABORATION ON AN IMPORTANT INITIATIVE FOR THE BLIND, DEAFBLIND, LOW VISION AND VISION IMPAIRED COMMUNITIES.

This initiative is supported by the Ministry of Health - Manatū Hauora. The initiative aims to create and disseminate relevant, timely and useful information relating to the Government's vaccine rollout plan, in accessible formats for this community, many of whom are listed in Group 3 and 4. The barriers faced by this community are intersectional and prevent access to important information.

By standing together and combining efforts, the collaboration aims to significantly reduce these barriers and tailor communications to the needs of the various groups in our shared community. The content will be co-designed with membership of KMA, PVI and BLVNZ and will ensure that everyone in our shared communities is supported to make informed decisions with regards to the vaccination and access equity of information shared.

The initiative, named 'Kāpō Vaccine Communications', will include the development of a series of short, clear, audio-described videos for our community, created in multiple languages and accompanied by resources provided in a range of accessible formats. This initiative is supported by the COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunisation Disabled Peoples Communications Fund, Ministry of Health. The collaboration are grateful for the support of the Ministry of Health for this initiative and look forward to sharing the resources with their communities in due course.

As part of the above project, we'd love to hear from PVI families! Take a video of yourself and/or your family and upload to our google folder (or you can DM a link to Rebekah on facebook.com/rebekah.graham.90/ or email her rgraham@pvi.org.nz)

CHANGES IN THE DISABILITY SECTOR

MINISTER FOR DISABILITY ISSUES, CARMEL SEPULONI AND THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, ANDREW LITTLE HAVE ANNOUNCED SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO THE DISABILITY SYSTEM, AS WE TAKE STEPS TOWARDS MAKING AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND A NON-DISABLING SOCIETY.

You can watch their announcement in full on Attitude Live. attitudelive.com/read/announcement-on-disability-system-transformation-and-accessibility/

The key changes are:

- New accessibility legislation
- Creation of a new Ministry for Disabled People (actual name tbc)
- Nationwide rollout of Enabling Good Lives

PVI is working hard to keep the needs of parents and families at the forefront of decision makers and to contribute where we can to this process.

NEW ACCESSIBILITY LEGISLATION

THE ACCESS ALLIANCE (OF WHICH PVI IS A FOUNDING MEMBER) HAS WORKED VERY HARD OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS TO GET THIS ACCESSIBILITY LEGISLATION ACROSS THE LINE. THIS INCLUDES ENSURING CROSS-PARTY SUPPORT SO THAT THE LEGISLATION IS ENACTED NO MATTER WHICH PARTY IS IN GOVERNMENT.



The Access Alliance also recently launched a report by an independent legal research group and funded by the New Zealand Law Foundation: Making New Zealand Accessible: A Design for Effective Accessibility Legislation. The report sets out the legislative design required to make the Access Alliance's vision real: to put Accessibility Legislation at the heart of a more inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand. It details how to create an integrated, people-centred, person-directed system that will remove barriers for disabled people and their whānau.

The Access Alliance held an online follow-up explainer and Q&A session to go through the report the day before Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Disability Issues announced that the Government will introduce accessibility legislation into Parliament by July 2022. The report and the explainer session are available in full on the Access Matters website.

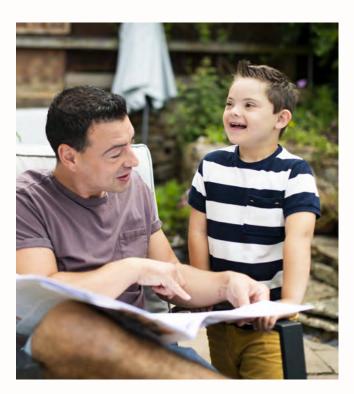
From here, the Access Alliance and PVI will work to ensure that the accessibility legislation is as strong as possible to create an inclusive, enabling society across all sectors of life.

SAVE THE DATE - 2022 PVI CONFERENCE & AGM



We have re-scheduled our annual conference for 16-18 September 2022, at the Distinction Hotel, Dunedin. After having to cancel for Covid-19 and lockdown related reasons, all our fingers and toes are crossed that we can meet together for a drink and a laugh and some fun in 2022!

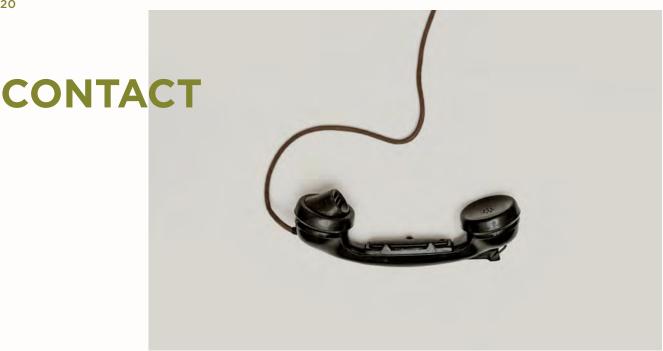
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION - HIGHEST NEEDS (ORS) REVIEW



Thank you to all the parents who contributed to our submission on this important and relevant review. PVI is delighted to announce that our EO, Rebekah Graham, has been invited to be on the Advisory Group for this review. There will no doubt be many, many meetings as this review is undertaken and it is so important to have someone there who represents the needs of our families and who understands the barriers children and parents face.

You can read more about the review on the MOE website here: education.govt.nz/our-work/changes-in-education/highest-needs-review/

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PARENTS OF VISION IMPAIRED NEW ZEALAND INC SUPPORTED BY BLIND LOW VISION NEW ZEALAND (FORMERLY THE BLIND FOUNDATION)

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