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Removal Of Disparity Needed To Ensure Occupational Justice For All New Zealanders

Occupational therapists are challenged daily by working with the inequity of funding for New Zealanders disabled by illness, compared with those who have been injured says the President of the New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists (NZAOT) Elizabeth Rowland. The Association opposes the anomalies created by the two tier ACC: Ministry of Health systems and urgently calls on Government to redress the inequities.

Rowland says this inequity is evidenced by a differential in funding and more restrictive eligibility criteria for therapy and support.

“It contributes to lengthy time delays in providing equipment and home modifications and reduces choices for people whose disability has not been the result of an accident.”

Rowland says NZAOT believes the issues surrounding ‘equity for illness’ are about promoting occupational justice* for individuals and populations within Aotearoa/New Zealand. In occupational therapy, occupation refers to the everyday activities that people do as individuals, in families and with communities

that give meaning and purpose to life. Occupations include things people need, want and are expected to do.

“Such disparity for people with disabilities is not supporting occupational justice where individuals and populations can engage in daily occupations that are meaningful to them and are supported equitably through the health system,” says Rowland.

End

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***Occupational Justice**

Occupational justice is the equitable opportunity to enable people’s engagement in meaningful and healthful occupations due to economic, political, geographical, or other constraints.

The New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists Inc. (NZAOT) represents occupational therapists, educators and students of occupational therapy.

Mission: ‘Members are assured of excellence in knowledge, standards, support and representation’.

“Occupational therapy is a profession that enables people to lead meaningful and satisfying lives through participation in occupation” Definition of Occupational Therapy – NZAOT (2002)