11 October 2019

Tena koutou

**Invitation to Kai and Kōrero: Inclusiveness in the Manawatu**

As Disability Rights Commissioner and Chair of an Inclusive Education Design Council, I invite you to meet with me and local members of disabled communities for *Kai and Kōrero: Inclusiveness in the Manawatu,*on **Monday, 21 October, from 10:00am – 2:00 pm at the Distinction Hotel, 175 Cuba Street, Palmerston North.**

Our event will be facilitated by Peter Allen and Dr Martin Sullivan from the region’s ‘Enabling Good Lives’ Governance Group.

**Why come?**

Because all parts of the Education System are undergoing the most radical change in 30 years, and teachers, principals and Boards want to know more about how they can make improvements for disabled people.

Because we’ve just celebrated [Disability Pride Week](https://disabilityprideaotearoa.nz/) with its theme of ‘Setting the Agenda’, celebrating disabled people, what we have to offer, and how we can set agendas for change in our own communities.

Because young disabled people have just led the first ever national hui, [I.Lead](http://ileadchange.org/), for young disabled people in Parliament and they want to continue leading and influencing change in their own communities.

**What’s the problem?**

We know that a quality education is fundamental to shifting longstanding outcomes for disabled people. For too long, too many disabled people have been invisible within the education system. Compared to 9% of their non-disabled peers, 34.9% of disabled young people are not in education, training or employment.

Support and inclusion for all students is key to improving quality and equity in education. Every student deserves to feel they belong and can grow in the right environment for them.

Sometimes change can be slow, and improvements work for some but not all learners. Local kōrero and actions can accelerate and improve the changes that are needed to help all disabled learners in your community.

**What’s the value?**

This *Kai and Kōrero* is being shaped and led by disabled people in your community. We promise there won’t be any long speeches or Powerpoint shows. Instead, disabled people and their families are front and centre. This is a chance for disabled people, educators and other networks to meet with each other, with people who can make things happen in your community, and with people who can influence change nationally through policy. There’ll be both plenary and breakaway segments so everyone will get a chance to listen to different perspectives and to have their say.

This is a safe place to meet new people and have your say about what’s important to you. It draws on the principles of:

* Manaakitanga, you are welcome here
* Whanaungatanga, building and maintaining relationships
* Rangatiratanga, each of us, as individuals, community organisations or members of a workforce carries our own authority and rights
* Kotahitanga, a belief that we can achieve more by working collaboratively than on our own

All the raw ideas and possible activities from the kōrero will be captured and sent back to you and to people working on education policy. You can share this with your own networks to plan other kōrero and activities.

**So what happens afterwards?**

I acknowledge that sometimes the outcomes of these conversations can be difficult to track. I am determined to see tangible actions come out of discussion that we can all track and hold decision-makers accountable for.

My office and members of the Design Council that has organised this event will:

* return data to you within 10 working days following the meeting
* keep in touch with you and help put you in touch with each other and with similar networks committed to improving learning for disabled people and those who have additional needs.
* Provide support to help you with any kōrero or activities you might want to lead after the hui.

You and others in your community might want to meet again to plan local actions or opportunities to influence decision-makers in Manawatu or in Education.

Please RSVP to [Alice.Leslie@education.govt.nz](mailto:Alice.Leslie@education.govt.nz) by **5pm, Tuesday 15 October**, and let her know of any accessibility requirements you have in attending (see below).

We will be in touch again next Wednesday to let you know about resources that can help you prepare for this meeting.

I hope you can make it.

Nāku noa, nā

**Paula Tesoriero MNZM**

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| |  | | --- | | Disability Rights Commissioner | Kaihautū  Tika Hauātanga | |
| New Zealand Human Rights Commission | Te Kāhui Tika Tangata |

RSVP - please complete and return to [Alice.Leslie@education.govt.nz](mailto:Alice.Leslie@education.govt.nz) by 5pm, Tuesday 15 October

* Yes, I am coming to the Kai and Kōrero: Inclusiveness in the Manawatu, on Monday, 21 October in Palmerston North.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know about any specific requirements you have that can help us to ensure you have a great experience. Circle, highlight or cross out any of the below points that apply, or otherwise just tell us what you need below.

Accommodations and resources:

* I will need a New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter
* I will be accompanied by an Assistance Dog
* I will be bringing a Support Person to the meeting
* I will need mobility or access assistance to travel to and within the venue
* Other ­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Requirements:

* Vegetarian
* Vegan
* Gluten Free
* Dairy intolerant
* Other ­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Any other requirements you might need to help you participate fully and effectively in this meeting?

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