

Cerebral Palsy Hōkai Nukurangi Education Day

SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2026 • WELLINGTON

Join us: [Register Here](#)

8.30–8.45 am	Arrival and registration	
8.45–9.00 am 9.00–9.15 am	Karakia and welcome Overview of Cerebral Palsy organisations	Daniel Clay Prof Sue Stott
9.15–9.45 am	SESSION 1: Introduction <i>Chairs: Daniel Clay and Prof Sue Stott</i> Whaikaha and NZ Disability Strategy	Paula Tesoriero MNZM PLY
9.45–10.40 am	SESSION 2: Early years <i>Chairs: Dr Gaela Kilgour and Dr Meghan Sandle</i> Early detection and early opportunities Discussion – regional perspectives	A/Prof Sian Williams Audience
10.40–11 am	Morning tea	
11 am–12.40 pm	SESSION 3: Development and movement <i>Chairs: Dr Meg Smith and Dr Anna Mackey</i> Neuroplasticity – how far can it take us? Muscle development in CP – lifespan approach Muscle to movement – moving well through the lifespan Sharing my story through “The F words for child development” lens Discussion	Prof Cathy Stinear A/Prof Sian Williams Dr Gaela Kilgour Arul Hamill
12.40–1.15 pm	Lunch	
1.15–2.35 pm	SESSION 4: Support and wellbeing <i>Chairs: Sally Kidd and A/Prof Sian Williams</i> Pain – new approaches to assessing pain Supporting the child and whānau with complex needs Adjusting to a different way of parenting Wellbeing approaches Discussion	Dr Meredith Smith Karen Adams Dr Meg Smith Dr Gaela Kilgour
2.35–4.20 pm	SESSION 5 Community engagement Afternoon tea with this session <i>Chairs: Amy Hogan and Prof Thor Besier</i> Introduction to CP Research ‘Pipeline’ Value of research and consumer engagement Group discussion: research and advocacy priorities for CP in NZ Summary and action steps	Prof Thor Besier Amy Hogan Facilitators: Dr Julie Blamires, Dr Karen Lansdown, Dr Meg Smith, Karen Adams
4.20–4.30 pm	Karakia and closing	Daniel Clay

Introducing our speakers

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Ms Paula Tesoriero
MNZM



Paula Tesoriero MNZM PLY is Secretary for Disabled People, Chief Executive of Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People. Paula provides strategic leadership to Whaikaha and across government to drive real and meaningful change with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, and their whānau. Paula is a Paralympian, winning a gold medal and two bronze medals at the 2008 Summer Paralympic Games in Beijing.

Daniel Clay



Daniel Clay is the Chairperson of the Cerebral Palsy Society of NZ's Executive Committee and Chief Executive Officer of an iwi-owned property development and investment company. Daniel has experience in leadership, law, and business, and lived experience with Cerebral Palsy – Hōkai Nukurangi.

Prof Sue Stott



Sue Stott is the NZ Cerebral Palsy Register Clinical Lead, Starship Children's Health and Professor at the Department of Surgery, University of Auckland.

Associate Professor Sian Williams



Sian Williams is an Associate Professor at the School of Allied Health, Curtin University and Honorary Senior Research Fellow with the Liggins Institute, University of Auckland. Sian is an accredited Clinical Exercise Physiologist (Exercise and Sports Science Australia) with a background in clinical biomechanics (three-dimensional gait/movement analysis). Sian has over 15 years of research experience focused on cerebral palsy involving the measurement of movement, muscle development and promoting physical activity and function from infancy through to adolescence. Through the Australasian Cerebral Palsy Clinical Trials Network - CRE, and an Aotearoa Fellowship in New Zealand, Sian's work has also focused in the area of early detection and intervention of cerebral palsy and has completed advanced training in the General Movements Assessment.

Dr Gaela Kilgour



Dr Gaela Kilgour is a paediatric physiotherapist from Aotearoa with over 30 years of clinical experience. She currently works at the University of Melbourne as part of a team delivering a co-designed cycling program to people across all disabilities in their communities. Prior to this, Gaela worked as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the University of Queensland developing and delivering participation-focused physical activity programs with children with cerebral palsy, of all abilities, ages 3-14 years. Gaela has a passion promoting physical activity for family health and wellbeing and creating opportunities within our communities.

Prof Cathy Stinear



Professor Cathy Stinear specialises in stroke recovery and rehabilitation. As an applied clinical neuroscientist, she is focused on translating neuroscience discoveries into clinical practice. Her current work is using neurophysiology and neuroimaging biomarkers to accurately predict motor outcomes after stroke for individual patients. She has led the development and validation of the PREP2 tool for predicting upper limb outcomes after stroke and is developing and validating the TWIST tool for predicting walking recovery after stroke. She has authored over 120 peer-reviewed publications. She serves on scientific and grant awarding committees for health-related funding organisations and is an Associate Editor for the journal *Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair*.

Professor Thor Besier



Thor is a Professor at the Auckland Bioengineering Institute (ABI) and has a joint appointment with the Department of Engineering Science & Biomedical Engineering at the University of Auckland. He completed his Ph.D. in musculoskeletal biomechanics at The University of Western Australia in 2000 and was a postdoctoral fellow in the Bioengineering Department at Stanford University from 2003 to 2006. Thor established Stanford's Human Performance Laboratory as the Director of Research and was a faculty member in the Department of Orthopaedics at Stanford from 2006 to 2010, before returning home to New Zealand in 2011. He leads the musculoskeletal modelling group at the ABI. Thor's research combines medical imaging with computational modelling to understand mechanisms of musculoskeletal injury and disease.

Dr Meg Smith



Dr Meg Smith is a Clinical Nurse Director at Counties Manukau Health. Meg recently completed her Doctor of Health Science at AUT and her doctoral research explored the experiences of caregivers raising school-aged children with Hōkai Nukurangi (cerebral palsy) in Aotearoa New Zealand. Meg is also on the Executive Committee of the Cerebral Palsy Society of NZ and has a teenage daughter who lives with Hōkai Nukurangi.

Amy Hogan



Amy Hogan is a researcher at the Cerebral Palsy Society of New Zealand and holds a Master of Science in Psychology with First Class Honours, with research focused on disability, chronic health conditions and experimental treatments. Drawing on her lived experience of disability, Amy is a passionate advocate with extensive national and international research networks. Her interests include knowledge translation, equity and system change across Aotearoa New Zealand and the broader disability sector. Amy is currently Co-Chair of the Oceania Academy of Cerebral Palsy and other Childhood-Onset Disabilities.

Karen Adams



Karen Adams is a physiotherapist with a mix of adult and paediatric experience. Graduating from Brunel University in 2000, I gained a Post Graduate Diploma in Health Science (Child Health) in 2024. I am a current PhD candidate exploring physiotherapy care for non-ambulatory children with cerebral palsy and intellectual disability. Karen is passionate about improving the evidence for children with complex disabilities and providing them with the most fun and beneficial physio that they deserve to be their best selves. Karen has an interest in clinical gait analysis, particularly the physiotherapy and orthotic management of gait and movement and works at the AUT Gait Analysis service.

Arul Hamill



Arul Hamill is a paediatric occupational therapist. Arul brings over 30 years of experience working with babies and children. Arul grew up in Fiji, trained in Aotearoa New Zealand and has worked in many settings including Child Development teams, Therapy for Children (ACC), school learning support unit, private practice and then conceived the idea and co-founded Paediatric OT Ltd. Arul is passionate about valuing the voice of infants, children and their families. She journeys alongside families in Aotearoa New Zealand and some Pacific Islands supporting infants and children to engage and participate in everyday routines and tasks within their varied environments. She uses task analysis and clinical reasoning frameworks in fun and playful ways.

Dr Meredith Smith



Dr Meredith Smith is a Lecturer in Physiotherapy within the School of Allied Health Science and Practice at University of Adelaide. She is a clinical paediatric physiotherapist, with expertise in paediatric rehabilitation. Meredith's PhD focused on tailoring chronic pain assessment to children and young people with cerebral palsy, in which she led the development of two new pain assessment tools.