

Innovative Video Clips Recognised

The Office for Disability Issues' work producing video clips in New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) was recognised at the recent BearingPoint Innovations Awards.

The annual awards promote innovation in the public sector.



At the BearingPoint Innovation Awards 2004 were from left to right: Paul Dickey, Victoria Manning and Jan Scown from the Office for Disability Issues and Institute of Public Administration New Zealand (IPANZ) President Christine Goodman.

The Office made it into the finals with its video clips designed to provide Deaf people with key information about Parliamentary processes. Providing such information empowered Deaf people to influence and guide the NZSL Bill giving official recognition to their own language.

Development of the video clips involved extensive consultation. Deaf linguistic experts advised the Office throughout the development process to ensure the highest quality translation into NZSL.

The Deaf community was also involved in developing new signs for government vocabulary and concepts to include in the video clips.

The video clips can be viewed at www.odi.govt.nz. Further information on the BearingPoint Innovation Awards is at www.innovationawards.co.nz

Disability Reference Group

More than 100 individuals and organisations responded to and positively supported the Office for Disability Issues' proposal to set up a reference group of disabled people and their families/whānau.

For information about the nomination process and the reference group's functions visit: www.odi.govt.nz, email odi@msd.govt.nz or phone 04 918 9573.

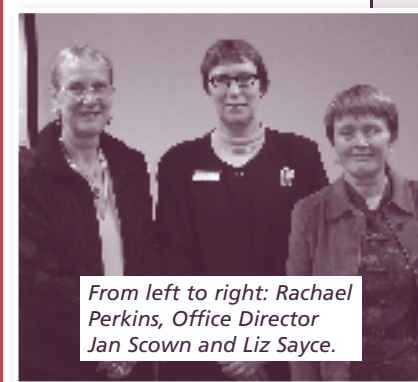
International Visitors

The Office for Disability Issues recently hosted international visitors who shared their experiences promoting social inclusion for disabled people.

The Office organised two workshops around their visit, which were attended by 60 government analysts.

Dr Rachel Perkins is Clinical Director of Adult Mental Health Services at South West London and St George's Mental Health NMS Trust. Liz Sayce is Director of Communications and Policy at the UK Disability Rights Commission. They both focused on employment, rights and anti-discrimination efforts.

David Morris leads the Social Inclusion Programme for the UK National Institute for Mental Health. He talked about working across government on issues of community engagement.

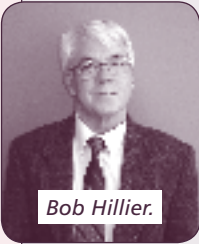


From left to right: Rachael Perkins, Office Director Jan Scown and Liz Sayce.

New Staff Onboard

Four new staff have begun working in the Office for Disability Issues.

Office Director Jan Scown is delighted to have them join the team, saying their collective experience and diverse backgrounds will strengthen the Office's capacity to do its work.



Bob Hillier.

Bob Hillier comes from the Ministry of Consumer Affairs where he was a Consumer Complaints Officer and Policy Advisor. After training as a lawyer he worked with tenants through the Christchurch Community Law Centre. One of Bob's roles is to work on the New Zealand Sign Language Bill with Analyst Victoria Manning.



Carol Ratnam.

Carol Ratnam worked for the Ministry of Health as a private secretary to the Minister of Health and also worked in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet before taking time out to care for her disabled daughter. She will lead work focusing on the capacity and leadership of the disability sector. "Life for disabled people and their families can be unnecessarily difficult and frustrating. I want to work on policies that will enhance their lives," Carol says.



Jill Briggs.

Jill Briggs has been appointed to project manage the review of long-term disability supports. She recently arrived from the UK where she worked as a government economist. "From my work in the UK, I developed the analytical and project management skills which I hope will help me guide this project to a meaningful and beneficial conclusion," she says. Jill has had some personal experience and contact with the disability community in the UK and is looking forward to meeting people from the sector in New Zealand.



Brent Watson.

Brent Watson comes from the Ministry of Social Development where he worked on benefit reform and the design and implementation of its Sickness and Invalid's Benefit Strategy. Brent is keen to see the promotion of full participation and inclusion of disabled people in society, and elimination of barriers disabled people face throughout their lives. Brent is part of the team working on long-term disability supports.

Views On Rental Housing Sought

The Government wants to hear from people in the disability sector who have an interest in rental housing.

The newly established Department of Building and Housing is reviewing the Residential Tenancies Act and wants to know how well the rental market responds to the needs of disabled people and whether the law needs to change to respond better to tenants' different circumstances.

The Act is the central piece of legislation that governs rental housing in the private and social housing sector.

Consultation is taking place over three months and centres on a discussion document – Getting the Balance Right. Copies of the document are available from the Department's website www.dbh.govt.nz, Tenancy Services offices or by phoning the Department on 0800 83 62 62.

The document includes a submission form and is available in pdf and html formats. Submissions close at 5pm on 18 February 2005.

Australians Visit NZ Disability Groups

Representatives from Australia's People with Disability (PWD) were recently in New Zealand visiting disability organisations.

During their visit, Damian Griffis and Heidi Forrest met with Office for Disability Issue's Senior Analyst Tessa Thompson and the rest of the team.

Tessa and Heidi met regularly during 2004 as they both attended the United Nations in New York in support of negotiations towards a convention on

the rights of disabled people.

PWD is a disability rights and advocacy organisation made up of disabled people and their representative organisations.



PWD's Damian Griffis and Heidi Forrest with Senior Analyst Tessa Thompson (right).