



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

"A Different Light"

A Different Light – 22nd June 2024 – “ Tiaho Trust offering social change and Leadership workshops to potential Disabled Leaders”

Despite the announcement from the Government in March about restrictions to the Purchasing Rules for Individualised Funding the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) approach is still front of mind in the Disability Sector. EGL is a concept that endeavours to put disabled people and their whanau at the helm of deciding what services they need and how they will be delivered. The announcement has galvanised the disabled community to hold fast onto the EGL concept and remain captains of their own waka.

At Tiaho Trust we have been working with communities to build capacity to take on the Enabling Good Lives approach in Northland. When, and if, the Government rolls out EGL in our neck of the woods, we will be as ready as we can. We have been using a community led development approach in which we listen to what issues disabled communities are having, and then support them in projects that address these issues. Through these projects, disabled leaders will be identified to form a Tai Tokerau EGL Regional Leadership group. These projects range from wanting public playgrounds with fenced areas to provide Autistic children who have a tendency to run away with a safe, inclusive play environment, to a network in Kaitaia who wish to establish an eco-friendly Residential and Respite Care facility. At one of the hui it was raised that disabled people didn't have opportunities to meet socially and get to know each other. Troy Robertson organized a Masquerade Disco last Saturday, here is his message on Facebook: *“Isaac and I attended a hui about the disability community a few months, one of the things people talked about was the lack of social events. So naturally, Isaac and I said, party! I did not know what to expect as none of the many parties I've attended has not been for disabled people exclusively. However, when I saw everybody dancing and having a blast, it truly warmed my heart. I hope this event was the first of many more to come in Whangarei”*. Another participant said *“This initiative showcases how people with disabilities can enjoy and thrive in a welcoming environment, join in for a fun and memorable experience that truly enables good lives!”*

Rolling out EGL, will require major paradigm shift in the sector. In essence it is about social change. As such, Tiaho Trust will be offering workshops in social change and leadership to potential disabled leaders and whanau in Northland. The first training sessions will be

delivered by veteran activist and former politician, Sue Bradford. Sue is a prominent New Zealander known for her extensive work in social justice, workers' rights, and environmental causes. Her early activism focused on anti-Vietnam War protests, anti-apartheid campaigns, and the feminist movement. She served as a Member of Parliament (MP) from 1999 to 2009. During her tenure, Bradford was known for her passionate speeches and effective legislative work. Beyond her political and activist roles, Sue Bradford has contributed to academia. She completed a Ph.D. in Public Policy from Auckland University of Technology, focusing on the relationship between activism and policy change. Throughout her life, Sue Bradford has remained a steadfast and influential figure in New Zealand's political and social landscape. Her unwavering commitment to justice, equity, and environmental sustainability continues to inspire new generations of activists and policymakers.

If any potential disabled leaders are interested in the Sue Bradford training or interested in being involved in the Tai Tokerau Regional EGL Leadership Group contact Tessa on tessa@tiaho.org.nz.

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