# Logo with stylised picture of an eye next to an ear alongside our name in English Deafblind Association New Zealand and te reo Māori Taringa Turi Kāpō Rōpū

# Be Seen Be Heard Be Connected

## September 2021 Newsletter Taringa Turi Kāpō Rōpū Deafblind Association of New Zealand Charitable Trust

Welcome to the September quarterly newsletter for 2021 of Deafblind Association NZ Charitable Trust. This newsletter is about us, for us, and specific to deafblind needs. It could be any season inside but it’s definitely spring outside so no matter what challenges you are facing with Alert Levels I do hope you are able to step outside for a little, breathe deeply, and connect with the vibrancy I hope we will all be able to touch more freely soon. As deafblind we are some of the most resilient people I know and I acknowledge all you are doing in your bubbles. Recently we had Māori Language Week so I have borrowed some inspiration from Chrissy Cowen at Kāpō Māori:**Tuhia ki te rangi, tuhia ki te whenua, tuhia ki te ngakau o ngā tāngata. Ko te mea nui ko te aroha. Tihei Mauri Ora!** (Write it in the sky, write it in the land, write it in the heart of the people. The greatest thing is love. Behold there is life!)

## COVID-19 Vaccination Information

Free vaccination appointments can be made directly with a local provider, as well as online at <https://bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz/> or by phoning 0800 28 29 26 between 8am and 8pm 7 days a week or through NZ Relay Services. When booking please mention if you have a disability or health condition or are caring for someone with a disability or health condition.

We have been advised that Capital and Coast District Health Board (Wellington Region) are offering free transport using pre-paid taxis and can be requested when you make the booking. Don’t hesitate to contact us if you need us to facilitate this for you. Northland Regional Health Coordination Centre are offering free taxi services and in-home vaccinations.

If you are from another part of the country we suggest you call the same freephone number 0800 28 29 26 and tell them what you need in order to feel safe and confident in receiving your vaccination.

## Deafblind Association NZ Seminar

In April we held our first-ever Deafblind Association NZ Be Seen Be Heard Be Connected seminar. Six months later I still feel joy when I remember how people connected with each other, engaged with presenters in such an open way, and showed exactly why it is so very important for deafblind to meet kanohi ki te kanohi – face to face. With over forty nine people on site including daily visitors, and three meals a day, I reflect on the random acts of kindness we shared amongst us that must count in their thousands. I acknowledge especially here the acts of kindness times ten that our volunteers squeezed in so enthusiastically. We will always need more volunteers at these events and we continue to reach out to one and all that have an interest in our community. While it is difficult to quantify the successes, I believe that we all as delegates, whānau, volunteers, interpreters, presenters, and Board and their executive team had an opportunity to input our perspective and skills that together support the needs of deafblind to a higher level of awareness and encouragement of each other because when we gather we are all contributors. We will build on this success and now have a little more time to plan for the 2023 seminar and we’ll be looking for your input.

## Peer-to-Peer Network Support Keeps Expanding

Plans are made and then plans are unmade during changing Alert Levels for our face to face gatherings. The good news though is that enthusiasm is staying strong for developed networks. We welcome Invercargill and Albany to the whānau. And there’s further good news – I will be in Dunedin in early November gathering together a network there so please do get in contact on 0800 450 650 if you are interested. Don’t wait for us to suggest you need a network, just call and let us know you want one and we will start working on it. We are grateful to Blind Low Vision NZ for funding our peer to peer group work so generously.

## Annual General Meeting

Once again our face to face for this event was scuppered by Covid-19. However we were delighted that everyone who said they were coming then agreed to come in by Zoom. Phil, who agreed to do this, has written a short article included here about using his braille display to make this possible. He explains how the technology is the tool but it’s the humans who make the rich communication that adds to life goals so congratulations to Phil, Debbie, Sarah, and Scott. Phil, you are now famous!

### What’s up with Zoom!

Since July this year I have had the opportunity to work with a lady in Canada via Zoom to train me in how to use Zoom with my assistive braille technology. I have been investigating other communication tools that can assist me with the life coaching service I am working towards setting up online. For the Zoom training sessions I have been receiving, my support lady sits beside me to hand sign and I can read communication coming through from Canada on my display. It has taken a good dollop of patience by all and there are a number of key strokes to master plus coordinating my blokes hands on the display when flash messages come through. I initially hoped that the tool maybe able to convert speech into braille as there is a technical guy based in England who is writing scripts to modify Zoom so it is more accessible. Unfortunately at this stage the captions from speech are not that accurate, however they are not giving up on getting it working. I can identify conversation through two hearing implants which does help with knowing when Zoom connects and I can speak directly to whoever is connected with me or send a typed message.

I recently joined the Deafblind Association NZ Annual General Meeting via Zoom with the lady in Canada kindly transcribing the AGM to me via the chat function in Zoom so I could read and keep up with proceedings using my braille display. This was the first time joining a meeting via Zoom for me. I was nervous, (Me? Never!)...Well just a little in case I pressed the wrong button and my one chance to be famous would disappear suddenly. How would I describe my experience? I survived the whole meeting and I was amazed at how well the lady from Canada did with an outstanding job of keeping up, as she is also deafblind herself (blind with hearing impairments). The meeting was moving too quickly to really grasp what was going on and to allow time for the relaying of information through an interpreter. When it came to discussion time at the meeting conclusion, there was so much going on with a number of people speaking at once that I decided it was time to give my relay lady a break and head for a stiff coffee. Would I do it again? Yes, if I had support and I will continue to have weekly sessions via Zoom with my contact in Canada through to the end of the year to help improve my use of JAWS and to become a skilled operator with using Zoom to aid me with future clients I can connect with via Zoom for Life Coaching sessions.

## TellMe

This is a new service where you can connect with us using your phone. For those of you used to using the Telephone Information Service (TIS) it works the same and we have just transferred over to TellMe. To start with we are going to have an option where you can listen to weekly updates and where you can leave a message commenting on the information or on another deafblind related subject that will be played the following week. We hope this simplifies the process and encourages you to call.

Option 3 has been created for blindness consumer organisations. Deafblind Association NZ is then option 2 on that menu so that means from the main menu you will find us at 3 2. From there a bulletin will be recorded on option 1 and option 9 allows you to leave a message. Please do leave a message so we know this is working for you.

Here are the numbers you will need:

## **TellMe Free-calling areas**

### North Island Te Ika-a-Māui

Whangarei: 09 553-3505

Auckland: 09 283-0044

Tauranga: 07 282-7299

Hamilton: 07 595-0188

Gisborne: 06 281-0433

New Plymouth: 06 241-0488

Napier: 06 280-6036

Wanganui: 06 281-3767

Palmerston North: 06 241-8044

Wellington: 04 595-4858

### **South Island Te Wai Pounamu**

Nelson: 03 244-4133

Christchurch: 03 595-6255

Timaru: 03 555-5088

Oamaru: 03 928-7102

Dunedin: 03 244-8220

Balclutha: 03 976-6032

Gore: 03 280-2255

Invercargill: 03 928-5737

### For all other areas the TellMe toll-free number is:

0800 TELLME // 0800 835 563

Please note the free-calling number is not available when calling from a number in an area where TellMe has a local number, and it is not available when calling from a mobile phone. What that means is any of these numbers will work if you are calling from a land line. If you are calling from a mobile the cost of the call will depend on your individual phone contract. From a mobile any of the numbers will work from wherever you are but not the 0800 number.

## Your input for next time

Finally, when we talk about being seen, being heard, being connected it’s your stories that contribute so richly to this so please do send us a contribution for our next newsletter.

You can find the link to join our national Deafblind Discuss List on our website, <http://www.deafblindassociation.nz/dbanz-discuss/>

Remember you can access our Strategic Plan 2020-2023, available here: <http://www.deafblindassociation.nz/?s=strategic+plan> or ask for a copy in your preferred format.

## Your Board Trustees:

Vaughan Dodd, President

Kevin Prince, Vice-President

Don McKenzie

Lynda Colee, Financial Officer

## Contact us

If you have not received this newsletter in your preferred format, or if your preferred format has changed, please let us know so we can keep you informed.

Or if you are now able to open up an MP3 or MP4 (sound file) rather than an audio CD then please let us know.

A copy of our Draft Annual General Meeting minutes and reports is available on request in your preferred format.

Deafblind Association NZ Contact Details

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Website: <http://www.deafblindassociation.nz/>

Amanda Stevens, Executive Officer