



FROM: The New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists (Inc)

Subject: A FAIRER HEALTH SYSTEM!

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'There is inequity in funding for people with disabilities,' agreed all political party candidates at a public meeting in Hamilton on Saturday 11 October to highlight inequitable funding for people with disabilities.

Occupational therapists joined Melanie Trevethick, campaigner for Equity-for-Illness, to highlight and discuss issues of unfairness in funding and service provision. Funding depends on whether people have an illness or injury related impairment. Despite the mandate in the New Zealand Disability Strategy (2001) stating the people of Aotearoa/NZ can expect equal access to funding and service provision "regardless of the cause of their impairment", this is still not happening in New Zealand.

Elizabeth Rowland, President of the NZ Association of Occupational Therapists agreed, 'The recent Court of Appeal case lost by disability campaigner Trevethick, which ruled that the "Government could justify such discrimination," is absurd.' She added, 'Occupational therapists believe in inclusion; in education, in employment, in our communities and the right to engage in meaningful activities for all people in this country, regardless of the cause of their disabilities.'

Political party candidates, occupational therapists, members of the public and Melanie Trevethick engaged in an exchange of ideas about the issues, and also possible solutions.

Elizabeth Rowland added, 'Now is the time to create a fairer needs based health system with similar funding streams and opportunities for people, "regardless of the cause of their impairment" to ensure people can carry out their life roles and access occupations that are meaningful to them and their communities.'

Politicians and parties who believe the system is unfair, can actively support this call for change, ensuring we achieve the Disability Strategy and we can be proud that all New Zealanders have equal access to funding and service provision "regardless of the cause of their impairment."

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The New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists: the professional association of occupational therapists in Aotearoa/new Zealand: Promoting excellence in knowledge, standards, support and representation.

See: www.nzaot.com