

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

CEO Update

We started 2024 with a change to our team as our CEO Laura Fear resigned from her role to start an exciting new position in January.

Laura joined the organisation in September 2022, and played a significant role in the successful delivery of our research project funded by the Lottery Grants Board. She also worked closely with our team to ensure the success of our conference last year. We would like to acknowledge Laura's contribution to the organisation and wish her all the very best for the future.

As our small team is working on delivering several projects, we have made the decision to commence recruitment for a new CEO in the second quarter of 2024. We are fortunate to have a passionate, experienced, and dedicated team, and it will be business as usual until a new CEO is appointed. As a former CEO (and current funding and planning manager), I will continue in my role and provide support as acting CEO until we have completed the recruitment process. Our programme manager Zoe Gillett will also assist with providing support to the team, and we are confident that we will continue to deliver during this interim period.

Executive Committee

At our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in November 2023 our members elected Auckland-based pelvic health physiotherapist Hannah Orr to our Executive Committee, and reappointed Dr Anna Lawrence and Dr John Short for a further two years. Thank you to everyone who participated in the AGM and voting process.

Over her career, Hannah has predominantly worked in the public health system and now works privately, treating adults with pelvic health conditions ranging from difficulty holding on, to difficulty emptying and pelvic pain. Alongside her clinical work, Hannah has also participated in pelvic floor research at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute where she recently completed a Master's project looking at the relationship between exercise and vaginal pressures. She is a keen participant and contributor to further education and finds great enjoyment in immersing herself in new research that is meaningful to the experience of the people she works with. Hannah is also a mum to two kids, a dog, a cat and five fish and whenever possible loves to be out running.

The Executive Committee has also recently appointed Alex Shahryar-Davies to the committee. Alex is a public servant, ordinarily based in Wellington but currently on a diplomatic posting in Suva, Fiji. Over his career, Alex has worked in a variety of public sector roles in Aotearoa New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Vanuatu, and Sierra Leone. In addition to his governance role with Continence NZ, he has held previous governance roles with non-profit organisations. Alex is a proud New Zealander of Bangladeshi and Scottish ethnic heritage and has two young children.

Education

Our popular Toilet Tactics webinar series, which ran from August to November 2023 with children's continence nurse Lisa Smith is now available on demand. The series covered topics such as bowel and bladder health, toilet training, constipation, bedwetting, daytime wetting, stool withholding, and toilet training for children with additional needs. It is free to register for one or all the webinars. We will have further webinars for both adults and children running throughout the year, including a series to support students with intellectual disabilities, which has kindly been funded by the IHC Foundation.

Visit continence.org.nz/ for details of our webinars.

Louise Judd

Acting CEO, Continence NZ