

# New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association (Inc.) Te Kāhui Kaiwhakatikatika Reo Kōrero o Aotearoa

Affiliated to the International Association of Logopaedics and Phoniatrics

13 February 2009

<Letter sent to 122 Members of Parliament personally addressed to each of them>

Dear <Name>

**Re: *Speech-language Therapy in New Zealand***

Congratulations on your success in last November's election, As we begin a challenging year, I would like to further highlight the important work undertaken by speech-language therapists (SLTs) throughout New Zealand, and the current issues facing our profession. Over 1,000 SLTs work in New Zealand providing services across a range of demographic groups. Specific examples of our roles include:

- Assisting newborns to develop feeding skills.
- Supporting young children with their communication and literacy development.
- Helping children, adolescents and adults overcome stuttering.
- Working with victims of road accidents to recover speech and/or language skills.
- Supporting communication and swallowing rehabilitation for adults who experience strokes or degenerative neurological disease.

Speech-language therapists currently receive professional development and support through the New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association (NZSTA). The two **main** issues currently facing our profession are:

- An urgent need for increased funding for speech-language therapy services in New Zealand. Many children and adults do not receive the necessary levels of support to ensure they receive 'best practice' service delivery. For example, many school-age children will not receive support from an SLT.
- SLTs should be included under the Health Practitioners' Competence Assurance (HPCA) Act without further delay. Given the importance of communication and swallowing in people's day-to-day lives, registration of the professionals working in this area is vital.

Thank you for taking the time to become aware of the speech-language therapy profession. Our association looks forward to developing links with MPs throughout this term of government.

All the best for a positive and productive 2009. We wish you every success.

Yours sincerely,



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President  
New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association



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