Accessing Employment

Career & Job-Finding Information

For Students with Disabilities
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For
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Over recent years New Zealand universities have become increasingly committed to improving access and successful participation for people with disabilities. As a result, increasing numbers of graduates are now seeking employment, and competition for jobs is becoming stiffer. No doubt there will be some challenging times in your search for employment. This Resource Book will come in handy in alerting you to important issues such as disclosure or modifications to the workplace.

**Introduction**
Finding and retaining rewarding professional work is the goal of all graduates. University graduates with disabilities and medical conditions are no different to other graduates in that they are a highly skilled and educated group who want to secure employment in an area that they have trained for, and which will start them on the path to greater professional opportunities. From this perspective, matters relating to disability are important issues that need to be seen in the context of the primary task of obtaining professional work.

The purpose of this Resource Book is to provide some initial discussion of the issues that you may encounter as you face the difficult task of securing rewarding employment. The Book is designed to assist you in the transition process from university study to professional employment. The best way to use this Resource Book is in conjunction with the careers services that are offered at the University of Waikato. You will find no specific information on how to write resumes, address selection criteria, or general job search information in this document. What you will find is disability-related information which can be used to supplement careers service resources.

The Resource Book can be used in a stand-alone format supported by careers service information resources; as well as in relevant careers workshops. It can also be used to assist careers service staff who need to provide disability-related information on an individual basis. For example, if disability issues arise in the course of a workshop or personal interview, then this Resource Book can be provided to the particular student to help address their concerns.

*Acknowledgement and appreciation is made to the following people and organisations for their efforts in contributing to and assisting with the publication of this book:*

*Rosemary Barrett, Careers Waikato; Judy Small; Grant Cleland, Creative Solutions Disability consultancy; Mark Edwards, University of Western Australia, and Karen Brown, Murdoch University for permission to use material from Access Employment: Facilitator's Manual. Perth, WA: Post Secondary Education Disability Network, (PSEDN); TIPD (Tertiary Initiatives for People with Disabilities), Queensland, Australia; Dean Severinsen, Massey University*
Section One

Getting Your First Job

It is important to recognise the time between finishing university and obtaining employment as a transition. Transitions can be emotionally difficult times for many of us. In leaving university after graduation, we are leaving a familiar place where we have achieved success.

You may start your transition before finishing your final year at University. You may be thinking about work options and may even be in part-time or voluntary work, whilst you are still studying.

The next stage of your transition begins with an ending, and endings should be done well. Make a list of what you have to do to really finish at university – e.g., take books back to the library, say goodbye to your lecturers, other staff and fellow students. Celebrate in your own way. You have achieved your goal. Congratulations!

A transition also has a period between endings and beginnings. This “between” needs special planning. You should treat it like a university project and use the skills you have learnt in research, writing and critical thinking. Name your project, e.g. “To get paid work”. Set aside several mornings a week and begin.

What Can I do From Home and in Familiar Environments?
Make a list of your abilities and knowledge areas.

Recognise your strengths, especially the strengths you demonstrated in adapting to university and winning your qualification, regardless of any barriers encountered along the way.

Show your list to a friend, lecturer or colleague and add their comments.

Start talking to people who are working and find out more about their working lives and environments.

Look at career books and articles; some are available on loan through the Disability Support Service and others through the University’s Careers Advisory Service. A list of other good resources appears in the Resources Section of this publication.

Identify what you would like to be doing as your work.

Visit the University’s Careers Advisory Service - they have a multitude of resources available from job descriptions to job vacancies. They can also help you with your decision-making and the development of your job seeking skills. The staff there are more than happy to discuss your CV, covering letters and interview techniques. You
can continue to use the services provided through the Careers Advisory Service after you have completed your studies. The Careers Advisory Service can be found upstairs in the Student Union Building and they are open 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday. Phone (07) 838 4751, fax (07) 838 4269 and Email: careers@waikato.ac.nz. Their website is: http://www.student-services.waikato.ac.nz/careers/index.shtml

Go back and talk to your lecturers. What strengths do they see in you and what advice do they have? Would they be willing to be named as a referee on your job applications?

Talk to everyone you meet about work.

**Get Out and About in Your Career Search**

Think about whether you know anyone doing the work you would like to do. Even if you only know them slightly, you could arrange to talk to them. Afterwards, send them a thank you card and they will remember you.

Use Internet sites and even chat groups (see Resources Section) and compile your own networking lists.

Visit or phone Career Services-rapuara at 19 Clifton St, Hamilton, phone 839-4181. They have computer resources on career and work-related matters which are free to use. They offer careers advice for a fee.

Careers Waikato is another agency which has experience of working with disabled graduates from the University of Waikato. They offer help in identifying career directions and strategies through careers counselling, vocational and personality assessment (also for a fee). Phone 8389 7398.

Find out if any agencies such as ACC, Workbridge, New Progress Enterprises etc, can refer you to careers counselling and pay your fee (See Section Four for contact details for these agencies).

Throughout this process, be your own best friend.

**Work Experience**

You may be a graduate who has never worked before, or you may be a graduate who has been in the paid workforce before but has never worked in a job which makes use of university qualifications.

Consider volunteer work as part of the transition process. Choose work that will challenge you to put your university skills into practice, e.g., organising, managing,
training, research, writing, understanding people and social processes. Contact an agency you know or the Volunteer Centre in the Hamilton City Council buildings. Make volunteering work for you!

Is there research work available at the University? Can funding be found for you to do it? Ask your lecturer, or perhaps some other organisation might have research needs?

Get some regular ‘work’, or even set up home-based work which extends or nurtures you and has similarities to paid work situations. It then is your work! And it keeps you up to date.

You may have been on committees, represented others for your class, for the University, for an organisation or even for the country! These activities involve professional skills - and don’t forget to include them in your self-assessment and on your CV.

Contact the University of Waikato Alumni Association. Get to talk to other professionals already employed in your field - you may be able to visit their place of work.

Take note of advice from John McIntosh, the Manager of Workbridge in Hamilton. His organisation has researched disabled graduates using Workbridge service, and he tells us that the prime factor that prevents disabled graduates getting paid work is the lack of previous work experience - voluntary or paid. This opinion is borne out by Australian research, which points out that most non-disabled people get work experience as they study, but students with disabilities tend to concentrate on getting their qualification and dealing with the extra time and stress they may face rather than gaining work experience (Access Employment: Facilitator’s Manual. Perth, WA: Post Secondary Education Disability Network, (PSEDN), 1998.)

**Keep on Networking!**

Read about effective networking (Richard Bolles’ book, *What Colour Is My Parachute*, is great on this - see Resources Section) and formalise some of the connections you already have. Start to use these contacts.

For many graduates, networks, especially family and friends, are the most productive for getting work.
Your Curriculum Vitae
Skim several of the many books on CV preparation (see Resource Section) and see what style best suits your purposes. It helps to know the difference between chronological, functional, and academic CVs.

Photocopy several successful CVs and then begin developing your own. Use lecturers, the University’s Careers Advisory Service, the University’s Disability Support Service, Careers Waikato, typing services, ACC resources if applicable, or CV agencies to develop and get feedback on your first version. Remember, a C.V. is a marketing tool and its purpose is to get you an interview. Remember to keep adding to your CV.

Covering Letter
A covering letter accompanies your CV for any job application. It says where you saw the job advertised or how you come to be sending the CV to their organisation. It also says something enthusiastic and positive about yourself and why you think you would be a good candidate for the job. Finish with a brief paragraph saying how you can be contacted. Keep it short. Three paragraphs!

Before the Interview…
Get your clothes sorted out in advance, ironed and co-ordinated and checked by someone else to make sure you're at your best. Also check that any equipment you take with you looks well maintained. Take a full CV with you to the interview.

If you have any requirements such as an accessible parking space, ring and speak to the person organising the interview. State your requirement and why you need it, for example, if you have a mobility-related impairment, ask for a park near to the entrance; if you have a vision impairment, ask to be met at the door of the agency; if you have OOS, ask if any pre-screening tests might require sustained writing.

At the Interview
The interview is the most daunting and nerve-racking part of the job search process. The Careers Advisory Service will be able to assist you in preparing for interviews so that you are at your optimal before the interview panel.

Practice Interview Questions
Practising for interviews is something that everyone knows would be helpful but no one actually does. In addition to practising some of the general questions you think you may be asked, it is also helpful to practise answering questions you may be asked that relate to your impairment.
The following questions can be practised in a workshop setting or with a partner at home. Even if you don’t want to practise with another person, visualise yourself in the interview situation and respond with the points that you would like to emphasise.

Remember that you should always turn the question to your own advantage. Be positive and relevant with your answers and always bring in concrete examples of how you have been successful and achieved in your academic and work experience. You can also raise the issue that the difficulties disabled people face are frequently due to the environment, structures or procedures which restrict and/or exclude impaired people from full participation, and then turn this to your advantage by pointing out that if changes are made to the environment, structures or procedures, you will be able to work without difficulty.

The following practice questions are examples of the sort of questions you could get asked. If you role-play or practise these examples, you will be ready to answer them with confidence and to your advantage.

- How do you think your impairment/medical condition will impact on your work?
- What impact did your impairment/medical condition have in your previous employment?
- In what ways did your impairment/medical condition cause you problems during your university studies?
- How have you managed to overcome the barriers/difficulties you face?
- How will you be able to do the job if you have (insert appropriate impairment or medical condition)?
- Is there anything you want to tell us about your impairment/medical condition?

During the interview talk positively and specifically about any barriers you may encounter, any requirements you have in the workplace, and how the barriers and requirements can be addressed. Your confidence will inspire the employer.

Talk to the employer about how you managed situations at University or other workplaces. Also tell them about the skills you have developed as a result of living with an impairment, e.g. technical expertise, use of internet, teamwork skills, ability to get the task done, problem-solving.

What to do about disclosure? Disclosure is a complex issue. There’s no right or wrong answer about whether or not to disclose. Check out the Disclosure section of this book for a discussion on this issue and information on how and when to disclose, if this is what you choose to do.

**After the Interview**
Debrief with someone who knows you and who is positive. Evaluate your performance.
The Job Offer
Be informed about employment contracts. Seek legal advice if necessary. Remember, initially contracts are a base for negotiation.

Finally,....

The University of Waikato Disability Support Service is there to help you until the end of the academic year. Often that is some months after your final exam. The University’s Careers Advisory Service is available indefinitely after you graduate.

No one knows how long it will take you to find your job. But to summarise, the most helpful activities toward getting that job are:

• be working - even half a day a week for a voluntary agency. It puts you out there;
• be an effective networker - develop contacts in your chosen area of work;
• set regular time aside to do your job search.
• follow up leads, make phone calls, send off CVs, and contact Workbridge or a career counsellor.

Section Two

Discrimination, Employment and Your Rights

Surveys on employer attitudes to disability show that, yes, discrimination is there, but it is not as widespread as people assume. A useful study of graduate outcomes and experience in Western Australia suggested that graduates, once employed, received similar salaries and conditions to their peers (PSEDN, 1998).

Disabled graduates are more likely to work part-time, to be self-employed and to be in work related to their qualifications. They are more likely to pursue further studies on completion of their degree.

Most disabled graduates do not experience barriers once they are employed, but of those who do experience barriers, inflexible work routines is the most common complaint.

On the negative side, disabled graduates did at times encounter discrimination. They took longer to find employment. Those whose impairment is visible experienced the most difficulty in securing work.

Fewer disabled graduates than non-disabled graduates have worked in their final years of study, and this can put them at a disadvantage. So, given an environment where discrimination may occur, to level the playing field disabled graduates need to:

• know their rights
• use more effective job-seeking strategies.

Your Rights Under the Human Rights Act (1993)

The Human Rights Act makes it unlawful for employers to treat people with disabilities unfairly. The Act protects you from discrimination in employment, so you should be familiar with its provisions.

Section 22 states that where an applicant is qualified for work, it is unlawful for an employer not to employ the applicant, or to offer less favourable terms of employment, or to terminate employment, because of the applicant's disability.

It is unlawful for an employer to make any enquiry of a job applicant which indicates an intention to breach Section 22; neither may they publish job advertisements indicating an intention to breach Section 22.

An employer must provide services or facilities to enable a disabled person to perform the duties of the position, unless it is not reasonable to do so. An
employer is permitted to set or vary work terms or conditions taking into account limitations that an impairment places on the person’s capacity to carry out the work. (*Human Resources Practice Manual II – Harassment and Discrimination*, Wellington, Brooker’s, 1998.)

Employers are required to reasonably accommodate the needs of disabled people. This can include:

- giving some work-related duties to other employees;
- providing changes to work practices or job design;
- modifications to equipment or premises, training or other assistance.

The Human Rights Commission can decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether the impact of an impairment may be reasonably accommodated. An employer must explore whether the impact of an impairment can be reasonably accommodated before dismissing or not employing someone. The onus is on the employer to do this, not the employee.

There are exceptions to the rule prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities:

- Section 29 permits different treatment based on disability where it is not reasonable to expect the employer to provide special services or facilities, or where there is an unreasonable risk of harm to the employee or others;
- Section 27 permits different treatment based on disability where the position is one of domestic employment in a private household.

Section 5(1)(a) of the Human Rights Act requires the Human Rights Commission to take a pro-active role, and to ”promote, by education and publicity, respect for and observance of human rights”.

Copies of the Human Rights Act can be obtained from the Human Rights Commission. You can complain to the Human Rights Commission if you feel you have been discriminated against. The Commission can also provide advice on your legal rights under the Act.

*Acknowledgment is made to Dean Severinsen, Massey University, for helpful advice and information.*

**Human Rights Commission**

Auckland: tel. (09)3090874, fax (09)3773593
Wellington: tel. (04)4739981, fax (04)4710858
Toll-free: tel. 0800 496877
E-mail: help@hrc.co.nz
Web site: www.hrc.co.nz
Other Helpful Legislation
Concerning the public sector, Section 56 of the **State Sector Act**, and parallel provisions in the Education Act, require state sector employers to take into account the needs and aspirations of people with disabilities.

Some other legislation could be used in relation to disability and employment issues, but it rarely has been, and it could be expensive and time-consuming to pursue these directions.

**The Health and Disability Commissioner Act (1994)** applies to instances where users of health and disability services believe that they have been unfairly treated by health or disability service providers. It is the function of various advocacy services throughout the country, established under the Act, to assist complainants resolve their grievances.

These complaints do not normally relate to employment disputes, but can do so if a person believes they have been unfairly treated. The mechanism used to resolve disputes through this forum is usually informal discussion and mediation. Although employees can, to a very limited extent, bring complaints to the Advocacy Service, such complaints can only be on the basis of the provision of, or access to, health or disability services, and can only be brought against providers of the above types of service.

**The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act (1990)**, stipulates that discrimination on any of the grounds contained in the Human Rights Act is unlawful. As the HRA is subservient legislation, the provisions contained in the Bill of Rights Act assist with reinforcing the rights contained in the HRA.

The first option for complaint against an employer (or potential employer) on the grounds of disability would be under the HRA. However, it could be worth considering bringing a complaint under the Bill of Rights Act if the HRA action proved unsuccessful.

Actions under the Bill of Rights Act go to court and would therefore involve a costly and time-consuming exercise. A more accessible and feasible choice would be to seek a **judicial review** of the Human Rights Commission's actions in the High Court. Another avenue for a person who does not agree with a HRC decision is to take the case to the **Complaints Review Tribunal** to have the complaint heard formally. The Bill of Rights Act, therefore, does not really provide disabled people with reasonable options to resolve discrimination disputes, although it has not been adequately tested.

Section Three

Disclosure

Whether to Disclose
In considering when, if ever, to disclose information about your impairment or medical condition to your prospective employer, it is important to remember that your impairment is not the central issue of concern in the process of applying for work; indeed, it may not ever be relevant at all. As with all steps in the job application process, the emphasis should be on the skills and qualities of the applicant and not on issues that may have no bearing on whether the applicant can do the job well. In most circumstances it will not be necessary to mention anything about your impairment or health condition in application letters, forms or resumes.

Some application forms ask whether you have a disability. Read the question carefully as this could be an optional question which is being asked for statistical purposes. Other forms may ask whether you have any condition which may affect your ability to do the job. Answer such questions honestly. Withholding or falsifying information on an application form can be grounds for a subsequent dismissal.

Although discrimination is unlawful, it can occur, and whilst you have an obligation to be honest towards your employer, how much information you provide regarding your impairment is your decision. The following are factors you should consider regarding the level of disclosure:

- the type of impairment;
- the barriers experienced as a result of your impairment;
- the type of employment opportunity;
- the need for some type of accommodation either at the interview or at job offer;
- the need for work-place alterations or supports;
- the attitudes of the interviewer(s).

Remember, if you are required to disclose at some point, this can be done in a very positive way. You can make a firm statement presenting your impairment not as a problem but as a positive experience which can give evidence of your problem-solving skills, personal qualities and other skills which may be related to the job.

There are valid arguments for and against telling an employer about your impairment.
Reasons for Disclosure
• Many employers have equal opportunity policies which reflect a commitment to non-discriminatory recruitment and employment procedures.

• The trust required in an employment relationship requires a level of honesty and good faith from you. You may need to negotiate adjustments and accommodations.

• Your impairment may be obvious and you can deal with misconceptions and provide correct information and show how you have considered solving problems that may arise in the workplace.

Reasons Against Disclosure
• You may be discriminated against and rejected.

• You may feel that the employer will label you by your impairment and not see your abilities.

• You may believe that the impairment has no effect on your ability to do the job that you are applying for.

Other Advantages and Disadvantages of Disclosing Information
Grant Cleland of Creative Solutions, a disability consultancy based in Christchurch, runs workshops on disclosure for disabled people. Grant advises that there is no right or wrong answer about disability disclosure. In workshops, Grant provides advice on the advantages and disadvantages of disclosure. By disclosing information in your application you may not be offered an interview by negative employers and therefore do not need to waste your time trying to convince them. You will also know that the employers or training providers who offer you an interview are reasonably comfortable about your impairment, and you can use the interview time to focus on your skills and experience rather than worrying about how you will discuss your impairment.

Grant does point out a number of disadvantages with disclosing information. Some employers will have negative attitudes and they may not interview or recruit you as a matter of principle. Or they may interview you for politically correct reasons, not provide the support you require and leave you feeling frustrated. The may also assume that managing disabled people will involve extra work and demands not required for non-disabled people and use this as a reason for not recruiting you.

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How to Disclose
Talk with assurance, be positive, honest and specific. If, from the duty statement for the position or your own research you identify areas where some barriers may arise, then offer some solutions to those potential difficulties. Don’t leave the interview panel wondering if you would be able to cope with particular aspects of the job. For example, if you have a visible impairment, the approach may be to say to the interviewer,

"We have not discussed my impairment or how it might impact on the job we have been talking about. If I understand the job description you have laid out, the job entails some travelling. I don’t foresee any of that being a problem. As I have stated I have had experience with all those responsibilities through my university studies and vacation employment. I drive my own car, so transportation wouldn’t be a problem. As long as there is accessible parking available there will be no problem."

Rather than avoid the subject, put it on the table, then demonstrate how unimportant it is.

For some graduates with invisible impairments, there is a tendency to disclose in inappropriate situations and/or provide more information than is necessary to the interviewer. Here is an example. A graduate with a learning disability is applying for a mid-level manager position. The interviewer has explained that technology has eliminated some of the traditional clerical roles. All mid-level managers have their own personal computer with the latest software to ensure they can effectively produce their own reports. Further into the interview the graduate says:

"By the way, I have a learning disability and I have difficulty with spelling and grammar, but as long as I have access to a computer with word processing capabilities, including spell check, I can produce the quality of work required."

In this situation, the accommodation that is required by the graduate is already in place for all employees. The interviewer had no “need-to-know” about the graduate’s learning disability. However, if the graduate had required a screen reader as part of their accommodation in order to undertake the job, then it is important to share this information with the employer, either at the interview or at the point of job offer.

Be brief and don’t necessarily dwell on potential problem areas. Try to keep discussion about your impairment job-specific because the context for the discussion is always how well you will do in the job and not what problems may arise. You should also be prepared to deal with insensitive questions.

Be enthusiastic and assertive in describing your skills, abilities, ideas and experience. Point out any abilities developed from living with your impairment
which serve as an asset in the workplace. As a university graduate there is no question that you have succeeded in coping with very demanding and intense work and study situations. From this viewpoint, inappropriate questions of performance, attendance, or safety that panel members may ask can be refuted in a positive way.

If the issue is relevant, take the initiative to discuss barriers you may experience and the accommodations required for you to perform the job. Discuss how these accommodations can be provided efficiently, and what you can do to pro-actively organise or identify funding sources for these accommodations. Be specific about your needs in the workplace. If you need to be shown the work area beforehand, request this. Know beforehand about agencies that help with workplace modifications or with technical appliances. You can, for example, discuss your needs with Workbridge before you get to the interview stage of your job search. Workbridge is a specialised employment agency for disabled people. Workbridge manages three support funds to ensure you are given equal opportunities in the workplace: Training Support, Job Support and Self Start (for more information on Workbridge and these support funds, see the Resources Section of this resource).

**Disclosure Activity**

The following is a role-play that can be used in preparation for disclosing information about your impairment or medical condition. The role-play will help in exploring the issues that may arise when you choose to disclose, for example, how to divulge only that information related to the statement of duties. The activity is best undertaken with another person who can role-play the potential employer.

You have just been offered an interview for a position you applied for. You have not been asked to disclose your impairment or medical condition prior to this stage, however, without suitable accommodations either in the interview or when working in the position, you may not be able to perform well. Using your own impairment or medical condition, consider the following issues:

- Would you disclose or just see how you performed in the interview or position?
- If you were to disclose, at which point would you do this?
- What would you disclose?

With a partner or in a group of three, choose an applicant, employer and an observer. The applicant decides to phone the employer and discuss their accommodations for the interview. The employer has never knowingly had someone with an impairment apply for a job before. How would you disclose? Observer to take notes.
There are also some practice interview questions in Section One of this resource.

**When to Consider Disclosure**

In general, disclosure of your situation should be left until the point where it becomes directly relevant to the duties that you will perform in the position. Particular circumstances may arise, however, where you will need to consider disclosure: if there is a particular question asking whether there is any difficulty in carrying out any aspect of the job and you have identified a difficulty; when you are contacted to set up an interview; during the interview; once a job is offered; or, if you are having problems in the job.

1. **In the application**
   It is generally not recommended that you mention disability or health matters in resumes or application letters. Some application forms ask direct questions about disability or health conditions. As discussed above, read the question carefully to see whether it is an optional question or not, and then answer such questions honestly. Withholding or falsifying information on an application form can be grounds for a subsequent dismissal. If you are very sure that the prospective employer is supportive of equity, and that your impairment and life experiences have relevance to your job, then you may wish to include them in the section of the application about why you are suitable for the job.

2. **Prior to the interview**
   There may be some advantages of disclosure prior to attending an interview depending on your judgement of the situation. If you have a visible or an obvious impairment, it may avoid awkwardness during the interview. This also gives the opportunity to check on the accessibility of the venue and let them know about any accommodations that may be required for the interview.

3. **At the interview**
   You may choose to disclose at the interview where you have more opportunity to present your situation in a positive and relevant context. You will also have the chance to deal with misconceptions, provide factual information and suggest strategies to accommodate any obstacles to the job. Again, there is the chance of discrimination taking place, however, if too much time is spent talking about the impairment, it may leave the employer with the wrong impression of your ability to do the job well.

4. **After the job offer**
   If you are offered the job but think that some accommodations will be required, it may be appropriate to notify your employer before starting in the position. If you leave it and don’t address the issue of on-the-job accommodations, your work performance may suffer and it can become harder to disclose or result in your employer questioning your performance.
Know Your Rights
Be aware of your legal rights (see also the Discrimination Section of this resource). Lorraine Skiffington, in “Pre-Employment Guidelines Under the Human Rights Act” gives the following useful information:

It is important for you to know that employers breach the Human Rights Act if they ask any of the following questions:

• Do you have any medical conditions unrelated to job performance?
• Have you ever received accident compensation?
• Have you received psychiatric care or been hospitalised?
• Do you have AIDS, HIV or Hepatitis C (or other conditions)?

On the other hand, they can ask:

• Do you have any condition that may affect how you perform the essential functions of the job?
• What accommodations, services or facilities do you require to perform the tasks associated with the job?
• Do you have an injury or medical condition caused by a gradual process, disease or infection which the job might aggravate (e.g., hearing loss, sensitivity to chemicals, repetitive strain injury)?
• Would your performance of tasks you are required to do give rise to the risk of harm to yourself or others?

To summarise: Tips on disclosure at the interview

• Be brief and job specific.
• Be enthusiastic and assertive.
• Point out abilities developed from living with your impairment.
• Point out that your impairment has not prevented success in previous work and study.
• Take the initiative to discuss barriers and how they can be addressed.
• Ask if there is anything they need to know.
• Describe how you address barriers that they see as a problem.
• Be prepared to deal with insensitive questions.
• Identify possible problem areas from the job description and be prepared for questions.
• Know your legal rights.

Section Four

Resources and Agencies

Agencies
Here is a list of organisations and agencies which may be able to assist you with disability and employment matters:

National

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)
Shamrock House, 81-83 Molesworth St, PO Box 242, Wellington. Phone (04) 918 7700. Fax (04) 918 7701. E-mail info@acc.org.nz
ACC provides a range of services that aim to reduce the impact of injury on individuals and the community.

Equal Employment Opportunities Trust
PO Box 12-929, Penrose, Auckland. Phone (09) 525 3023.
E-mail: admin@eeotrust.org.nz http://www.eeotrust.org.nz
The EEO Trust helps employers adapt to and embrace the diversity of the workforce through the use of EEO and best practice. Valuing diversity in the workplace through EEO benefits both employers and their employees by making workplaces more effective, efficient and competitive. The EEO Trust provides a number of services to employers, including the EEO Employers Group. Their Diversity Index provides statistical information on New Zealand’s diverse workforce, and they supply resources on diversity. Their web page is informative and includes advice to jobseekers.

Human Rights Commission.
Auckland. ph. (09) 309 0874; fax, (04) 377 3593.
Wellington, ph. (04) 473 6981; fax: (04) 471 0858.
Toll-free 0800 496 877.
E-mail: help@hrc.co.nz
http://www.hrc.co.nz/
The Human Rights Act 1993 provides greater protection for people facing discrimination. Its intention is to help ensure people are treated fairly in a number of areas of public life. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on a number of grounds, including disability. The legal definition of disability includes physical disability or impairment; physical illness; psychiatric illness; intellectual or psychological disability or impairment; the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing illness; and any other loss or abnormality of a
body or mind function; reliance on a guide dog, wheelchair or other remedial means.

The Human Rights Commission provides good public education resources, including a useful website. If you believe you have been discriminated against, you can ask the Human Rights Commission for assistance (ask for a copy of the HRC’s “Your Rights” pamphlet for more detail).

The organisation also includes the Race Relations Office, the Ombudsman, and the Commissioner for Children and the Privacy Commissioner.

Mainstream Supported Employment Programme
State Services Commission, PO Box 329, Wellington.
Phone (04) 472 5639; fax: (04) 495 6699
http://www.ssc.govt.nz
For further information contact: Pam Crothall, Programme Manager. State Services Commission, PO Box 329, Wellington, phone (04) 495 6751, or email pam.crothall@ssc.govt.nz.
Mainstream is a supported employment programme for people with significant disabilities. This two year, salary-subsidised programme, provided by the State Services Commission, aims to assist its participants into meaningful, long-term employment within New Zealand's State sector. Mainstream placements are full or part-time created positions (five hours per week minimum), which are outside budgetary limitations within Public Service departments and some Crown entities.

Individuals who wish to access employment through the Mainstream Programme need to register with a placement agency (such as Workbridge) or disability sector agency (such as IHC or NZ CCS), which employs placement specialists.

When a State sector employer creates a Mainstream position, a salary subsidy of 100% is paid by Mainstream to that employer for the first year of work and training under the programme. This subsidy reduces to 50% in the second and final year of Mainstream support. Mainstream participants are paid at the same rate as anyone else performing similar duties.

It is expected that employers will make every endeavour to place Mainstream participants into existing vacancies either during or at the conclusion of the Mainstream Programme, but no guarantee of permanent employment can be expected.

Up to $1,500 is allocated annually by the Mainstream Programme for each participant to meet the cost of additional, vocationally related training, or training to meet specific disability needs. However, all usual on the job training must be
provided by the employer. Training assistance is also available to each participant’s direct supervisor.

Which state sector agencies are eligible for Mainstream Placements? A List of agencies is attached in Appendix A of this document.

DPA: National Assembly of People with Disabilities.
Advocacy, education and lobbying at local and national levels.
Local contact is John MacIntosh at Workbridge.

Hamilton and the Waikato
Careers agencies and disability agencies specializing in work and careers

University of Waikato Careers Advisory Service
Upstairs, Student Union Building (8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday).
Phone (07) 838 4751, fax (07) 838 4269.
Email careers@waikato.ac.nz.
Website is: http://www.student-services.waikato.ac.nz/careers/index.shtml
The Careers Advisory Service has a multitude of resources available, from job descriptions to job vacancies. They can also help you with your decision-making and the development of your job-seeking skills. The staff there are more than happy to discuss your CV, covering letters and interview techniques. You can continue to use the services provided through the Careers Advisory Service after you have completed your studies.

Careers Services-Rapuara
19 Clifton St. Phone 839-4181.
Government-funded career information agency with online access to Kiwi Careers (see websites), free printed information, and career assessments.

Careers Waikato
P.O. Box 19332, Hamilton. (07) 839 7398.
E-mail: rosemary.barrett@clear.net.nz.
Offers career counselling, assessment through use of MBTI personality type, Strong Interest Inventory, Skill Scan, CV preparation.

LIFE Unlimited
20 Palmerston St. Phone 839-5506.
Information and advocacy service. Assists people with disabilities with funding applications for equipment, great local information resources, specialist in Maori resources. Links in with Workbridge and other services.
New Progress Enterprises
Phone 839 3539.
Vocational assistance for people with mental health issues.

Workbridge
Cnr. London & Victoria St (WEL Energy Bldg).
Phone 834-1080.
Specialised employment agency for people with disabilities. Their role is to ensure that people with a wide range of disabilities can participate fully in the workforce. Also assists employers.

Workbridge manages support funds to ensure you are given equal opportunities in the workplace. There are three funds:

- **Training Support**
  Financial support for a disabled person undergoing a period of assessment, work experience, training or education as part of their plan to gain open employment.

- **Job Support**
  Is available to be used for services necessary to set up and support an individual in a job. Examples of common uses of Job Support include: workplace modifications; job coaching; interpreter services; specialised equipment; additional costs of transport and parking; and disability awareness training for fellow workers.

- **Self Start**
  This fund has been created to assist disabled people to set up their own business ventures.

While some people are referred to Workbridge by other agencies such as Work and Income NZ, people can also refer themselves to Workbridge. Workbridge liaises with and refers people to the Mainstream Programme.

Work and Income NZ (WINZ)
Hamilton offices in Anglesea & Victoria St
Phone 0800 551 001. Fax 0800 621 621 or TTY.
WINZ provides a range of assistance to graduates looking for employment, including information about benefits and abatements, information on vacancies, job matching, careers advice, training or referral to other agencies. For best results from WINZ, phone the 0800 number and make an appointment to discuss your needs in getting work.

Note: there is no reason why you should restrict your options to either WINZ or Workbridge; you should investigate other employment agencies as well.
Resources
There are many hundreds of useful resources on careers and on disability. What follows is a selection of some of the most useful. Most of the print resources are available from the University’s Disability Support Service or through the Careers Advisory Service. Use them as a starting point to find encouragement, useful information and advice, and to identify areas for you to follow-up. Add any other useful resources to this list!

Useful Books and Articles

Disability and Employment

The best resource for running groups for disabled students who are preparing for employment. This resource is available at the University of Waikato Disability Support Service.

This paper is available at the University of Waikato Disability Support Service.

Useful and practical ideas on how to present yourself, your abilities and your disability to an employer. This publication is available at the University of Waikato Disability Support Service.

The most recent proposal from Workbridge to Government.

Explains the employment programme fully. Booklets available from the University of Waikato Disability Support Service and the Careers Advisory Service.

“Workbridge At Work”.  
Published quarterly by Workbridge, it is available from Workbridge offices. Its primary focus is on recent successful placements.
Excellent Career Resources

*The most popular book worldwide on strategies to help you find out what you want to do in life and how to get there. Most libraries will have this one. This publication is available at the University of Waikato Disability Support Service and the Careers Advisory Service.*

*A useful little book on dealing with change.*

*Up-to-date New Zealand information.*

*Also can be bought as an audiotape from Garside Consulting, ph. (61) 3 9882 0875. This publication is available at the University of Waikato Disability Support Service.*

Labour Market News
*A newsletter giving an overview of trends and opportunities in different kinds of New Zealand industry and work, compiled from interviews with employers. Eight issues per annum, available from Lesley Taylor, Workshape 38 Mahonia Place, Tauranga; tel. (07) 543 1360, fax: (07) 543 1362, e-mail, workshape@xtra.co.nz. This newsletter is available at the University of Waikato Disability Support Service.*

*Practical CV writing, lots of examples, samples of statements for different professions, covering letters. There are dozens of books on CV preparation, and this is a recommended one. This resource is available at the University of Waikato Disability Support Service and the Careers Advisory Service.*
Web Sites

Careers and Employment: New Zealand Sites

http://www.student-services.waikato.ac.nz/careers/index.shtml
This is the University of Waikato Careers Advisory Service Web Site. It has all sorts of useful information relating to careers services, and a links page which takes you to New Zealand and overseas newspapers and vacancy sites. There are also links to career resource sites, including some sites specifically on careers and job finding information for disabled graduates.

www.kiwicareers.govt.nz
Kiwi Careers is the Careers Service-rapuara site. It offers comprehensive information about jobs and industries and is linked to a huge range of recruitment agency sites here and overseas. Great for research.

http://www.netclassifieds.co.nz
Part of the New Zealand Herald stable. NZ and international job information. Using Alert, you can be notified of jobs matching the specifications you post on-line.

http://www.nzjobs.co.nz
Search for jobs by classification, location, employer or consultancy; also offers an e-mail response should a job appear that fits your requirements.

http://www.jobnetnz.co.nz
Employment advertising from New Zealand newspapers.

Disability and Employment: Overseas Sites Useful for Graduates

You may be thinking of applying for situations overseas, or just interested in the good advice available from these sites. Have a browse around the following web sites:

http://www.studentservices.uwa.edu.au/
An Australian site that has a valuable resource with career and job-finding information for disabled students. From this page, select "access for students with disabilities?" from the select menu; then select "Resources" from the UWA Support Services Menu; then select "Access Employment" from the Other Resources menu.

Has useful information and advice about disability and employment.

http://www.csun.edu/~hfcar009/disability.htm
The Career Center, California State University at Northbridge. An on-line resource manual plus links to other disability sites.
http://www.acinet.org/acinet/resource/diverse.htm#disab
America's Career Info Net link to information for disabled workers.

http://www50.pcepd.gov/pcepd/
A US site – The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities - plenty of resources and archived material.

http://cando.lancs.ac.uk/scripts/d/start.idc
CanDo is the official British Web site offering specialised careers information for disabled university students/graduates, and interested university staff

http://www.1st-imp.com/disabilities.htm
Good introduction to the disability and careers issues in the U.S. environment, plus links

http://disserv3.stu.umn.edu/col/
Careers Online: University of Minnesota Disability Services

Most of the sites mentioned above are user-friendly for people with vision impairment.

**Relevant Statutes**

Education Act 1989
Employment Contracts Act 1991
Health and Disability Act 1994
Health and Disability Commissioner Code of Health and Disability Services
Consumer's Rights Regulations 1996
Human Rights Act 1993
Human Rights Commission Act 1977
Labour Relations Act 1987
New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990
Privacy Act 1993
Race Relations Act 1971
State Sector Act 1988
Appendix A

Other disability agencies
There are numerous disability-related agencies in the region, and they vary in the extent to which they help with work-related issues.

Adult Reading and Literacy Assistance (national body known as Literacy Aotearoa Incorporated). Ph. 834 8880. Assists adults with literacy. They have 61 schemes around the country.

Alzheimers and Other Related Disorders (ADARDS). Ph. 839 5506 Provides support for people with dementia and also for their families.

Age Concern. Ph. 838 2266. Working towards improving the quality of life for elderly people.

Al-Anon. Ph. 843 8648 - Advice and support for people with alcohol and drug issues.

Alcoholic Anonymous. Ph. 0800 229 6757. Support and counselling for people with alcohol or drug issues.

Amputees Association Ph. (07) 889 3009. Assists amputees in gaining independence.

Arthritis Foundation. Ph. 856 6082. Provides information and support for people with arthritis.

Artificial Limbs Centre. Ph. 838 3269. Manufacturers of artificial limbs.

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. Ph. 834 1939. Support and education for families of people with ADHD.

Autistic Association. Ph. 839 5506. Support, friendship and activities for families of people with autism or Asperger's Syndrome.

Barrier Free Trust. Ph. 839 6545. Advice and information on accessible buildings and relevant legislation.

C.A.R.E. Services Trust. Ph. 858 3341. Support, information and education for families who have disabled children under 14 years.

Cancer Society. Ph. 838 2027. To improve the quality of life for people with cancer.

Centre 401 Trust. Ph. 838 0199. Consumer operated service for people with mental health issues.

Citizens Advice Bureau. 0800 367 222. Not specifically disability-focused, however, it may put you in contact with a local organization not on this list.

Community Living Trust. Ph. 834 8124. For people with intellectual disabilities living in the central North Island.

Deaf Association of New Zealand. Ph. 834 0119. To ensure Deaf people have equal access to information and services.

Disability Support Link. Ph. 839 5506; 0800 553 399. Needs assessments for home help and respite care.

Epilepsy Association New Zealand. Ph. 834 3556 (National Office Ph. 838 1433). Information and support for people with epilepsy.

Head Injuries Society. Ph. 930 5506. Advice, counselling and support.

Hearing Association 856 2908. Advice for people with acute hearing loss.

IHC. Ph. 839 4802. Welfare for people with intellectual disabilities.

Linkage. Ph. 839 8282. A government funded mental health help organisation, which links people up with a variety of agencies.

Little People's Incorporated Society (no local contact), Ph. (09) 486 4633. Education and support.


Motor Neurone Association (care of the Multiple Sclerosis Society).

Multiple Sclerosis Society. Ph. 839 5506. Support and information.

National Heart Foundation. Ph. 839 0634. Support and information.


New Zealand Association of Blind Citizens (no local contact). Consumer advocacy group.

New Zealand CCS. Ph. 838 2744. Services and support for people with disabilities.

Occupational Therapy Rehabilitation Service. Ph. 839 5506. This organisation does assessment for driving when people are applying to Equipment Management Services for funding for a vehicle.

Orthotics Centre. Ph. 834 1281. Manufacturers of corrective and supportive footwear and surgical aids and appliances such as leg, neck or arm braces.


Rehabilitation Institute. Ph. 834 2410. Assessment and education for people with Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS).

Richmond Fellowship. Ph. 855 7906. International organisation working in the field of mental health.

Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind. Ph. 839 2266. Services for blind people

Schizophrenia Fellowship of New Zealand. Ph. 839 7069. Information and support.

Appendix B

State Sector Agencies for Mainstream Programme

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<tr>
<th>State Sector Agencies</th>
<th>Ministries or Other Bodies</th>
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<tr>
<td>AgResearch Ltd</td>
<td>Ministry of Research, Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aoraki Polytechnic</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auckland College of Education</td>
<td>Ministry of Transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auckland Healthcare Services Ltd</td>
<td>Ministry of Women’s Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auckland Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Ministry of Youth Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audit Office (or Office of the Controller and Auditor-General)</td>
<td>Museum of New Zealand / Te Papa Tongarewa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bay of Plenty Polytechnic</td>
<td>Nat. Institute of Water &amp; Atmospheric Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canterbury Health Ltd</td>
<td>National Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Coast Health Ltd</td>
<td>Nelson/Marlborough Health Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Services (Rapuara)</td>
<td>Nelson Polytechnic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Institute of Technology</td>
<td>New Zealand Artificial Limb Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christchurch College of Education</td>
<td>New Zealand Blood Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christchurch Polytechnic</td>
<td>New Zealand Council for Educational Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand</td>
<td>New Zealand Customs Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coast Health Care Ltd</td>
<td>New Zealand Defence Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commerce Commission</td>
<td>New Zealand Fire Service Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative New Zealand (Arts Council of NZ)</td>
<td>New Zealand Forest Research Institute Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crown Law Office</td>
<td>NZ Institute for Crop &amp; Food Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Child, Youth &amp; Family Services</td>
<td>New Zealand Lotteries Commission</td>
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<td>Department for Courts</td>
<td>New Zealand Police</td>
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<td>Department of Conservation</td>
<td>New Zealand Qualifications Authority</td>
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<td>Department of Corrections</td>
<td>New Zealand Symphony Orchestra</td>
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<td>Department of Internal Affairs</td>
<td>New Zealand Tourism Board</td>
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<td>Department of Labour</td>
<td>New Zealand Trade Development Board</td>
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<td>Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet</td>
<td>Northland Health Ltd</td>
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<td>Department of Work and Income</td>
<td>Northland Polytechnic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dunedin College of Education</td>
<td>Office of the Clerk of the House</td>
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<td>Early Childhood Development Unit</td>
<td>Office of the Ombudsmen</td>
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<td>Eastbay Health Ltd</td>
<td>Otago Polytechnic</td>
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<td>Eastern Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Parliamentary Counsel Office</td>
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<td>Education Review Office</td>
<td>Parliamentary Service</td>
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<td>Environmental Sciences and Research Ltd</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical Management Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation for Research, Science &amp; Tech.</td>
<td>Public Trust</td>
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<td>Good Health Wanganui Ltd</td>
<td>Reserve Bank</td>
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<td>Health and Disability Commissioner</td>
<td>Serious Fraud Office</td>
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<td>Health Benefits Limited</td>
<td>Skill New Zealand (Education and Training Support Agency)</td>
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<td>Health Care Hawkes Bay Ltd</td>
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<td>Health Funding Authority</td>
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<td>Health South Canterbury Ltd</td>
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<td>Health Waikato Ltd</td>
<td>Specialist Education Services</td>
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<td>Healthcare Otago Ltd</td>
<td>Standards New Zealand</td>
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<td>Healthlink South Ltd</td>
<td>State Services Commission</td>
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<td>Hillary Commission for Sport Fitness &amp; Leisure</td>
<td>Statistics New Zealand</td>
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<td>HortResearch Ltd</td>
<td>Tai Poutini Polytechnic</td>
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<td>Housing New Zealand Ltd</td>
<td>Tairawhiti Health Ltd</td>
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<td>Human Rights Commission</td>
<td>Tairawhiti Polytechnic</td>
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<td>Hutt Valley Health Ltd</td>
<td>Taranaki Healthcare Ltd</td>
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<td>Hutt Valley Polytechnic</td>
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<td>Industrial Research Limited</td>
<td>Te Puni Kokiri / Ministry of Maori Development</td>
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<td>Inland Revenue Department</td>
<td>Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori (Maori)</td>
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<td>Institute of Geological &amp; Nuclear Sciences Ltd</td>
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<td>Lakeland Health Ltd</td>
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<td>Land Information New Zealand</td>
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<td>Land Transport Safety Authority</td>
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<td>Landcare Research New Zealand Ltd</td>
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<td>Learning Media Ltd</td>
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<td>Legal Services Board</td>
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<td>Lincoln University</td>
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<td>Manukau Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>Maritime Safety Authority of New Zealand</td>
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<td>Massey University</td>
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<td>Midcentral Health Ltd</td>
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