

# theword



Aphasia New Zealand Charitable Trust  
mate ngaronga reo

**Issue 60**

**Spring 2025**

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## Save the Date!

### Online Events for Whānau Coming Up in November!

Check out page 11 🙄



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## From the Office

This is our 60<sup>th</sup> Issue – which seems rather amazing! AphasiaNZ has now been in action for just over 18 years. Lots has changed since our small beginnings, and through our Community Aphasia Advisors, we now support over 1000 people with aphasia at any one time.

We are delighted that Dr Kate Daellenbach, who joined the organisation earlier this year, has agreed to join us as a Trustee.

Kate says “I feel lucky and honoured to be a part of this dedicated, knowledgeable and extremely hardworking team of trustees with AphasiaNZ. I have had a varied series of careers including marketing, fundraising, higher education teaching and of course Speech Language Pathology/Therapy, and I hope these skills combine to help me contribute to AphasiaNZ.

I’m inspired daily by people with aphasia and their whānau, and the initiatives of AphasiaNZ. I believe strongly in our role supporting people with aphasia over the long term, and educating our communities about aphasia. I am the CAA for the Wellington region, and will continue in this role, keeping me in touch with people with aphasia and PPA. Now, I also look forward to helping out as a trustee.”

Kate D and I are looking forward to representing AphasiaNZ at the Aphasiology Symposium of Australasia in Melbourne in November. We are giving a talk on the findings from our survey of Kōrero Club members in June – more information below!

*Until next time... Kate M*

## Aphasia Awareness

During Aphasia Awareness Month in June, we put together a short survey to find out what people with aphasia who attend our Kōrero Clubs feel about aphasia awareness.



### How Do People with Aphasia Explain Aphasia?

Many people don't know what aphasia is.

We did a study asking questions like ...

- How do people with aphasia explain aphasia?
- Do they think other people need to know more?



### Who was involved?

- 95 people with aphasia in New Zealand
- All attended regular conversation groups
- They answered questions in a survey



What did the survey tell us?

**Most people- 87%** - thought it would be **easier if other people knew** more about aphasia

**Most people- 86%** - felt it might **help if their family understood** more about their aphasia.



**Over half - 60%** - thought **they understood** or had enough information about their own aphasia

**Over half - 67%** - **shared information** about aphasia,

**Half - 50%** - referred to speech and language difficulties

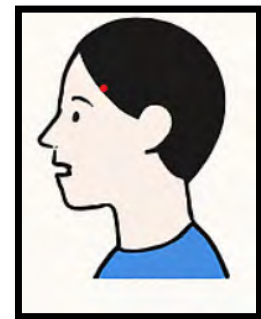
But **Only 22%** used the word **"aphasia"**

When people with aphasia do explain aphasia, they use short, simple phrases, and give people tips to communicate.

We asked, **why not explain more** about aphasia?

People with aphasia said:

- **People don't know** what aphasia is
- People do **not give me enough time** to explain
- There is a need for **short, simple answers**
- **"I had a stroke" is easier** to say

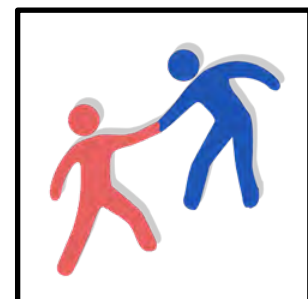


What might help?

**56%** thought that **"hearing my story or listening to me talking"** would help others understand.

Other ideas

- Give them **written information**
- **Watch a video** of someone with aphasia
- Do **online learning** or **other education**



## What does this mean?

- People with aphasia **want others to know** about aphasia.  
**Sharing their story helps**—but it's hard.
- Even in a group that talks often, **many still struggle to explain aphasia.**



## What can we do?

- Collaborate **with** people with aphasia
- Help them share their **knowledge and story**
- Make space for listening
- And ask:
  - “What helps you explain or share information about aphasia?”
  - “What do you want others to know?”



We would love to hear your thoughts!

You can [email us](#) here, or talk to your CAA.





## Changes to Disability Funding are coming

The Minister for Disability Issues, Hon. Louise Upston announced changes to Disability Support Services funded support in a press release on 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026, there will be changes to the assessment and allocation of flexible funding for people with disabilities, their whānau and carers.

All Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) providers around the country will do assessments the same way. Support for carers will be part of this assessment process.

Reassessments will be paused from February until October 2026, to give NASCs time to make the changes needed. If your circumstances change in this time, you can request an urgent reassessment.

The press release can be found [here](#).

The fact sheet can be found [here](#).

You can watch a video explaining the changes [here](#).



## I've Been Thinking... by Nigel Sanson

I have been thinking...

Why is there a Father's Day or a Mother's Day or Children's Day or Family Day?

It should be for "EVERY DAY"!

After all, Every Day is a New Beginning.



### Word of the Season

"VERNAL" (adjective). Relates to Spring.

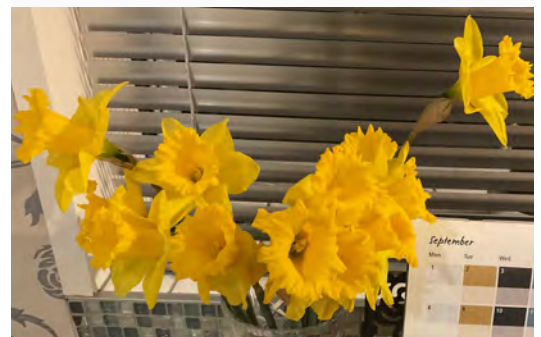
### Joke of the Season

"What did the flower say when she found out it was allergy season again?"

*"You've got to be pollen my leg"*

What is a flower's favourite kind of pickle?

*"A daffo-dill".*



## Find the Word

The size is 10x11 (Left and Right X Down)

B	E	T	T	E	R	Y	D	Y	G
A	E	T	L	E	L	Y	Q	R	S
K	H	O	W	I	F	T	I	G	P
E	H	O	M	E	M	X	G	N	R
W	L	A	P	H	A	S	I	A	I
F	F	Z	P	E	L	O	V	E	N
S	L	E	E	P	C	M	E	F	G
Q	Z	X	K	J	Y	E	M	I	T
S	T	R	O	K	E	V	X	N	J
Y	S	K	D	R	I	N	K	D	D
N	E	W	Z	E	A	L	A	N	D

APHASIA	CLUB	SMILE	BETTER
GIVE	HELLO	FAMILY	SLEEP
ME	THINK	NEW ZEALAND	TEA
SOME	SPRING	GOODBYE	DRINK
TIME	WORD	STROKE	LOVE
SEASON	JOKE	HOPE	BAKE
HAPPY	FIND	ANGRY	WHOLE ( <i>bonus word</i> )
HOME	FLOWER	GIFT	HOW ( <i>bonus word</i> )

\*\*\* See the answer on the Summer "The Word". Bye for now, Nigel. \*\*\*





## Thoughts from Ron Collard

I have found this interesting.

It has come to mind that some people avoid large gatherings because you can't speak in a conversation because of your aphasia.

I want to share something with you about how I take part in conversations and gatherings.

For me, speaking in a crowd isn't always easy. Because of this, I've learned to enjoy being an observer. Instead of focusing on what I cannot say, I find joy in following the conversation closely. A simple "yes" or "no" keeps me connected, and often a smile, a laugh, or a serious look says just as much as words.

I've discovered that people notice this. They see that I'm with them in the moment, even if I'm not saying much. Sometimes, when the time is right, I write things down. Others are often surprised at how much I've picked up, and that feels good—it shows that listening and observing are powerful in their own way.

I've come to realize that being part of a conversation isn't only about talking. It's also about being present, sharing the mood, and showing that you care. That's how I enjoy being with others, and it has brought me peace and happiness.

With warmth,

Ron



## AphasiaNZ's Community Aphasia Advisors (CAAs)

### Auckland North and West – Nicole Chia

Email: [aucklandnw@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:aucklandnw@aphasia.org.nz)

### Auckland Franklin – Nicole Lewis

Email: [franklin@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:franklin@aphasia.org.nz)

### Auckland Central and South – Nicole Lewis

Email: [aucklandcs@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:aucklandcs@aphasia.org.nz)

### Waikato West Central – Christa Grbin

Email: [waikatowc@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:waikatowc@aphasia.org.nz)

### Hauraki plains and Papamoa – Kate Ombler

Email: [hauraki@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:hauraki@aphasia.org.nz)

### Tauranga – Kate Milford

Email: [tauranga@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:tauranga@aphasia.org.nz)

### Eastern Bay of Plenty – Vacant

Email: [easternbop@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:easternbop@aphasia.org.nz)

### Rotorua – Jude Thomas

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### Central North Island – Melinda Dakin

Email: [centralnorth@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:centralnorth@aphasia.org.nz)

### Whanganui – Rachel Wilson

Email: [whanganui@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:whanganui@aphasia.org.nz)

### Hawke's Bay – Maxine Bevin

Email: [hawkesbay@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:hawkesbay@aphasia.org.nz)

### Wairarapa – Sarah Martin

Email: [wairarapa@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:wairarapa@aphasia.org.nz)

### Wellington – Kate Daellenbach

Email: [wellington@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:wellington@aphasia.org.nz)

### Christchurch – Mikaela Yung

Email: [christchurch@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:christchurch@aphasia.org.nz)



Most CAAs work part-time hours and may not be able to respond to you immediately.

The best way to contact the office is by emailing [info@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:info@aphasia.org.nz)

### Central Otago – Alison Lunn

Email: [otago@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:otago@aphasia.org.nz)

### Dunedin – Meryl Jones

Email: [dunedin@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:dunedin@aphasia.org.nz)

### Invercargill – Megan Bell

Email: [invercargill@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:invercargill@aphasia.org.nz)

### Friends CAA – Nicole Lewis

Email: [admin@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:admin@aphasia.org.nz)



## Online Groups for Whānau

AphasiaNZ runs several support and information programmes for whānau.

We have support groups for family members of people who have aphasia due to stroke, and also for family of people who have progressive aphasia.



**Online Whānau Support Group**

For whānau of people with aphasia; to meet others and find support

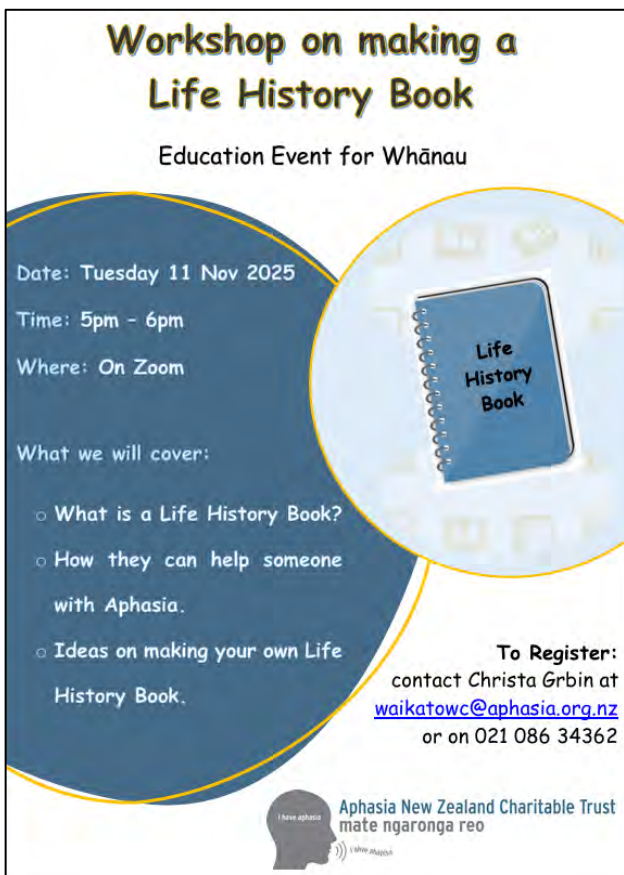
When: November 25<sup>th</sup>

Time: 5:30pm - 7pm

Where: on Zoom

Contact: Christa Grbin  
021 086 34362 | [waikatowc@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:waikatowc@aphasia.org.nz)

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**Workshop on making a Life History Book**

Education Event for Whānau

Date: Tuesday 11 Nov 2025

Time: 5pm - 6pm

Where: On Zoom

What we will cover:

- What is a Life History Book?
- How they can help someone with Aphasia.
- Ideas on making your own Life History Book.

To Register:  
contact Christa Grbin at  
[waikatowc@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:waikatowc@aphasia.org.nz)  
or on 021 086 34362

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In addition, we run regular workshops for family members – making a life history book is the next one in our programme.

We also run workshops on supported conversation.

The aim of these workshops is to improve communication, reduce frustration, and help you to have more enjoyable conversations.

[Register to attend here.](#)

## Primary Progressive Aphasia information

I recently watched a presentation on Speech Language Therapy approaches to treatment in PPA. This is from the Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration ([www.theaftd.org](http://www.theaftd.org)) and was a presentation at their Education Conference in 2024.

[PPA: Approaches to Treatment Dr Maya Henry](#)

AFTD Education Conference 2024

This is a great overview of PPA, with an update of research into treatments and interventions designed to slow the loss of language abilities.

Did you know that Frontotemporal Degeneration is the most common cause of dementia in people under 60 years old?

This week (21st – 27th September) is World FTD Awareness Week.

The AFTD have lots of videos on their YouTube channel, including all the presentations from their 2025 conference.

<https://www.youtube.com/@TheAFTD>

[Here is the presentation](#) on Improving Quality of Life with PPA: The Communication Bridge Study from the University of Chicago.



## Technology Corner

We have recently become aware of a new app for communication support for people with aphasia called **Aphasia Duo**, by **Smartbox**. You can find information about Smartbox on [their website](#).

Aphasia Duo is a set of two symbol vocabularies, designed specifically with people who have aphasia in mind. Aphasia Duo is included in **Grid 3** and **Grid for iPad**. Grid for iPad can be trialled for 30 days for free.

The aim of the app is to **enable users to communicate for a wide range of reasons** and provide a range of accompanying communication supports. These vocabularies are designed to be used with a communication partner, though some individuals may be able to use them independently.

Both vocabularies contain **topic words, activity/topic relevant phrases, and supports to help with word-finding difficulties and daily routines**. There is also vocabulary to talk about important topics like **mental health, goal setting and discharge planning**. The link to the Webinar on YouTube is [here](#).





## Text-to-Speech Apps

Have you ever looked at a menu at the café, the letter from the bank, or that book you always wanted to try, and thought, "*This is just too hard to read*"? Many people with aphasia feel this way.

There are apps that can help. Two of them are called:



**Natural Reader** and



**Speechify**

Both apps can read:

- **Online items** like websites, emails, and social media posts.
- But also, **physical items** like books, letters, menus, and bills.



Take a photo of the page and upload it to the app.  
The app will then read the words out loud to you.



These apps are available on **Android and Apple devices**. Free versions can be downloaded but are limited. To access all the app features, you need to pay a subscription.





## Our Contact Details



**You can get in touch with us in the following ways:**

### **By writing to us:**

AphasiaNZ, PO Box 13435, Tauranga Central, Tauranga 3141

### **By making an appointment and visiting us:**

At 36 Cameron Road, Tauranga 3110

### **By calling us:**

In the office on (07) 220 9973, *OR*

On our free phone number **0508 APHASIA** (0508 274 274)

### **By emailing us:**

[info@aphasia.org.nz](mailto:info@aphasia.org.nz)

### **Through our website:**

[www.aphasia.org.nz](http://www.aphasia.org.nz)



### **On our Facebook page:**

[www.facebook.com/AphasiaNZ](http://www.facebook.com/AphasiaNZ)

**We look forward to hearing from you**

*E tatari ana matou ki te whakarongo ki a koe*

*If you have prior governance experience and an interest in serving as a Trustee for AphasiaNZ, please do get in touch with us at the office.*



Aphasia New Zealand Charitable Trust  
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*giving a voice to people with aphasia*

## Can you Help with a Donation?

Your donations enable us to provide information, resources and Community Aphasia Advisor (CAA) services across New Zealand.



**\$10** will cover the cost of one person attending an online Kōrero Club meeting.

**\$20** will send a resource pack to a family affected by aphasia.

**\$50** will print a copy of the NZ Stroke and Aphasia handbook.

**\$300** will fund one Kōrero Club meeting.

Donations can be made online into the AphasiaNZ bank account, or by credit card via PayPal or Stripe. The easiest way to donate is to visit our website.

As AphasiaNZ is an approved donee organisation, you can claim a tax credit for all donations over \$5.00 if you earn income.

If you are interested in [payroll giving](#), please get in touch. This is an easy way to give us a regular donation, and you receive the tax credit instantly.

**[Please click here to donate online today!](#)**

And lastly.....before you go... People with aphasia- can you spot our deliberate spelling mistake?? [Email us](#) to tell us where it is!

