

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

With 2024 at an end, we are reflecting on a year that has focused on strengthening the organisation to enable us to withstand the challenges that persist in our charitable and health sectors. Over the course of the year, we have completed several significant projects and have continued to advocate for those affected by incontinence, alongside working to enhance the standard of support and care available around Aotearoa New Zealand.

Human resources

We have had a very small team for most of the year with CEO Laura Fear moving to a new role in January after 16 months with us, and our Education and Communications Manager Toni Horan on parental leave from September. Despite this, we are proud of what we have been able to achieve and look forward to continuing the momentum in the coming year.

Our wonderful Awareness Coordinator, Jacqui Stanford, who has worked with us on a part-time basis since 2017, has resigned to focus on her full-time role with the charity Bellyful. Jacqui has made an immense contribution to the organisation, and we are very grateful for her efforts to enhance our communications and World Continence Week campaigns. Jacqui was instrumental in the development of our current campaign style, resource guides, annual report, e-newsletters, social media, and new website. Jacqui will finish working for us at the start of 2025 and we wish her all the best for the future. Due to her other role, Jacqui has recently worked five hours per week for us and her role won't be replaced as we are able to incorporate her responsibilities into other roles.

As I held the CEO role from 2017 to 2022, our executive committee has requested that I remain in the acting CEO role for the foreseeable future. We will provide an update about the position in the new year and appreciate the understanding of our team during this interim period.

Education

Our Education and Communications Manager Toni Horan gave birth to her second child in September, and we are absolutely delighted for her and her family. Toni remains on parental leave until 4 March 2025, and we look forward to welcoming her back.

As we have not replaced Toni's role during her parental leave our recent education has focused on our online courses, the Toilet Tactics webinar series, and our new webinar series to support disabled students, their teachers and support staff, parents, carers, and whānau (family). This webinar series joins the range of other courses and webinars on our website. We encourage members and non-members to access these via the education page on our website, at no cost.

Another highlight of the year was the education programme we completed with three special schools for disabled students, supporting a total of 675 students and their whānau. Continence Nurse Lisa Smith led this

project for us, and it was overwhelmingly well received. We have been inundated with requests for support from other special schools who will all benefit from the recently released webinar series.

Health promotion and resources

Health promotion remains an ongoing focus of our work, and we have had over 1000 webinar participants, and more than 400 individuals complete one of our online courses this year. The support and information section of our website also has several new guides made available this year, including a guide for carers, tamariki (children) and teens, and a bowel health guide.

Our World Continence Week campaign in June once again reached many New Zealanders, with over 71,000 people watching our inspiring campaign video featuring beloved Kiwi entertainer Jason Gunn. The campaign encouraged a focus on pelvic health through our Pelvic Floor Challenge, with participants receiving daily motivation and tips. Our comprehensive guide was shared widely.

Our new website is operational, and we hope that it provides enhanced access to our resources, education, and information. This has been a resource-heavy undertaking for the year, and we look forward to the opportunities an enhanced website will provide in 2025.

The comprehensive pregnancy guide we released in 2023 is being updated, with the new version scheduled for release in early 2025. The guide has been endorsed by the Aotearoa New Zealand branch of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and we will be working with them and the New Zealand College of Midwives to promote the updated guide.

Our Executive President Anna Lawrence has represented us in the development of the new guide *Promoting and managing continence for people living with dementia mate wareware* which has just been released by a University of Auckland research team. In 2020, there were almost 70,000 people living with dementia mate wareware in Aotearoa New Zealand, around 35,000 of them were affected by urinary incontinence and approximately 18,500 were affected by faecal incontinence. This guide presents practical information and advice for people living with dementia mate wareware and their care partners. Part 1 focuses on "getting into the system" and part 2 offers potential solutions to common continence challenges. It was developed and designed with experts by experience, focusing on the "things we wish we knew earlier". This important resource is available under the Support and Information page on our website.

Strategic planning

In September our executive committee and leadership team participated in strategic planning with Catapult Leadership. The session was incredibly beneficial, with one significant outcome the development of a

new purpose statement for the organisation which is *empowering people affected by incontinence to thrive*.

With ongoing challenges in the health and community sectors in Aotearoa, investing time in our strategic purpose and priorities, and ensuring strong alignment across our wider team, has certainly strengthened our capability and capacity for the difficult period ahead.

We look forward to moving ahead with a variety of strategic initiatives in 2025, and would like to thank our members, operations team, and governance team for their ongoing support.

Louise Judd

Acting CEO, Continence NZ