

President's Report – Annual General Meeting 2024

Kia ora koutou e ngā mema o Rōpū Hōkai Nukurangi. Greetings to the members of the Cerebral Palsy Society.

As the CPS holds its AGM for 2024, it is time to reflect on the challenges and achievements of the past year. I am proud of the work our team has done in supporting the Society's members by providing advice, support through various programmes, funding, and advocacy.

Our four strategic objectives have guided our services:

1. Ensuring future organisational and financial sustainability
2. Delivering a valued, national service to our members
3. Awareness and advocacy
4. Driving research into cerebral palsy

We have successfully delivered various programmes that have supported members in improving their physical and mental health, including access to physical activities, counselling, and transportation. Our events continue to be popular, fostering social connections and network building. The grants programme has provided many members with financial support for activities, services, and items that help maximise their individual potential.

We also continue to support members by providing information and guidance on the challenges and opportunities of living with cerebral palsy, from health services to social support, enabling freedom, choice, and participation in society.

The past year has been particularly stressful for members due to the abrupt changes to the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha's funding rules for disability support in March. This was followed by the Independent Review of the Disability Support System. Significant changes are now proposed to the disability funding and management regime, including moving the Disability Support Services to the Ministry of Social Development and reviewing the funding criteria, all driven by budgetary constraints.

The Board and Management of CPS have been active in advocating for members' interests through these changes. We thank members for sharing information with us on how the funding changes are affecting them and acknowledge the anxiety this is causing the CP community. We have been proactive in engaging with the Minister for Disability Issues and Whaikaha to ensure members' interests are known and their voices are heard. We have collaborated with other disability support organisations on policy changes. We will continue to advocate for members' interests throughout the funding review process to ensure that the unique and often significant



needs of people living with cerebral palsy and their whānau are properly understood and provided for.

Of course, all of these services and supporting activities come at a cost. We are focusing our efforts on increasing income streams to support the growing membership and needs of members, and we acknowledge and thank the funding organisations, trusts, foundations, and friends that have supported us. Ensuring the CPS is financially sustainable brings its challenges, and we are working hard to maintain financial sustainability for the long term. Part of this challenge has involved divesting CPS's interests in investment subsidiaries established a few years ago before the current Board was elected. This process is nearly complete, and overall, there will be a financial loss from these investments, but we look forward to focusing all of our efforts on supporting our members without distraction.

Our partnership with the Cerebral Palsy Register has strengthened, and we are supporting research into the disparity between ACC and Ministry of Health funding for people with cerebral palsy. We are also helping design the 2025 Australia and New Zealand CP Strategy, focusing on equity, advocacy, and making systemic changes in the healthcare system.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Clare Williams (General Manager) and her team for their dedication to supporting our members. I also acknowledge Merryn Straker, who stood down from the Board this year for her support over many years, and Emma Lovett for her work as former Secretary and Vice President. I thank Meg Smith for her role as current Secretary and Vice President, Peter Wynne-Jones (Treasurer) for providing his financial expertise and all my fellow Board members for their time and support. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Directors of CPS subsidiary Essential Assets Ltd for their governance of CPS's investment funds, which provide most of the financial support for the Society's activities.

The Board and Management team are here to serve our members and do our best to ensure that they have the freedom and choice to live their best and most fulfilling lives. Thank you for your continued support.

Ngā mihi nui

Daniel Clay
President and Board Chair
Cerebral Palsy Society

