

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

Affiliated to the International Association of Logopaedics and Phoniatrics

12th January 2009

Dear Private Practitioners

I trust that you have had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year break. This letter is a follow-up to my correspondence of 22nd October on behalf of the Executive Committee of NZSTA. At our December 2008 meeting, the Executive Committee reviewed correspondence received from a number of private practitioners regarding the decision to implement a fee of \$200 per annum for advertising on the website. This matter was discussed at length and I would like to take this opportunity to report on the outcomes of that discussion.

1. Is website listing advertising or a public service? It is the opinion of the Executive Committee that the website listings serve a dual role. Firstly, they provide valuable information to the public around services available and, secondly, they advertise private services on offer to prospective clients in a particular geographical area.
2. Fee for listing on the website: Much correspondence centred on the rate of the fee. The Executive Committee has taken these concerns on board and compared the rates for listing against similar professional associations within New Zealand. Following this review, the rates have been reduced to reflect this comparison more appropriately. Comparisons were not made between international SLT associations and the NZSTA as the membership fees and Association structures are far from comparable.

On this basis, the fees have been reduced to \$100 (GST inclusive) per annum for members of NZSTA and \$400 (GST inclusive) for non-members effective immediately. It is hoped that the difference in fees will encourage non-members to join NZSTA. Members who have paid \$200 for their listing will be refunded \$100.

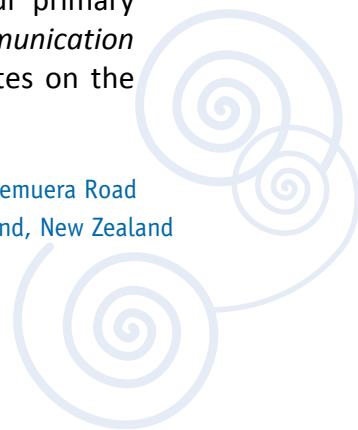
3. Perceived lack of consultation by the Executive Committee: This matter was addressed in my correspondence of 22nd October. Further to this, the Executive Committee is endeavouring to improve correspondence and consultation with the membership. We are hosting a teleconference on the 13th of February to outline current NZSTA initiatives and provide a forum for feedback from members. It is also anticipated that with the appointment of a Chief Operating Officer in the middle of 2009, communication will further improve. The Executive Committee also encourages all members to keep up-to-date via our primary channels of communication and consultation – area meetings, *Communication Matters*, and the publication of Executive Committee meeting minutes on the NZSTA website.



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4. Promotion of businesses of non-members of NZSTA: It was raised as a concern that the website will promote therapists who are not current members of NZSTA. We have implemented a two-tiered charge that promotes membership of the NZSTA. Furthermore, the website will be updated to state whether or not a therapist is a member, or a practice employs members, of the NZSTA.

While the implementation of a fee for listing on the website has disappointed some private practitioners, the Executive Committee stands by its decision. Maintenance of private practitioner listings requires both time and money and is viewed as one mode of advertising. In addition, the discussion resulting from this decision has generated a number of positive outcomes. Firstly, this process has resulted in a thorough review of the listing of businesses on the website. Following this review and in response to NZSTA and private practitioner correspondence, it was observed that 14% of listings were either inaccurate or promoted inactive businesses. The update has ensured that this service promotes only active businesses and, therefore, has resulted in an improvement of the information available to the public.

Secondly, this process has resulted in the formation of a private practitioner group (see the summer edition of *Communication Matters*). It is hoped that this initiative will result in greater involvement of NZSTA members from private practice in the running of the Association and will facilitate better links between this group and the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee look forward to working with this group and hearing of their plans for the improvement of services and practice.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'm. mcauliffe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Megan McAuliffe
President