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From The Chief Executive's Desk

Kia ora Koutou,

I'd like to begin by thanking everyone who helped make Purple Day such a success this year. Across the country, individuals, families, schools, workplaces, and communities came together to raise awareness and show their support for people living with epilepsy. It was uplifting to see so much purple and to feel the collective commitment to reducing stigma and increasing understanding of epilepsy.

I'm also pleased to share some encouraging news from our research funding programme. Through the Neurological Foundation, we received four high-quality applications in the latest funding round - an exciting outcome that reflects the growing strength and interest in epilepsy research in Aotearoa. Decisions will be made in July, and we look forward to sharing the outcomes and the important work these projects support.

Access to medicines remains a critical issue for our community. PHARMAC is currently consulting on its Exceptions Review, which has significant implications for people with epilepsy who rely on timely and flexible access to treatment options. You'll find more detail about this consultation in the body of the newsletter. Epilepsy New Zealand will be actively advocating for improved access and increased funding for epilepsy medicines because we know how life-changing the right treatment can be. To support this advocacy, we want to hear directly from you. If you or someone you care for has been declined access to an epilepsy medicine, we encourage you to share your experience with us. These lived experiences are vital in helping us build a clear picture of the real-world impact of current decision-making. Please email ceo@epilepsy.org.nz with your story.

Thank you, as always, for being part of our community and for standing with us as we continue to advocate for better outcomes for everyone affected by epilepsy.

Ngā mihi nui,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tracy', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

[Email Tracy Here](#)



Have Your Say On How Medicines Are Accessed In Special Circumstances

Pharmac is reviewing its Exceptions Framework, which guides how people can access medicines outside the usual funding process.

The aim is to make the system clearer, more consistent, and easier to navigate, while improving fairness and transparency for those with complex health needs.

This is an important opportunity for consumers, clinicians, and whānau to share their experiences and help shape improvements.

Feedback closes 7 June.

[Read more and submit feedback here](#)



See the Person Campaign Returns This June

After the success of last year's **See the Person** video campaign, we're excited to be bringing it back this June.

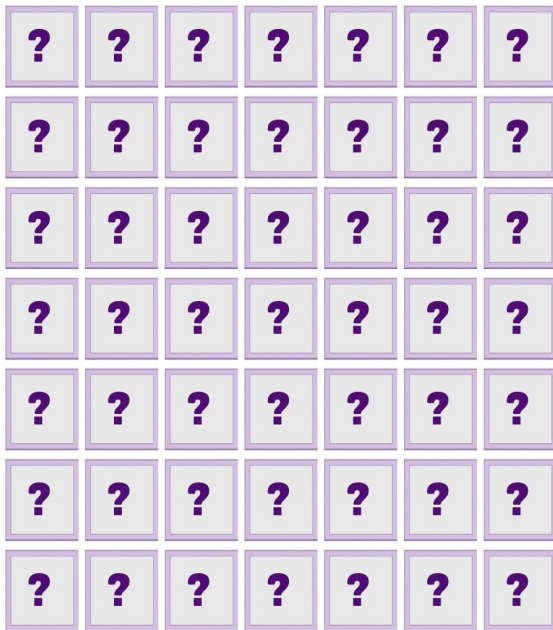
The campaign shines a light on the importance of seeing the person first - looking beyond epilepsy to recognise the whole person, including their strengths, passions, and individuality.

As with last year, we're inviting videos from people who support someone living with epilepsy. If you're a parent, partner, spouse, friend, colleague, or caregiver (and do not live with epilepsy yourself), we'd love to hear from you.

If you're interested in taking part, please get in touch – we'd be delighted to have you involved in this year's campaign. Email Bobbi marketing@epilepsy.org.nz.

We'll be sharing the video link soon by emailing our supporters separately, so please keep an eye on your inbox.

Will you be one of the 70 faces?



70 Faces of Epilepsy

Following the announcement in our last newsletter of our **70 Faces of Epilepsy** campaign (as part of our 70 Years and Beyond celebrations), we've been encouraged by the interest so far—thank you to those who have already put their hand up to be involved.

We're still looking for more people to help us reach our goal of 70 individuals willing to share their story.

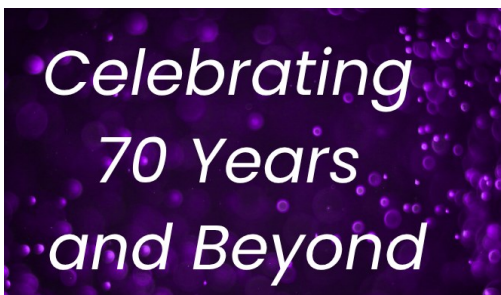
This campaign is all about putting real faces to epilepsy - sharing a photo and a few words about your journey to help break down stigma, build understanding, and highlight the strength and diversity of our community.

Every experience is different, and every story matters.

Stories will be shared across our website, social media, and campaign materials throughout the year.

If you live with epilepsy and would like to be part of this special campaign, we'd love to hear from you. Simply email Bobbi marketing@epilepsy.org.nz and we'll be in touch at the end of May.

Yes, I want to be one of the 70 Faces



Celebrating 70 Years and Beyond

As we celebrate *70 Years and Beyond*, we are reflecting on the incredible journey so far and looking ahead to the future of supporting people living with epilepsy across Aotearoa.

To help us continue this vital work, we're inviting our community to mark the occasion with a special gift of:

- \$7.00
- \$70.00
- \$700.00

Every donation, no matter the size, helps ensure we can continue providing information, education, and support for people living with epilepsy and their whānau for the next 70 years and beyond.

To donate - click on the box below, choose the Donation Allocation *Celebrating 70 Years and Beyond* and enter a donation amount that feels right for you.

[Donate Here](#)



Thank You For Supporting Purple Day

Thank you again to everyone who took part in **Purple Day** and helped shine a light on epilepsy awareness across New Zealand.

Whether you wore purple, held a fundraising activity, or helped start important conversations, your support plays a valuable role in reducing stigma and building greater understanding of epilepsy in our communities.

Donations are still coming in, and it's looking like we are tracking to equal or even exceed last year's total – which is amazing. Once all contributions have been received and finalised, we will share the full amount raised.

We are incredibly grateful for the continued support from schools, workplaces, and individuals across the country. Every effort helps Epilepsy NZ provide vital information, education, and support to people living with epilepsy and their whānau.

If you'd like to see some of the photos and the fun that took place, please visit our [Facebook page](#).

[Purple Day](#)



Purple Walk For Epilepsy - Hamilton

Purple Day was celebrated in Hamilton with the very first **Purple Walk for Epilepsy**, held around Hamilton Lake on Sunday 29 March.

Whānau dressed in purple and came together to show their support for family and friends living with epilepsy. Despite the morning fog, the event was filled with colour, energy, and a strong sense of community.

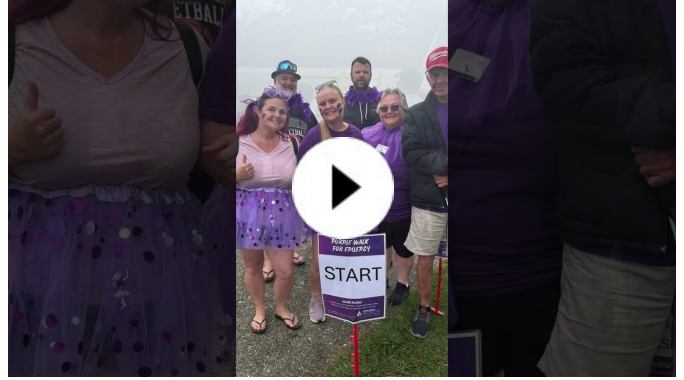
This marked the first Purple Walk for Epilepsy in New Zealand, an initiative led by Epilepsy New Zealand's Waikato Educator, Catherine Wightman. With a vision to see walks like this take place across the country next year, the Hamilton event demonstrated just how powerful community engagement can be in raising awareness and showing support.

At the finish line, Waitemata Educator Renee performed songs inspired by the colour purple, while volunteers kept everyone fuelled with a sausage sizzle - adding to the fun and welcoming atmosphere.

Together, these efforts created a memorable and uplifting way to celebrate Purple Day. To see photos and highlights from the event, visit and follow our Facebook page to stay up to date with Epilepsy New Zealand.

Interested in getting involved or sponsoring a Purple Walk for Epilepsy in your region next year?

Please contact Bobbi, our Marketing and Fundraising Manager, at marketing@epilepsy.org.nz.



Membership Update

Thank you to those who have renewed their membership subscription - we really appreciate your support.

Membership is valid from 1 April to 31 March.

This is a friendly reminder that voting rights are only active once your membership subscription has been fully paid by **31 July 2026**.

If you've received an email with a link to pay, please complete this as soon as possible to ensure your membership and voting eligibility.

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



John's Story

This Purple Day, we were proud to share John's story - a powerful example of how understanding, care and support can make a real difference.

After being diagnosed with epilepsy last year, John chose to be open about his experience. With the support of his team at Serco NZTS, he continues to thrive in his role, supported by a workplace that understands his needs, shows genuine care, and stands alongside him.

Their Purple Day efforts highlight the importance of reducing stigma and creating environments where people living with epilepsy feel supported to live well.

[Read John's full story on our blog.](#)

Do You Know Someone Who Works For A Business That Might Support ENZ?

We're always looking to build meaningful partnerships with organisations that want to make a real difference in their communities. Corporate sponsorship is a powerful way for businesses to show their commitment to social impact, while helping us continue providing vital support, education, and advocacy for people living with epilepsy.

If someone comes to mind - whether it's a colleague, friend, connection, or even you - we'd love an introduction. A simple conversation could 'open the door' to a partnership that benefits both their business and the thousands of people we support each year.

Feel free to get in touch or pass on our details. We'd be happy to chat and explore what a partnership could look like.

[Email Bobbi here](#)





Find Us On Social Media

Have you checked out our Purple Day Moments on Facebook?

We had so many fantastic photos from our communities celebrating Purple Day that we've been sharing them throughout April.

This one features Marjo, our Lakes District educator, alongside a community celebrating Purple Day in style—what an incredible effort from everyone involved!

Don't forget to like, share, and get involved

#RaisingAwareness #PurpleDay2026 #PurpleDay #CommunitySupport #CommunitySupportingCommunity



SeizureSmart

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

Epilepsy NZ's [SeizureSmart Schools](#) programme is an online educational programme designed to be completed at your own pace.

Interested in other SeizureSmart Training?

Please view our other online training offerings in the links below:

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



Free Will Service – EveryWill

Don't forget that you can access a free, simple will through our partnership with EveryWill **all year round**.

Having a will in place ensures your wishes are clearly recorded and gives peace of mind for you and your loved ones.

Through EveryWill, you can create or update your will online at no cost, in a straightforward and secure way.

It only takes a short time to complete, and you can do it at your own pace from home.

To find out more about leaving a Bequest - [CLICK HERE](#)

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:

- [Epilepsy Foundation](#)
- [BayTrust](#)
- [Roy Owen Dixey](#)
- [Glenice & John Gallagher Foundation](#)
- [Napier City Council](#)
- [Esme and Tom Tombleson](#)
- [Aotearoa Gaming Trust](#)
- [Otago Community Trust](#)

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



Please Donate Today

 **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

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Visit us at

www.epilepsy.org.nz

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