

## **Announcement on a new advisory group on autism**

A new group has been established to advise government agencies on work programmes that involve people with autism. This group replaces past groups that provided advice on the development of the New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline and the focus for the implementation of the guideline. The new advisory group will provide their advice to a group of senior government officials.

The recent request for people to express an interest in the new group received nearly 35 applications. The number of members on the group is 20 and the people are:

- Alison Molloy, Autism New Zealand
- Andrea Ford, Children's Autism Foundation
- Andrew Marshall, New Zealand Paediatric Society
- Ava Ruth Baker, person with lived experience of autism
- Barry Kiwara, family/whanau member
- Brian Pulefolau, family/whanau member
- Caroline Hearst, person with lived experience of autism
- Cheryl Palmer, Ministry of Education, Special Education
- Debbie Fewtrell, Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners
- Gabrielle Hogg, person with lived experience of autism
- John Greally, person with lived experience of autism
- Lyn Doherty, Ohomairangi Trust
- Martyn Matthews, IDEA Services
- Matt Eggleston, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Megan Chapman, Ministry of Social Development (CYF)
- Paula Jessop, person with lived experience of autism
- Sarah Turnbull, family/whanau member
- Susan Haynes, family/whanau member
- Tanya Breen, NZ Psychologists
- Wendy Duff, family/whanau member

This group comprises a mixture of people with lived experience of autism, their supporters (e.g. family and/or whānau), and clinical, disability, education and social welfare service deliverers. There are people who have been involved in the past groups, which provides a sense of continuity, and there are people who will make brand new contributions and provide fresh insights. Many of the people have other affiliations or life experiences associated with autism that enrich the group.

The first meeting of the group was on 1 December, 2010. It is likely that as its focus evolves, the group will seek to hear from people with specific expertise. In other words, gaps in the knowledge or expertise of the group can and will be filled by engaging with other people.

The senior officials thank everyone for their interest and look forward to working with the members of the new group.