



Read our CEO **Jonny Wilkinson's** regular column in The Northern Advocate

## "A different Light"

### **A Different Light - 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020 – “Glad NZ looks after vulnerable disabled in crisis”**

---

It's week four of lockdown. The days are running into each other with a theme of repetition. Our bubbles have become hyper familiar along with our environments which have shrunk to bare essentials. Bare essentials have become the norm. However hope is on the horizon. On Tuesday we will wake up to level three, a milestone that symbolises a marked improvement of our situation in New Zealand. Thanks to the Government's "go hard and go early" strategy and New Zealand's geographic isolation it looks like the virus's impact of our nation's collective health has been one of the most minimal in the world. This has meant that we have avoided (so far) overloading our health system and in turn been able to uphold the basic principles of Human Rights throughout our society during this pandemic.

Other countries, such as America that are experiencing widespread outbreaks of Covid 19 are starting to worry about their capacity to provide intensive care and equipment such as ventilators. They are preparing grim rationing plans that would prioritise patients based in who is the most likely to benefit from Intensive Care. While pregnant women, health workers and other frontline workers including politicians would be prioritised, the elderly, people with terminal and chronic conditions and disabled people fare poorly in many such plans.

It's an issue that has concerned many disability advocate groups in America. They lobby the powers that be that disabled people should not be denied medical care on the basis of stereotypes, assessments of quality of life, or judgments about a person's relative 'worth' based on the presence or absence of disabilities.

I'm glad that our government has taken such decisive. I'm glad that we all have responded so well. I'm glad that New Zealand is not turning its back on disabled and vulnerable people in this crisis. I'm glad to live in New Zealand.

Here is some information that may be helpful if you're disabled and find yourself stuck:

**Pharmacies** – If you check with your local pharmacy you will probably find that they may do home deliveries of medications for a small or no fee. Most of their hours have changed to 10am – 12 noon then 2pm – 4.30pm during this lock down period.

**Groceries, deliveries** – While the big suppliers have indicated that you can do online shopping/delivery there has been some reports that their websites are overloaded. I am sure they are working hard. Countdown has been promoting their “Priority Assistance” on the government’s guidelines around those who are most at risk. You can register online for this support on the Countdown website.

**Pickup/delivery other options** – Volunteering Northland are putting their hand up to help **vulnerable people** get essentials, to provide guidance over the phone on the use of online services, to offer someone to check in on them (via phone or online) or just for a chat. All enquiries: <https://volunteeringnorthland.nz/covid/help> or ring 0800-865268.

**Driving with Miss Daisy** – will happily discuss options and costs to assist those in the community who require assistance with getting their essential shopping requirements. Call Mike on [09 430-8091](tel:094308091)

**Meat Delivered-** One service that is working is the local Omak Meats who will deliver in Whangarei, Hikurangi, Onerahi, Kerikeri and other areas on certain days. You can order online – [omak.co.nz](http://omak.co.nz) or talk to them on 09-435 1403 if you haven’t got internet.

**Civil Defence** : If you find that you need help and you fit 'outside the gap' e.g. other networks, channels, services can't help you, maybe you aren't a NZ citizen , maybe you are but you still can't get help – just ring **0800 790 791**

**NorthAble (NASC):** Needs Assessment Service Coordination for people 0-64 with diagnosed intellectual, physical, sensory disabilities. If you are under NASC and you need further assistance during this lock-down period, please contact them on 09 430 0988 or 0508 637 200. You can also email Des Cawood at [Des.Cawood@northable.org.nz](mailto:Des.Cawood@northable.org.nz) or 021 373 133 [northable@northable.org.nz](mailto:northable@northable.org.nz) Their Equipment Store is closed however you can buy online or over the phone on (09) 430 3469.

*Jonny Wilkinson is the CEO of Tiaho Trust - Disability A Matter of Perception. A Whangarei based disability advocacy organisation.*