

theword



Aphasia New Zealand Charitable Trust
mate ngaronga reo



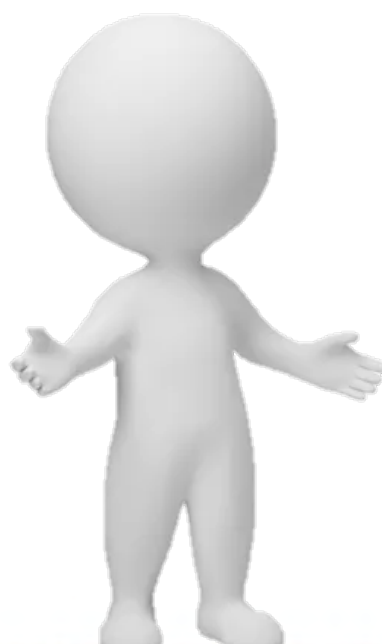
Issue 63

Winter 2026

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**Thank you Virginia and
Maurice for your support
for people with aphasia!**



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Aphasia New Zealand (AphasiaNZ) Charitable Trust
36 Cameron Road, Tauranga 3110
PO Box 13435, Tauranga Central, Tauranga 3141

From the Office

We are so pleased to have Emma and Renee join the Community Aphasia Advisor team in Auckland. New Kōrero Club meetings are starting up and we can offer home visits, education sessions and more. Please reach out for support and make referrals through the form on our website.

Sadly, we are farewelling Nicole Chia. Nicole has been the CAA for the North Shore and West Auckland. She is leaving us to take up a role in Japan – which sounds very exciting and we wish her all the best. Thank you Nicole!

Our national office in Tauranga is moving – not far, just down the road. We will be moving from 36 Cameron Road to 96 Cameron Road over the next month. Our postal address (PO Box 13435, Tauranga Central, Tauranga 3141) remains the same, so nothing is changing from a day-to-day perspective. The office is on the first floor – but there is a café on the ground floor so we can meet there. Please get in touch with plenty of notice if you want to meet us. We usually come to you at home.

Thank you all for your awareness activities over the month of June. We were very pleased with the feedback, and delighted with the success of our posts on Facebook. Your engagement with our posts is vital to ensuring that awareness of aphasia continues to spread.

Congratulations to Virigina and Maurice Gibbens for being awarded the Emma Castle Award this year. You can see a photo later in the newsletter.



AphasiaNZ has subscribed to the Tactus Virtual Rehab Centre to support you to access increased therapy opportunities. We have spaces for 40 people with aphasia to use the rehab centre at any one time. Read more about this below. (We are very excited about this!)

We are making some of our resources available electronically through our website. Have a look! More will be following.

We are very sad at the news that Tony Petrasich has passed away. Tony had a stroke at the age of 32, and lived with aphasia for over 25 years. He was the joint winner of the Emma Castle Award for Excellence in Aphasia in 2024, in recognition of his many years of support and advocacy for people with aphasia.

Tony was present at the very first meeting of Aphasia New Zealand, was Chair of the Rodney Aphasia Group, and a keen member of the CBR CeleBRation Choir, the 'More than Words' Gavel Club, and Sing Up Rodney.

A celebration of his life will be held in Auckland. Please [contact us](#) or the [Rodney Aphasia Group](#) if you would like the details. Rest in Peace Tony – and thank you.



Until next time... Kate M

Community Aphasia Advisor News

Introducing Emma

Kia ora koutou, ko Emma taku ingoa. Ko Vermont te whenua tupu, ko Whangaparāoa te kāinga - I'm originally from Vermont (on the east coast of the U.S., but I'm very flattered if you think I'm Canadian), living in Whangaparāoa, and working with people with aphasia, their whānau, and friends across the Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland region.



I enjoy helping people develop self-expression and independence through communication, and I'm excited about making all forms of communication accessible, practical, and rewarding.

I completed a Master of Speech-Language Therapy Practice at Waipapa Taumata Rau – University of Auckland in 2021, and previously completed a Master of Arts in Linguistics from Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington in 2018.

As well as my mahi with Aphasia NZ as a Community Aphasia Advisor, I currently facilitate a fortnightly community singing group for people with traumatic brain injury, and I'm also the editor of the NZ Speech-Language Therapists' Association magazine, Communication Matters.

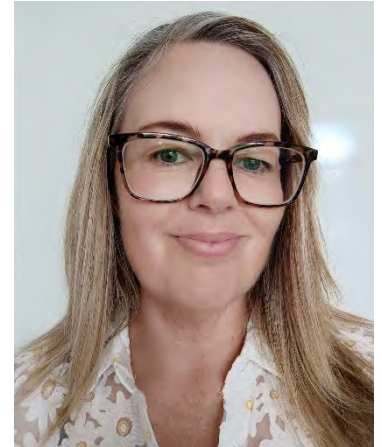
I've previously studied NZ Sign Language, Te Reo Māori, French, Spanish, and Italian... and can also speak a bit of emergency Klingon.

I'm looking forward to getting to know you, he waka eke noa!

Introducing Renee

Kia ora, I'm Renee, and I'm excited to be joining the team as a Community Aphasia Advisor.

I am a Speech-Language Therapist with a passion for supporting adults with communication difficulties following stroke and other neurological conditions.



I have lived in Glenbrook for eight years and love being part of the Franklin community. I live on a small lifestyle block with my husband, our 14-year-old son, and a menagerie of animals.

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time at home with my family, op-shopping, and horse riding. The Waiuku Forest is my favourite place to ride my horse and enjoy the outdoors.

What I love most about this role is the opportunity to work alongside people with aphasia and their whānau, helping them navigate challenges, access support, and continue participating in the activities and relationships that matter most to them.

I look forward to meeting and working with you.



AphasiaNZ's Community Aphasia Advisors (CAAs)

Auckland North and West – Nicole Chia

Email: aucklandnw@aphasia.org.nz

Auckland Central and South – Emma Wollum

Email: aucklandcs@aphasia.org.nz

Auckland Franklin – Renee Edmonds

Email: franklin@aphasia.org.nz

Waikato West Central – Christa Grbin

Email: waikatowc@aphasia.org.nz

Hauraki and Thames - Vacant

Email: hauraki@aphasia.org.nz

Tauranga - Kate Milford

Email: tauranga@aphasia.org.nz

Eastern Bay of Plenty – Vacant

Email: easternbop@aphasia.org.nz

Rotorua – Jude Thomas

Email: rotorua@aphasia.org.nz

Central North Island – Melinda Dakin

Email: centralnorth@aphasia.org.nz

Whanganui – Rachel Wilson

Email: whanganui@aphasia.org.nz

Hawke's Bay – Maxine Bevin

Email: hawkesbay@aphasia.org.nz

Wairarapa – Sarah Martin

Email: wairarapa@aphasia.org.nz

Wellington – Kate Daellenbach

Email: wellington@aphasia.org.nz

Christchurch – Mikaela Yung

Email: 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

Central Otago – Alison Lunn

Email: otago@aphasia.org.nz

Dunedin – Meryl Jones

Email: dunedin@aphasia.org.nz

Invercargill – Megan Bell

Email: invercargill@aphasia.org.nz

Friends CAA – Nicole Lewis

Email: friends@aphasia.org.nz



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

Highlights this Season

Plains Media Podcast Series – Canterbury

"Introducing... Community Hubs & Their People"

Mikaela (Community Aphasia Advisor (CAA) for Canterbury), Nicole (Friends CAA), and Kevin and Malcolm who both have aphasia have taken part in episodes. Kevin and Malcolm shared their personal journeys, challenges, and achievements.



Here are the links to listen to all 3 episodes:

1. [Interview with Mikaela and Nicole discussing aphasia and AphasiaNZ](#)
2. [Interview with Malcolm](#)
3. [Interview with Kevin](#)



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Highlights this season

Lower North Island Korero Clubs

Congratulations to Virginia and Maurice Gibbens - for establishing the aphasia group in Lower Hutt and for being advocates for aphasia everywhere they go.



Wairarapa



Hutt Valley



Johnsonville



Kāpiti Coast

Members from the Kāpiti, Wellington, Hutt, and Wairarapa groups had a tour of Government House!



Wellington Central



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Online Workshop for Whānau

The next online workshop is our **Supported Conversation Training!**

When?

Thursday 10 Sept
5pm - 7pm

Supported Conversation Training
(first session)

Thursday 22 Oct
5pm - 6:30pm

Supported Conversation Training
(follow-up session)



About this workshop:

Aphasia can be a barrier to conversation. Whānau of people with aphasia can learn how to adjust their own communication to improve conversations in their home.

Supported conversation training is a 2-part training programme where the whānau of people with aphasia learn strategies to communicate better with people with aphasia.

How to register?

Please email Christa [at this link](#), or head to our website where you can find all the details about how to register.

Click on the link (online events flyer) to see what online events are coming up in November.





Virtual Rehab Centre

A comprehensive online platform designed for SLTs

AphasiaNZ has recently set up a subscription to the Tactus VRC to extend therapy support options (evidence-based treatments) for people with aphasia.

The Tactus VRC is available for people with aphasia living in the community:

- Who **primarily have their own device**;
- Who want aphasia therapy for **home practice**;
- For **up to 4 months**.

Those who do not have their own device, can access the VRC through our **iPad loaning program**.



**If you are an SLT wanting to support a person with aphasia to use the VRC, please get in touch with Nicole:
friends@aphasia.org.nz**



Technology Corner

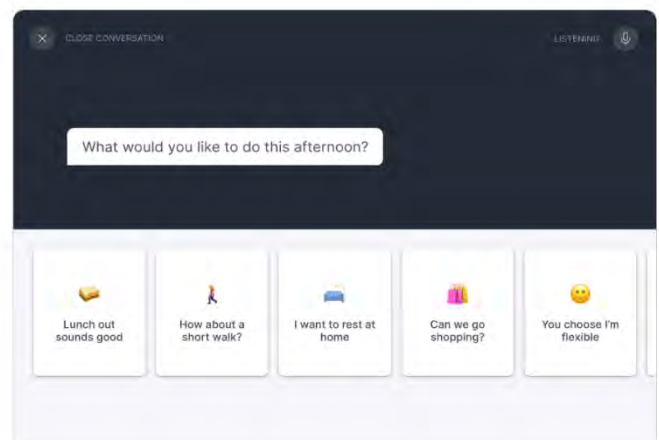
Broca AI Speech

Broca AI Speech is an online tool designed **for family, friends, and caregivers** to communicate more easily, naturally, and enjoyably with a person with aphasia who has **difficulty with speaking, writing and typing.**

How does it work?

Broca AI Speech:

1. Listens to a person talking.
2. Suggests response options with pictures for the person with aphasia to choose from.
(Add a bio for more personalised response options)
3. Says the response out loud.



You can create a **free** account through their website using **any device**. An **iOS app** will also be **available soon**.

Click on the link to find out more - <https://www.brocaaispeech.com/>.

How many words can you make?

The word of the day at the Tauranga Kōrero Club on 10 August was **lethologica** – this is the temporary inability to remember a specific word or name during conversation. It is commonly known as the "tip-of-the-tongue" phenomenon.

We thought this was a great word, so we set to work seeing how many words we could make from the word **lethologica**.

Rules:

- You can only use each letter once;
- You can have words of one letter or more;
- No foreign words are allowed;
- Don't cheat and look it up on the internet!

How many words can you make?

Tips:

- It is usually easier if you write out the letters to fit within a circle shape on a piece of paper
- There are 2 words that use all the letters! (we didn't think of these during our meeting...)

The Tauranga Kōrero Club scored 87 during our meeting – we had about 15 minutes for this game. Can you beat us?

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 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

Through our website:

www.aphasia.org.nz



On our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/AphasiaNZ

Through your local Community Aphasia Advisor:

(email addresses are above)

We look forward to hearing from you

E tatari ana matou ki te whakarongo ki a koe



Thank you for your donations!

Your donations, whatever the amount, are very important to us and help us to provide information, resources and Community Aphasia Advisor (CAA) services across New Zealand.



\$10 covers 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!

