

DECEMBER 2024

# THE YEAR THAT WAS

2024 marks the 60th year of Speech New Zealand. I acknowledge the thousands of hours committed to building a network of people who care deeply about equipping people with the skills to confidently communicate, advocate, and participate within their own communities.

This year we have delivered six EPC webinar; almost 5,100 assessments; a pilot oral communication in schools programme (in partnership with Rātā Foundation and Canterbury English Speakers Union Trust), released two updated syllabi; held our first in-person accreditation in four years; redeveloped our vision, mission and values; and defined our strategy plan for the next three years.

While every day is full, the pockets of joy are in seeing the impact we have on the tamariki, listening to their tasks and hearing the pride our teachers have in their ākonga. Ngā mihi ki a ngā kaiako for your continued support, encouragement, patience, and manaaki.

Our national office team has undergone a few shifts and changes throughout the year but I am grateful for the team we are creating with one another. Thank you to National Office for your support, your hard work, and openness.

# 4,429

## ENTRIES TERM 3/4

A super special thanks must be given to Stephen Holdaway our IT developer and the genius behind our examinations portal Dashboard. After over 10 years working on and off with Speech New Zealand he has decided to focus on himself and loved ones. Words cannot justly express the impact you've had on Speech New Zealand!

Thank you to our examiners, assessors, and supervisors for representing Speech New Zealand in the community, for advocating to your communities about the benefits of our programmes, and for supporting National Office.

A personal thank you to the Board of Trustees and Carl Sunderland for the work we have undertaken in developing the 2025-2027 Strategy. I am very excited to see what we can achieve together!

Meri Kirihimete ki a koutou and enjoy your holidays!



**HELENA COULTON**  
Executive Manager Speech NZ

DECEMBER 2024

## 60 YEARS OF SNZ

As we celebrate this momentous milestone, we are privileged to share some stories from our community.

### MRS MELDA TOWNSLEY

Looking back over many years of happy examining I remember not just the brilliant achievers but the unusual persons or events and their impact during the examining tour.

One of these occurred when I examined a group of young pet owners in the sitting room of an old house adjoining and part of a school. It was Friday afternoon, and an eager group of pet owners was enthusing over a range of portable animals. One of these was a very patale cat, not too keen to come out of its cage but it was soon coaxed to allow patting and appreciation. After the talk, its owner said it would be fine just sitting under her chair, and so it was until the time came to pack it away at the end of the exams. It suddenly shot away around the room pursued by a group of little girls. I persuaded the owner and classmates to leave me to deal with the alarmed cat. But suddenly it raced away from my embracing hands and fled up the chimney scattering soot and ancient ashes into the room and on to me. Eventually, I did manage to charm it down into my arms and thence into the cat box. Its owner was delighted, and I was left with a hefty dry cleaning bill.



### MRS GABRIELLE THURSTON

Speech New Zealand is a family to me. I've been involved with the organisation in one way or another for near fifty years.

The most rewarding moments for me have come from my being an examiner for Speech New Zealand and the many talented candidates I have met and what I have learnt from them. Often in a quiz situation I ponder as to where my recall has come from - lo and behold it has come from a candidate's talk.

Over the years I have watched and listened to a demonstration on how to skin a freshly thawed possum carcass, (not my most memorable examination encounter) to make all sorts of delicious culinary dishes, learnt the best ways to travel cheaply, where the best hiking tracks are in New Zealand and heard persuasive talks on every relevant issue imaginable - I think I know more about climate change than any politician!



Rosalie Play 1989

NZ Speech Board 1977

DECEMBER 2024

## MRS BARBARA LAURENSEN

In the early 1990s, I was teacher in charge of a Special Needs Unit at a boys' secondary school in Wellington.

The unit consisted of 18 students with a range of intellectual disability, two teachers, and several teacher aides. The students' needs ranged from moderate to very high. Some students were almost entirely mainstreamed, while others spent the majority of their days on special programmes in the unit.

Several of our students were non-verbal. Two or three used basic sign language to communicate. We decided to involve as many of the students as possible regardless of ability or disability. We asked Speech New Zealand if they would widen the scope of the term 'oral' to allow the participation of a candidate's teacher aide/interpreter into the assessment. Ted White, director of SNZ at the time, agreed. In the end, we devised ways for all but three of the students to take part.

The process of preparation required energy, commitment and creativity from the teachers and aides, to problem solve both communication and physical challenges.

Levels of interaction and a range of communication skills broadened. The required drama presentation allowed some students to reveal hitherto unknown talents and an enthusiasm for performance. It was increasingly clear to us all that there was a great deal more to 'communication' than just 'oral.'

## ASHLEIGH GULLIVER

'Speech New Zealand' was always a term that held great power in my mind. Growing up it was the examining body – examiners always tucked away in the school chapel, and me, a bundle of nerves behind the doors waiting to be ushered in. I was always met with a smile, and, with pride would then present the exam work I had spent so long preparing. Following the exam I would run back to my teacher to debrief and share the questions we were asked along with any impromptu exercise topics. There was a buzz as we waited patiently over the coming days to receive our handwritten exam reports; beautiful cursive handwriting that would need to be translated for us.

I was privileged to be approached in 2009 to join the Board as a Trustee, and I proudly sat around the table at my first Board meeting in awe of the other Trustees, many of whom had been my examiners over the years.

Sir Isaac Newton once said, "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." Gabrielle Thurston, Pam Logan, Claire Marsh, Meredith Caisley, Helen Balch, Karen Austin, and Maureen Gray – I thank you for being beside me on this journey, and for being instrumental figures in not only my life, but that of Speech New Zealand.



1995 Conference at the Edge

DECEMBER 2024

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

In Term 3, Speech New Zealand delivered the Oral Communication and Language Literacy Syllabus to 116 year 5 and 6 students at Pareawa Banks Avenue School.

Sitting at grade *Kikorangi* | Light Blue, all students passed their *aromatawai-ā-waha* | assessments with:

- 8 x *Kua Oti Pai* | Credit,
- 64 x *Kua Ea* | Merit and
- 44 x *Pūkenga* | Honours

The *ākonga* should be so proud and a huge thank you to teacher, Niamh Hallissey, who represented Speech New Zealand at the school whilst also training the classroom teachers in the programme.

Our heartfelt thanks to Rātā Foundation and Canterbury English Speakers Union Trust for their support of the programme.

Get in touch if you or a school are interested in applying for funding to deliver the programme. [info@speechnz.co.nz](mailto:info@speechnz.co.nz)



**...you helped me understand teamwork and how to help others...**



**So many of the students have more confidence speaking up in front of a group, we have more sharing their ideas and opinions in the room as well.**



DECEMBER 2024

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW PERFORMANCE EXAMINER



**REBECCA REED**

Rebecca is a seasoned communications, public speaking, and public relations professional with 15 years of experience, including three years as a Broadcast Journalist in New Zealand and the UK. As the Director of Arriba! PR, she specializes in media training, public speaking, writing, strategic planning, and media relations.

In 2021, Rebecca began teaching Speech and Drama at St Orans and later at Sacred Heart College in Lower Hutt. She holds a Bachelor of Communications in Broadcast Journalism, a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, and two national journalism awards, including the Qantas Media Award for Breaking News Story of the Year. Rebecca also holds an Advanced Associate Diploma in Speech and Drama Teaching and completed her Licentiate Diploma in Speech and Drama in 2023. In 2024, she was awarded a Deidre Snedden Scholarship to study at The Globe Theatre in London and the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon.



Rebecca Reed with her teacher and current examiner, Sandra Bartlam

## BECOME AN EXAMINER!

Interested in becoming an examiner or *Kaiarotake* | Assessor yourself? Get in touch to find out about the application and training process.

[info@speechnz.co.nz](mailto:info@speechnz.co.nz)

## MARKETING COORDINATOR WANTED

We are looking for productive and enthusiastic person to join our National Office team as the Marketing Coordinator. This role can be based at the Wellington National Office or remote. Check out the job description [here](#).

# thank you

This year we say farewell to key members of our Speech New Zealand whānau. We would like to take the time to thank them for the *manaaki* | care they showed to their work, our students and the Speech NZ family.

*Ngā mihi* and go well;

Meredith Caisley, *Examiner*

And to our departing trustees;

Nina Burchett

Del Costello

Pauline Douglas

Elizabeth Drayton

Lucinda Heslin-Wightman

DECEMBER 2024

## UPSKILLING FOR TEACHERS

We are here to support you as you build your business, upskill or look to other career paths. Our **Coaching Programme** returns in 2025. The programme is tailored to suit individual needs, whether its better understanding how to run a small business, developing a marketing strategy, upskilling in a new syllabus or wrapping your head around IT, we will partner you with a skilled practitioner to guide and mentor you.

Perfect for new teachers and teachers looking to strengthen their knowledge and enhance their ways of working.

Our [website](#) has more information.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Speech NZ offer scholarships over a range of syllabi and grades, many of which are kindly donated by teachers, alumni and examiners.

If you are interested in supporting the future generation of confident and articulate communicators and would like to establish your own scholarship please get in touch!

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

Teachers – if any of your students have received a scholarship invitation, entries close on **31 December 2024**. Students must have responded to the invitation by then to have a chance of receiving a scholarship.

## EDUCATORS IN PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNICATION

Educators in Performance and Education support, develop and register educators in performance and communication. Throughout 2024 we have held six webinar over a diverse range of subjects. Recorded copies are available via our [website](#). Thank you to our amazing presenters!



### Connect, Develop and Reveal Character

with Dame  
Miranda  
Harcourt DNZM



### Lighting Design

with Nathan  
McKendry



### Keep Speaking Up

with Joseph  
Boon



### Clowning Workshop

with Amy Grace  
Laura



### What I Learnt

with Georgia  
Lassen and Nina  
Burchett

### Sole-Trader Best Practices

with Amy Grace  
Laura



## FORTY-EIGHT YEARS OF COLLEGIALLY

Retiring examiner, Mrs Meredith Caisley, reflects on her time with Speech NZ

When my Mother drove me to my very first elocution lesson in 1954, neither of us could have imagined how that single moment would set the course for the rest of my life. I sat Grade 3 at the end of that year and failed. I often think of J.K. Rowling's inspiring words during her address to graduating students of Harvard University "The Fringe Benefits of Failure and the Importance of Imagination". She said "Having the courage to fail is as vital to a good life as any conventional measure of success; imagining ourselves into the place of another... is a uniquely human quality to be nurtured at all costs." I am not sure that it was courage that I experienced at my first failure but certainly I imagined myself into becoming an examiner for the New Zealand Speech Board by 1976. That appointment shaped a vibrant and rewarding career I have cherished ever since.

Three years earlier, I had one of the most defining moments of my teaching career, the visit of Christabel Burniston, the late Director of the English Speaking Board with which our Association of Teachers of Speech and Drama (ATSD) became affiliated. I had the privilege of holding a masterclass conducted by her in my own Studio in Auckland. I treasure her book 'Speech for Life' signed by her along with John Thomson, one of the founders of ATSD and Wallace Allen who examined me for my FTCL.

My career has brought with it endless enriching challenges across New Zealand. Two in particular stand out: being welcomed onto a Marae in the far north accompanied by Hazel Menehira prior to examining her students, an awesome ceremony in the days long before Kiwis understood the tradition; and examining auctioneers standing in the Cambridge stables where Claire Marsh taught, with racehorses as the visual aids.

The 48 years of collegiality has been a treasured feature. Inevitably I was in awe of the founding examiners such as Rhona Davis, Berwyn Gibbons and Melda Townsley in the days when the Examiners' Decision was final, but meeting and befriending examiners at the annual Accreditation Seminars melded us together as our whānau. It was the highlight of our year to be able to work and play together for three days each year having our spirits refreshed and our community strengthened. That also gave us the opportunity to meet and listen to the driving force of our entity, our Administrators. Some of you reading this will remember Ted White, our long-serving Administrator who termed himself "the Servant of the Board" but actually ruled with the authority of a Navy commander.

Although I am retiring from the field, I remain a life-time member of Speech New Zealand and am pleased to welcome our up-coming examiners proud to assist New Zealanders to develop versatility in the use of language, oral presentation and performance skills.

Meredith Caisley



## FAREWELL TO MEREDITH

Meredith is one of Speech New Zealand's icons. She began teaching at the age of 17, entered students in Speech New Zealand exams, served as a trustee on the Board and examined for decades. Among her many students she taught her daughter in law, Stephanie Caisley who is both a SNZ teacher and examiner. She then went on to teach her two twin granddaughters Emma and Jaqueline who are now speech teachers. While Meredith is retiring from examining, we still have her legacy.

I first met Meredith at an accreditation seminar in the 90's at Frederick Wallis House. While on our compulsory early morning walk up some bush clad hill we had our first chat. One of Meredith's great strengths was that she was upfront and 'told it like it was.' Meredith had the courage to always embrace change and this was so beneficial to Speech New Zealand.

Meredith travelled the length of New Zealand many times on examining tours. In 1976 she joined the Board as a trustee and was appointed Theory Moderator. I was one of her theory examiners and grew to realise that Meredith ran a tight ship. We would dread the papers being returned with her markings and comments but it was a great learning curve. Whenever, a famous person makes a significant speech I always think of Meredith as public speaking was her forte. Meredith was very loyal to Speech New Zealand and would always fulfil her examining contracts and do extra when required.

Speech New Zealand will miss Meredith's wisdom, loyalty, flexibility and infectious laughter. She has been an important person in the shaping of Speech New Zealand.

Karen Austin  
Chair of Exams





## 2025 - 2027 STRATEGY

*As we look back, we must also look forward to how we can have the greatest impact and what is important to our community.*

### Vision

An Aotearoa New Zealand where **everyone** has access to oral communication training.

### Mission

We are building a nation of confident communicators through **excellent, equitable and empowering** oral communication training.

### Values

#### Growth



To support and empower ambition, creativity and achievement

#### Collaboration



We work with communities and partners to create accessible, responsive and innovative opportunities

#### Inclusion

An accessible, inclusive and safe environment to find your voice and advocate for you and your community



#### Integrity

We show respect, kindness, empathy and trust





# 2025 - 2027 Strategy

## Our Goals

Improve the  
accessibility and  
impact of our training

Grow our profile,  
reach and  
engagement

Strengthen our  
organisational capacity  
and sustainability

## Our Priorities

1

Striving to provide  
the best quality  
support and  
training in oral  
communication

2

We value diverse perspectives,  
promote equity and inclusivity  
and create a flexible, supportive  
environment for all

3

We aim to remain  
well-resourced  
and ensure we  
have the necessary  
tools, talent and  
infrastructure for  
future success and  
sustainable growth

4

Continuing to raise awareness  
of Speech New Zealand,  
strengthening our presence  
and capacity as the leading oral  
communications provider in  
Aotearoa New Zealand while  
maintaining and developing  
strategic partnerships and  
collaborations



DECEMBER 2024

# CHAIRPERSON'S SIGN OFF

## NGĀ MIHI O TE KIRIHIMETE KI A KOE

It has been a very productive year for Speech New Zealand due to the commitment and enthusiasm from teachers and examiners to share our vision with students and parents throughout the motu. Thank you to the staff at National Office for your dedication to being highly organised and efficient in planning tours and everything else you do to keep Speech NZ running successfully.

Our special mention to Helena who will be moving to New Plymouth with her family at the end of 2024. We are very appreciative that she has agreed to continue as our Executive Manager, managing by Zoom from her new home. Thank you, Helena, for your conscientiousness and your willingness to go the extra mile to ensure Speech NZ continues to grow.

We acknowledge Meredith Caisley's retirement as an examiner for Speech NZ. We have learned so much from her knowledge and expertise. I'm sure the candidates will miss her enjoyment and genuine interest in their work. We wish Meredith a happy and long retirement.

Nina Burchett has resigned from the Board of Trustees due to family commitments. Nina has been a valued member of the Board and will continue with the running of her large studio, Shine School of Confidence, in Auckland.

We wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas. May the blessings of Christ be with you as you gather to celebrate with your families and friends. Let us remember those suffering from the horrors of war in the Ukraine and Middle East and pray for a lasting peace.

*Meri Kirihimete me te Hape Nu Ia*

**145 TEACHERS  
20+ NEW TEACHERS**

**23 EXAMINERS  
2 ORAL ASSESSORS  
9 TRAINEES  
5 NATIONAL OFFICE  
STAFF**

**5,079 TOTAL  
ENTRIES**

*Pauline Prednergast*



**PAULINE PREDNERGAST**  
Chairperson Speech NZ