

# *Support For Employers*

CONSIDERING PEOPLE'S NEEDS AND  
ABILITIES

**BELONGING | CAPABILITY  
PARTICIPATING | ACCEPTANCE**



*To Live a Life With Purpose*



Kia Ora, my name is Jack Lovett-Hurst and I am 26-years-old. I have a Disability called Autosomal dominant spinal muscular atrophy, lower extremity-predominant 2 and I have been in a wheelchair for most of my life and undergone about 35 operations. But, my disability does not hold me back from what I want to do and I have achieved a lot in my life. One of the highlights for me was competing in the New York marathon with my mother Debbie and stepfather Greg. We completed it in just five hours and 51 minutes!

I am a champion of disability issues through a programme at Nga Kete Matauranga Pounamu Charitable Trust named S.O.A.R. (Securing Our Aspirational Realities). The programme is aimed to better understand and grow awareness and knowledge around working alongside whanau with disabilities and to appreciate more fully the service options and needs they have to live full, enriched lives. I reach a wide audience in this work by hosting a weekly radio show on Radio Southland, running a Facebook page where people have the opportunity to post about anything disability related, and I also facilitate group think-tanks which, through the collective minds of several, is how this booklet came to be.

This booklet reflects the views and opinions of those living with a disability. Everyone wants to feel like they have a sense of belonging and purpose in their lives, and we believe it is important that everyone, no matter what disability they may have, should be given a fair go.

We want employers to embrace us as they would anyone else, to be open-minded, to listen, to understand, and to support and trust. Most importantly, we do not wish to be treated differently to anyone else.

*We want all people to be able to take flight and SOAR*

OUTH  
OUTHLAND  
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## DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

### LOVE

Live simply

Oppress no creature

Vanquish inequality

Embrace diversity

Ann Roske 2012

*"The inclusive work place has a professional etiquette that upholds human rights, work place harmony and equal employment practices. The inclusive work place has a shared power, in that enabled people can lead out and reflect the unique and personal qualities they bring to their work."*

Tracey Wright Tawha  
Chief Executive Officer

Nga Kete Matauranga Pounamu Charitable Trust





## SEE, FEEL, EXPERIENCE

We are excited about launching this booklet, to give employers an insight into why we believe they should give disabled people a go in their workplaces. Our disability focus group would like to:

- Be accepted
- Belong
- Be trusted
- Be included
- Not feel judged
- Have purpose
- Feel proud
- Be listened to
- Be motivated

We would like to accomplish our career goals, and know we are adding value and participating in the workforce with purpose.

We encourage employers to embrace us as they would anyone else, to be open-minded, to listen, to understand, and to support and trust us. Most importantly, we do not wish to be treated differently to anyone else.



## THE AWARE EMPLOYER

We believe the aware employer will be open-minded and understand the need for engaging different processes in creating equitable opportunities for people seeking employment where a significant disability is shared.

The aware employer will ask about the needs of the applicant and what (if any) resources may be required to fulfil the needs of the role. The aware employer will recognise that people living with a disability have often felt marginalized and seek that employers give them a go!

### We urge employers to...

- Listen
- Guide
- Explain
- Enable
- Understand
- Support

*My strength is not that of an individual but a reflection of the efforts of many.*



**Paul Searancke**

**Habitat for Humanity  
General Manager**

"I have the pleasure of being  
General Manager for Habitat  
For Humanity

Invercargill - A charity with  
housing as our focus. We  
have been operating in  
Invercargill for over 23 years,  
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We employ over 21 staff and  
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Invercargill for over 23 years, and for the past 20 years have been running a social enterprise to fund our aims. We employ over 21 staff and have a volunteer group of over 70 people from all walks of life. Amongst our Habitat whanau we have many people who have a range of disabilities or different abilities. We like to think that we are an inclusive organisation who treats people as people without prejudice or discrimination, and we work very hard to make this real every day. Being inclusive has changed our organisation's culture. We have become more aware, caring and responsive to those with disabilities and to those without.

I am often asked about the costs and efficiency of employing, or having volunteers, with disabilities. The answers are simple: People with disabilities are well embedded in our community, they live here, and they aren't transients so they have stickability. They are trusted, reliable, punctual, engaged, and take pride in their role, and enjoy being part of something that is making a difference in their community. They have improved our business outcomes and performance. I can't state strongly enough how positive this is to our organisation and encourage other business leaders to be open minded and embrace the positives that come when you employ people with disabilities.



Tracey Wright-Tawha

Nga Kete Matauranga  
Pounamu Charitable Trust  
Chief Executive Officer

"As an employer, I  
have had to develop  
my thinking and  
practice about how  
best to support

employees who have a disability. I now ask a simple question at interviews: "Is there anything else you want to tell me?" This provides an opening for people to tell you about their needs. Disability isn't always obvious. I've become a better listener and I take time to connect and understand what support is required. I aim to employ people who can get the job done but I also want a workplace environment that promotes diversity, inclusion and reflects our whole community."



# Darren Ludlow

Radio Southland  
Station Manager



"Radio Southland is an organisation that tries to walk the walk, as well as talking about it, when it comes to disability awareness in our space.

Some of our own staff have a disability, so we have an empathy for the challenges it can present. But we are also a radio station that has a mandate to advocate disability awareness within our community. Our volunteer programme makers have a variety of physical and mental disability that they cope with every day, and it's our role to ensure they too feel valued.

We share our stories, we educate, we advocate – but not everything we do is about disability. It's about being positive and inclusive members of our community. Just because someone has a disability shouldn't preclude them from sharing their hopes, aspirations, and passions with our audience. They will often work harder than those who take their everyday ability to cope without challenges for granted."



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Give those with a disability a go!
  - Listen and engage with us.
  - Be accepting, open-minded, and kind.
- Understand our disability, but please treat us the same as you would anyone else.
  - Deliver clear information to us.
- Support alternate application processes, online, in person, with a support person and so forth.
- There are agencies who can support employers, e.g. Work bridge, WINZ, Ministry of Social Development and Disability Support Centres etc.
- Seek input from your staff with the development of human resource policies on the topic of disability.
- Know your staff and be aware of existing disability in the workplace.
  - Develop policy that reflects agency values regarding disability and your commitment.



**THANK YOU!**

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