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Tracy photographed with David Seymour and Paula Bennett receiving acknowledgment of her work over the past 12 months with Pharmac's Consumer & Patient Advisory Group

From The Chief Executive's Desk

Kia ora koutou,

As we move through the year, one of our biggest focuses continues to be advocacy – making sure the voices of people living with epilepsy are heard loud and clear where it matters most.

Epilepsy isn't just a health condition; it can affect education, employment, independence, and everyday quality of life for many people. That's why advocacy plays such an important role in the work we do. It's how we help shape the systems and policies that impact our community every day.

Recently, we've contributed to a couple of important national conversations. We made a submission on the Proposals to Strengthen Total Mobility from the Ministry of Transport, highlighting how critical accessible and affordable transport is for people with epilepsy to stay connected and independent. We also submitted on the Disability Support Services Bill, pushing for a system that is fair, flexible, and truly centred on the needs of disabled people and their whānau. These are important opportunities to ensure epilepsy is part of the wider disability conversation.

Looking ahead, you'll start to see more of our advocacy work. With the next General Election on the horizon, we'll be working alongside other organisations to push for change. A big focus will be advocating for an increase in the medicines budget, to help clear the Options for Investment list – which still includes epilepsy medicines people urgently need. We'll also be calling for more investment in specialist care, including an increase in the number of neurologists across Aotearoa New Zealand.

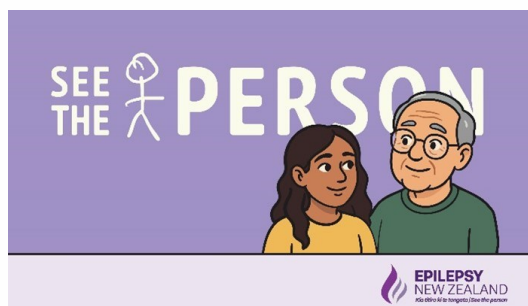
We'll keep you posted as this work develops, including ways you can get involved. Supporters like you make a real difference – your voices strengthen our collective call for change.

Thank you, as always, for standing with us.

Ngā mihi nui,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tracy'.

Email Tracy Here

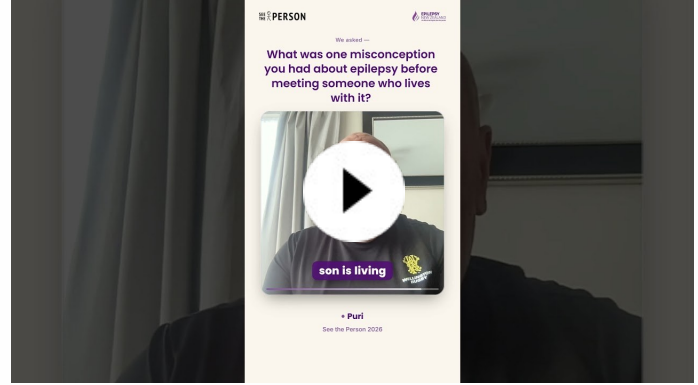


Thank you for supporting #SeeThePerson

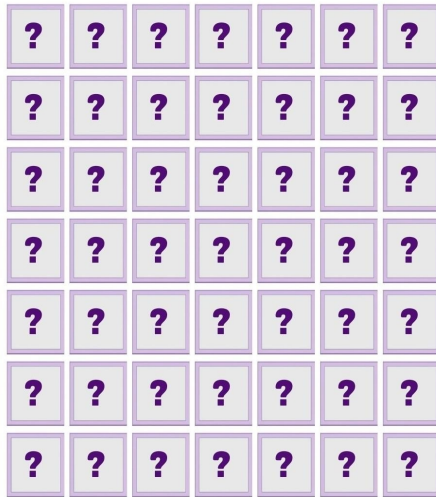
A huge thank you to those who took part in our **See the Person** video campaign. Videos were submitted from people who support someone living with epilepsy, a parent, partner, spouse, friend, colleague, or caregiver.

By sharing your experiences, you have helped challenge misconceptions about epilepsy and encouraged others to look beyond the diagnosis and truly see the person. We are incredibly grateful for your honesty, courage, and support.

If you haven't seen the videos on our Facebook page, you can view them here: <https://epilepsy.org.nz/understanding-epilepsy/see-the-person-looking-beyond-the-label/>



See The Person Web Page



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 really encouraged by the interest so far - thank you to everyone who has already put their hand up to be involved.

There's still time to take part, and we'd love to hear from you.

To help keep everything consistent and easy to manage, please email marketing@epilepsy.org.nz with the following information:

Photo: A clear, high-quality head-and-shoulders photo of yourself. Please save the file using your name (e.g. Jane Smith.png). PNG format is preferred where possible, but a high-resolution JPEG is also fine.

Preferred name: The name you would like displayed (this can be your first name only or another name if you prefer not to use your full name).

Your Age:

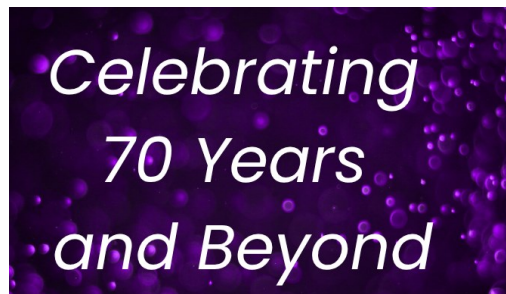
The type of epilepsy/seizures you experience:

Has medication helped? (Yes/No)

Who has supported you through your epilepsy journey? (1 sentence is perfect)

If you have any questions about the information required, or would like a hand with anything, please don't hesitate to get in touch - we're happy to help.

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 one-off 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

Mānawatia a
Matariki

Te Wānanga
o Aotearoa

Whakawhetai

What are you thankful for?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Matariki Herenga Waka

This year's theme of Matariki Herenga Waka, For everyone, celebrates inclusion and celebrating together. At epilepsy New Zealand we wish to celebrate our community by expressing gratitude for people all over Aotearoa who have supported our charitable services. Thank you to everyone who has uplifted our organisation and helped us to continue to provide free educator services and epilepsy awareness.

[Link to free Matariki Resources](#)

The Purple Stall That's Starting Conversations

Our Grants & Funding Lead, Ross Macleod, is not only passionate about securing funding for Epilepsy NZ but is also a dedicated member of the Hamilton theatre community.

Recently, Ross found a creative way to support two causes close to his heart. As part of The Meteor Theatre's "Buy a Seat" fundraising campaign, he sponsored one of the venue's bathroom stalls instead of a traditional theatre seat.

True to form, Ross added an Epilepsy NZ twist by having the stall painted in our signature purple and installing a plaque and awareness poster about epilepsy. It's a fun and unexpected way to raise awareness, helping to start conversations about epilepsy while supporting the future of one of Hamilton's much-loved community theatres.

It's a fantastic example of how one thoughtful idea can have twice the impact – supporting the arts while shining a light on epilepsy and the work of Epilepsy NZ.

A huge thank you to Ross for his creativity, generosity, and ongoing commitment to making a difference. 💙



Membership Reminder - Sign up before 31 July 2026 to vote at the AGM

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**



Swimming and Epilepsy

Hilary, our Southland Educator, recently spent an hour with the lifeguards at Invercargill's Splash Palace, providing epilepsy awareness and seizure first aid training.

The session was very well received, with one lifeguard commenting, "I learned a lot about the different types of seizures and how to respond to them." The team left feeling better informed, more confident, and better equipped to support people living with epilepsy.

Swimming is a fantastic form of exercise, and we encourage people living with epilepsy who are swimming alone to let the lifeguards know they are there so they can keep a closer eye on them if needed.

We Swim Side by Side



After being diagnosed with epilepsy in 2025, Kate was determined not to let it define her or stop her doing what she loves. Instead, she transformed her journey into a heartfelt fundraising project supporting Epilepsy New Zealand.

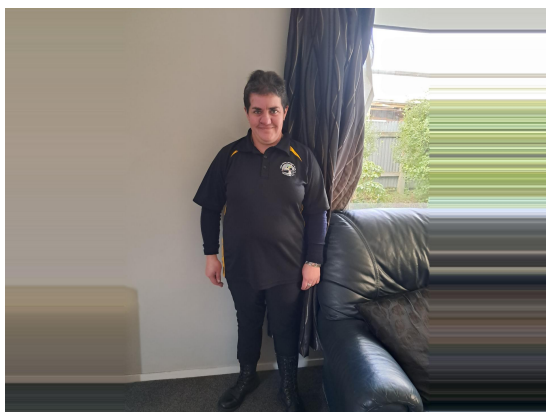
Shop the collection: Online - [Kate's Epilepsy Towel and Swim Cap Fundraiser NZ](https://www.kingfishergifts.co.nz/categories/kates-epilepsy-towel-fundraiser-nz) (<https://www.kingfishergifts.co.nz/categories/kates-epilepsy-towel-fundraiser-nz>) or pick up can be arranged at Wellington Freyberg Pool, Oriental Parade, Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre or Hawkes Bay Kingfishergifts, 70 High Street, Waipawa.

Every item purchased donates **100% of the profits** to Epilepsy New Zealand.

Discover the inspiring story behind **We Swim Side by Side** and how every purchase helps raise awareness and support people living with epilepsy.

[Read Kate's Story Here](#)

From a Taxi Ride to the National Podium



A chance conversation in a taxi introduced Olivia to archery – and it's changed her life. Living with epilepsy, Olivia has discovered a sport that has boosted her confidence, improved her wellbeing, and recently led to outstanding success at the NZFAA Indoor Nationals.

[Read](#) Olivia's inspiring story and see how one conversation opened the door to a new passion.

[Click here to view Blog](#)

Epilepsy Education in the Community

Kore, our Northland Epilepsy Educator, recently provided in-person training to Fresha Valley. This is a great example of Epilepsy New Zealand's charity work in action, providing education and support within the community.

Thank you, Fresha Valley, for helping raise epilepsy awareness and encouraging epilepsy education. This benefits the wider community by helping to break down barriers and discrimination, while promoting safety and enabling people living with epilepsy to live their best lives.

Our free epilepsy education services can be tailored to businesses, community groups, families, and individuals.

If you want to find out more - then contact seizuresmart@epilepsy.org.nz.





SEIZURESMART ONLINE LEARNING



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](#)

Become SeizureSmart Today!

Our SeizureSmart online training is an easy-to-follow course designed to build confidence and understanding around epilepsy and seizure first aid. In just a short time, you'll learn how to recognise different types of seizures and how to respond safely and calmly if one occurs.

Whether you're a teacher, coach, employer, community group member, or simply want to be better prepared, this training helps create safer, more supportive environments for people living with epilepsy.

Learn at your own pace, anytime, anywhere - and become SeizureSmart today!

To get started, visit Epilepsy New Zealand's website or contact us for more information.

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

 **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

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