

Know someone who might enjoy this?
[Click here to share this newsletter.](#)



FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DESK

Kia ora Koutou,

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2026! I hope the year has started well for you and your whānau.

Here at Epilepsy New Zealand, we're kicking things off with a real sense of excitement - because this year, we're celebrating **70 years** of supporting people living with epilepsy across Aotearoa. Seventy years of community, advocacy, learning, and walking alongside thousands of New Zealanders. It's a milestone we're incredibly proud of, and throughout the year we'll be sharing stories and special moments that honour this journey.

We're also absolutely delighted to welcome **Angus Mabey** as the newest member of the ENZ whānau, joining us as an **Epilepsy New Zealand Ambassador**. Angus brings passion, positivity, and lived experience that will help amplify the voices of people with epilepsy across the country. You can read more about him in the newsletter - I know you'll enjoy getting to know him as much as we have.

And of course, March is just around the corner - which means **Purple Day** is nearly here! While the official date is **26 March**, we don't want anyone to feel limited to a single day. So this year, we're embracing **Purple Month**. Celebrate, raise awareness, or fundraise whenever and however suits you. Hold an event, wear purple, start a conversation, or involve your workplace - every action helps shine a light on epilepsy and supports the work we do.

We've got a big, energising year ahead as we celebrate our 70th anniversary, welcome Angus, and continue our mission with renewed focus. Thank you, as always, for your support, your encouragement, and your belief in our work. None of this happens without you. Here's to a great year - and to 70 years of making a difference together.

Ngā mihi nui,

Tracy Tierney

P.S. I found some bulbs in a box a few months back that were being given away on the street. Having no idea what they were when I planted them, imagine my delight to find they were all gorgeous purple blooms - hopefully a sign of an auspicious year ahead.

[Email Tracy Here!](#)



Subscribe to Newsletter

INTRODUCING 'Epilepsy Matters'

We're excited to share that our newsletter has a new name – ***Epilepsy Matters***.

This name reflects what sits at the heart of everything we do. Epilepsy matters because it affects the lives of thousands of New Zealanders every day, and our newsletter focuses on anything that matters to people living with epilepsy, their whānau, supporters, and the wider community.

Epilepsy Matters will continue to share updates, stories, research, resources, and practical information that inform, connect, and support our community – reinforcing a simple but powerful message: epilepsy matters, and so do the people living with it.

CLICK HERE TO DONATE TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION



TOTAL MOBILITY SCHEME - HAVE YOUR SAY

In December 2025, the Government announced proposed changes to help ensure the long-term sustainability of the Total Mobility scheme and opened consultation on how it could be improved.

At the moment, the scheme covers 75% of taxi fares for disabled people and older people who can't use public transport. **From 1 July 2026, this subsidy will reduce to 65%**. To help councils manage the change, the Government has committed \$10 million in immediate financial support.

The Ministry of Transport is now asking for feedback on how to strengthen and enhance the scheme. ENZ will be making a submission - and we'd really encourage you to share your views too.

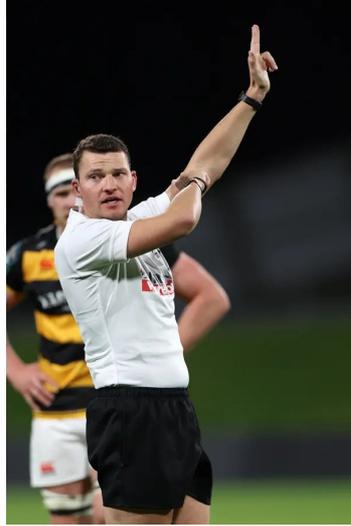
It's easy to have your say.

There's an accessible online survey with options including NZSL, Easy Read, and Voice Recording formats, plus additional accessibility features. You can also send written feedback via email or post your submission using the official feedback form.

You can read more and access the discussion document on Ministry's website:

[Proposals to strengthen Total Mobility | Ministry of Transport](#)

Consultation **closes on 22 March 2026** – so make sure your voice is heard



WELCOME TO OUR NEW AMBASSADOR Angus Mabey

We are delighted to officially welcome **Angus Mabey** as an Ambassador for Epilepsy New Zealand.

[READ MEDIA RELEASE HERE](#)

As an Ambassador, Angus will help raise awareness, support key campaigns and events, and advocate for people living with epilepsy across Aotearoa. His openness and authenticity will make a real difference to those who may feel unseen or unheard.

Angus brings lived experience, passion, and a genuine commitment to breaking down the stigma that still surrounds epilepsy.

He has already been sharing his journey publicly – including on *Stuff and Aotearoa Rugby Pod*, *DSPN – Devlin Sports Podcast Network*, and with a *Stuff* article – helping to spark important conversations and increase understanding.

You can hear or read more here:

- [Stuff and Aotearoa Rugby Pod](#) (from 50:00)
- [DSPN – Devlin Sports Podcast Network](#) (from 29:27)
- [Stuff article: Angus Mabey: New Zealand rugby referee managing epilepsy](#)

We've created a new Ambassador page on our website to showcase everything Angus has been doing!

[VIEW OUR
AMBASSADOR PAGE HERE](#)

By sharing his story and lending his voice to our kaupapa, Angus will help shine a light on the realities of living with epilepsy and the importance of understanding, acceptance, and support.

We are incredibly grateful to Angus for stepping into this role and look forward to working alongside him.

Please join us in giving him a very warm welcome. 💙



DR PETER BERGIN ON THE BREEZE The House of Wellness

We were delighted to hear one of New Zealand's leading epilepsy experts, **Dr Peter Bergin**, recently featured on *The House of Wellness* – a popular health and wellbeing programme on The Breeze.

Dr Bergin talked about epilepsy awareness, current research, and how people can recognise and respond to seizures – sharing valuable insights ahead of International Epilepsy Day on 9 February.

We're proud to see epilepsy and support information highlighted on such a wide-reaching platform.

Thank you, Dr Bergin, for continuing to represent our community and sharing your expertise.

To listen to his segment
[CLICK HERE](#)



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Following our 2025 AGM, members formally adopted an updated Constitution to meet the requirements of the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. As part of this, a small number of changes were made to our membership arrangements.

We offer several membership options to suit different needs, including Individual, Corporate, Unincorporated Group, Employee, and our honoured Life Member category.

Please note: you do not need to be a Member to access Epilepsy NZ's educator services.

All memberships (other than Life Members) have reverted to requiring a modest annual subscription to be paid. Historically this was set at \$10 per financial year, however the Board have increased this to \$12, mainly to cover the GST component which had previously been absorbed. Members will need to be up to date with their subscription and fees (if any) to vote at annual general meetings.

Membership term: 1 April – 31 March

Amount: Single annual subscription (no pro-rata)

Late-joiner rule: Members joining on or after **1 January** carry membership through to the following year

AGM eligibility: Subscription and fees (if any) must be paid by **31 July**.

If anyone is experiencing financial hardship, confidential subscription waivers or reductions may be available – please contact national@epilepsy.org.nz.

Also, a reminder to let us know of any changes to your contact details so we can keep you informed. We share important information through email and our website to ensure all members stay connected and engaged.

For full information about Membership
[CLICK HERE](#)



ENZ TURNS 70 IN 2026 AND PURPLE DAY IS FAST APPROACHING!

March 26 is Purple Day – wear purple, show support, and help raise awareness for epilepsy across New Zealand! Every action counts – whether big or small, and everyone can play a part!

This year, as **Epilepsy NZ celebrates 70 years and beyond**, there's never been a better time to show your support and make your mark. Whether it's on Purple Day itself or any day in March, your involvement helps shine a light on epilepsy and fosters understanding in our communities.

How Can You Get Involved?

- **Wear Purple:** Gather your friends, family, or colleagues and don your best purple outfit.
- **Host an Activity or Event:** From school or workplace activities to local community events, any way you choose to "go purple" helps spread awareness.
- **Get Creative:** Share your support on social media, create artwork, or even organise a fundraiser - every gesture matters.

Looking for ideas? Check out our ["70 Ways to Go Purple"](#) for inspiration and ways to get involved.

Click here to
REGISTER FOR PURPLE DAY

Let's make this Purple Day unforgettable – together, we can raise awareness, funds, show support, and celebrate 70 years of making a difference! ❤️



Will you be one of the 70 faces?



70 FACES OF EPILEPSY - WILL YOU BE ONE OF THEM?

As part of our *70 years and Beyond* celebrations, we're launching **70 Faces of Epilepsy** to honour the people behind the stories.

For 70 years, people across Aotearoa have been living with epilepsy. Now, we're inviting **70 people with epilepsy** to take part in this special campaign.

As part of the campaign, we'll be asking for a head and shoulder photo and a few words about your epilepsy. Every experience is different - and every story matters.

By putting real faces to epilepsy, we can break down stigma, increase understanding, and celebrate the strength of our community.

We'll be sharing these stories across our website, social media and campaign materials throughout the year.

If you live with epilepsy and would like to be **one of the 70**, email marketing@epilepsy.org.nz and we'll be in touch soon.

Together, let's show New Zealand what epilepsy really looks like – real people, real stories, real strength.

Will you be one of the 70? ❤️

**PURPLE WALK
FOR EPILEPSY**



DATE: SUNDAY 29 MARCH 2026
TIME: 9.30AM
LOCATION: INNES COMMON

WEAR PURPLE
and join us for a 'Fun Walk' around Hamilton Lake
Bring the whole Whānau (friendly dogs welcome)

For more information, contact Epilepsy NZ's
Waikato Educator, Catherine on 022 630 4901
or email waikato@epilepsy.org.nz

This is a FREE event (Koha welcomed)
Sausage sizzle available - cash only



**EPILEPSY
NEW ZEALAND**
Partners in Progress. Inspiring Change.
Celebrating 70 Years and Beyond

HAMILTON - LET'S TURN THE LAKE PURPLE!

We're thrilled to invite our Waikato community to our [Purple Walk for Epilepsy](#) on **Sunday 29 March 2026, 9.30am at Innes Common, Hamilton Lake.**

This **FREE**, feel-good, family-friendly event is your chance to come together, show your support, and celebrate Purple Day and 70 years of Epilepsy NZ. Wear your brightest purple, bring the whole whānau (yes, friendly dogs too!), and enjoy a fun walk around the lake - or simply come along to soak up the atmosphere and connect with the community.

With free entertainment, a sausage sizzle (cash only), and plenty of purple spirit, it's set to be a fantastic morning out. Koha is warmly welcomed.

Check it out on [Facebook events](#).

Want to make an even bigger impact?

If you're planning to walk, why not turn your steps into support by setting up a fundraising page on [Givealittle](#)? It's quick and easy to create your own page, share your story about why you're walking, and invite friends, whānau, and colleagues to sponsor you. Every dollar raised helps us continue providing education, support, and advocacy for people living with epilepsy.

Together, we can raise awareness and vital funds. Let's make it a morning to remember! ♥

For more information, contact our Waikato Educator Catherine on 022 630 4901 or email waikato@epilepsy.org.nz. For corporate sponsorship opportunities please contact marketing@epilepsy.org.nz.



everywill
by Gathered Here

A NEW NAME, SAME TRUSTED WILL SERVICE

Gathered Here have relaunched their free online Will service and gifts-in-Wills management platform under a new name: [EveryWill](#).

Along with the new name comes a refreshed logo and visual identity – but importantly, the platform experience for supporters remains the same.

If you have already written your Will through Gathered Here - thank you! Your existing Will is not affected as there are no changes to your document – only an updated look and feel to the website.

If you've been considering leaving a gift in your Will to Epilepsy NZ, you can find [more information here](#).

As part of the relaunch, EveryWill has also introduced a new commitment – they will donate \$1 for every new Will written on the platform. It's their way of turning legacy giving into immediate impact.

Thank you for considering leaving a lasting legacy – your support today can help change lives for generations to come. ♥

SWIMMING AND EPILEPSY-2

Epilepsy New Zealand

Always seek advice from a healthcare provider or neurologist before swimming to evaluate your individual risks.



Always swim with a buddy. It's essential to have a knowledgeable observer present who understands the condition, is trained in seizure first aid, and is a strong swimmer. They should be actively monitoring at all times.

Make sure to inform the lifeguard on duty or the swimming instructor about the condition and how they can best assist in case of an emergency.

www.epilepsy.org.nz

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Have you checked out our *Swimming* mini-series on our [Facebook page](#)?

Our mini-series shares simple, practical tips to help you stay safe and well during the summer months – be sure to check it out on our [Facebook page](#)

Like, share and get involved!



SEIZURESMART SCHOOLS

Do you have tamariki at school or are you a teacher?

Thanks to our generous funders FREE training for schools is still available in: Tauranga, Eastern Bay of Plenty, Hutt Region and Canterbury.

Epilepsy NZ's [SeizureSmart Schools](#) programme is an online educational programme designed to be completed at your own pace. Interested in SeizureSmart Training? Please view online training offerings in the links below.

[SeizureSmart Schools • Epilepsy New Zealand](#)
[SeizureSmart Workplaces • Epilepsy New Zealand](#)
[SeizureSmart Disability • Epilepsy New Zealand](#)

Eastern & Central
Community Trust

grassroots
trust



SHOUT OUT TO OUR FUNDERS

We would like to sincerely acknowledge and thank the following funders for their generous support of our mahi across Aotearoa:

- [Eastern & Central Community Trust](#)
- [Grassroots Trust](#)
- [Dragon Community Trust](#)
- [Milestone Foundation](#)

This support enables us to continue making a meaningful difference in communities around the motu. Thank you!

 **FREEPHONE**
0800 37 45 37



If you require treatment advice please contact your health provider or ring 111 in an emergency

For general health advice, please ring 0800 611 116 - anytime

If you are experiencing mental distress, please call or text 1737 - anytime

Epilepsy New Zealand is a registered charity CC10611

Visit us at

www.epilepsy.org.nz

To unsubscribe [click here](#)