



PO Box 9230
Tower Junction
Christchurch 8149
Phone: 08001NZFCE or 0277169323
Email: sally@nzfce.org.nz
www.nzfce.org.nz

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The NZ Foundation for Conductive Education is the umbrella organisation for 13 affiliated centres throughout New Zealand who support approximately 300 people with disabilities at any one time.

Our focus is on enabling disabled people to have the best possible quality of life and choice and control over how this looks for them as individuals.

A big part of our work is encouraging and supporting disabled people to be part of their local community. This has a two-way benefit – for disabled people themselves to be connected but also to encourage the community to engage with and value all members of our society.

We have come a long way with regards to accessibility, but unfortunately we have a long way to go. Many people assume that accessible bathrooms as currently provided under the Building Act and as required by law, meet the needs of everyone in the disability community. This is not the case.

We work with a very diverse range of people some with complex multiple needs. They too want to get out in the community but currently many need to go back to their homes for their personal cares as they require hoists, changing tables etc.

We have recently become aware of an organisation called Changing Places NZ who have designed bathroom facilities with the needs of our most complex group in mind. I had an opportunity to visit Auckland recently and made a special trip to Westfield Newmarket to view a Changing Places NZ facility. I was delighted to see the thought that had gone into this – with everything possible that may be needed incorporated into the design. The standard of the fittings was very high – a necessity – because even with the utmost care – these fittings will receive hard wear. I am very much of the opinion that it is worth investing in an optimum product that will stand the test of time – do it once and do it well.

NZFCE consider that it is a human rights issue that people are able to access appropriate bathroom facilities in communities and we fully support a plan for a nationwide network.

We hope that you are able to help make this a reality and ensure that ALL disabled people can participate in community life.

Please contact the undersigned or Changing Places NZ for further information.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sally Thomas", is written over a horizontal line.

Sally Thomas
National Coordinator