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Historic moment as NZ signs UN Convention

History was made on 30 March 2007 when the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was signed.

New Zealand is one of the first nations in the world to sign the Convention, and was represented at the signing ceremony by the Hon Ruth Dyson, Minister for Disability Issues, accompanied by a delegation that included Don MacKay (Ambassador to the United Nations), Jan Scown (Director, Office for Disability Issues), and Gary Williams (Chief Executive, Disabled Person Assembly).

The signing of the Convention is part of the large investment made by the New Zealand Government

over the past few years to remove the barriers to disabled people's participation, both internationally and nationally. New Zealand has played a leadership role in negotiating the Convention. This country's proposal that a working party made up of non-government disabled persons organisations and state representatives work together on the text of the Convention was a first in UN history.

The active participation by international non-government organisations, including using the internet to communicate between the UN meetings, has allowed a truly global and representative approach to emerge. It really was



Minister for Disability Issues, Hon Ruth Dyson, signs the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on behalf of New Zealand at the United Nations, New York, 30 March 2007.

a case of "Nothing about us, without us" with disabled people playing a central role in the progress of this important United Nations Convention.

For more information on the Convention go to www.odi.govt.nz/what-we-do/un-convention.html

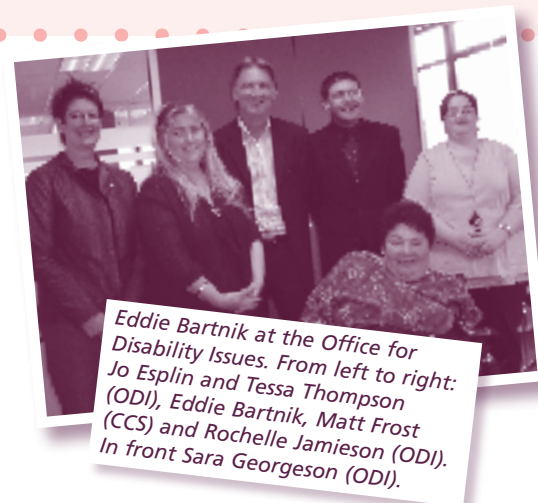
Australian disability expert visits New Zealand

Former Director of Metropolitan Services Co-ordination with the Disability Services Commission in Western Australia Eddie Bartnik was recently invited to visit New Zealand by a group of disability organisations. Eddie has been instrumental in developing and leading the Western Australian Local Area Co-ordination Disability Programme which focuses on personalised support, direct consumer funding, consumer and family empowerment, and decreasing bureaucracy. The Local

Area Co-ordination model has been copied in different areas and has been rated extremely effective in Australia and in other countries.

Eddie is currently working with Planned Individual Networks (PIN) in Western Australia. PIN is a programme that guides families to build lifelong support networks for their family members.

While here, he met the Hon Ruth Dyson, the Minister for Disability Issues, and staff at the Office for Disability Issues.



Eddie Bartnik at the Office for Disability Issues. From left to right: Jo Esplin and Tessa Thompson (ODI), Eddie Bartnik, Matt Frost (CCS) and Rochelle Jamieson (ODI). In front Sara Georgeson (ODI).

"We appreciate Eddie coming to New Zealand and sharing his views and experiences on how disability support systems can be changed to make them more personal, local and responsive," says Jan Scown, Director of the Office for Disability Issues.

No Exceptions Training

Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) and the Halberg Trust are adapting Australia's successful Disability Education Programme to suit New Zealand. The No Exceptions Training Kit (NET) will be offered to all those involved with sport and physical recreation, and is aimed at making sport and physical recreation opportunities accessible to disabled people.



Disabled paddlers join in at the Aratika Water Sport Club open day.

NET is a modular system and ensures people can train in areas that are relevant to their activity. Halberg Trust Sport Opportunity advisers based throughout the country deliver NET with additional presenters recruited from their regions. To ensure that all workshops have real life examples of participation, every delivery team includes disabled people. These presenters can also educate other disabled people to become presenters.

NET provides employment opportunities for disabled people and ensures that the sport and physical recreation sector gets the opportunity to value the involvement of disabled people.

For more information on NET or for assistance with sporting and recreational needs, contact the Sports Opportunity Advisers in your nearest Regional Sports Trust or the Halberg Trust. Contact details are on the Halberg Trust website: www.powerupdates.com/clients/halberg/pages or phone the Halberg Trust on 09 579 9931 or email info@halberg.co.nz

Nominations Service for disabled people

On 20 February 2007 the Minister for Disability Issues, Hon Ruth Dyson, hosted a reception at Parliament to promote the Nominations Service. This was attended by key people from the business sector, board and committee chairpersons, and representatives from the government agencies which nominate and appoint people to boards and committees.

"Disabled people have many skills, experiences and talents that will increase diversity on boards. This is a hidden pool of talent that is not tapped into often enough," said Minister Dyson in her opening address.

André Lubbe and John Burton from the Nominations Service database also addressed the audience. Barrister and Solicitor André Lubbe talked about his role as Workplace Relationships Manager at ANZ National Bank, which is one of the largest private employers in the country.

John Burton, the founder of John Burton Ltd, began importing coffee beans in 1985 and, working from his garage, sold them to three distributors. Today John Burton has a nationwide network with over 80 distributors and a 27% share in the New Zealand Dilmah tea market. He is also an international sportsman who represented New Zealand in disabled lawn bowls at the Paralympics. John says balancing sport and work has given him a great appreciation of life.

Nominations Service Convenor Judy Small says that the database of skilled disabled people is growing all the time, and the width and breadth of talent and skills represented is increasing.

For more information about the Nominations Service go to www.odi.govt.nz



The Hon Ruth Dyson with Nominations Service database members John Burton and André Lubbe at a reception at Parliament to promote the Nominations Service. From left to right: John Burton, Minister Ruth Dyson and André Lubbe.