



John Dawson

John Dawson is a professor of law at the University of Otago. He has written about MH law since the 1980s when he was legal officer for the MH Foundation. He teaches law and psychiatry, public law and jurisprudence and has studied in the UK, US, Canada and Australia. He is a preeminent expert on his topic in NZ. Books he has edited include NZ's Mental Health Act in Practice (2013) and Mental Capacity Law in New Zealand (2019)."



Erika Butters

Erika works as the Director of The Personal Advocacy and Safeguarding Adults Trust. She is passionate that the rights, well-being and interests of all New Zealanders are protected and promoted. Over the last several years her work has focused on ensuring independent advocacy and support for decision making is available to all disabled people in New Zealanders. Erika works and lives in Wellington.



Teresa O'Connor

Teresa is a former nurse, journalist and co-editor of Kaitiaki Nursing New Zealand. Teresa completed her nursing education at Nelson Polytechnic in 1988 and later worked as a surgical nurse. She worked as a journalist for the Nelson Mail and has been involved with the Victory Health centre, setting up a free nurse service at Franklyn Village and helped to set up Voice Nelson.

This organisation worked to give voice to those that aren't heard – the poor and the disenfranchised. Teresa was Co-Editor of Kaitiaki from 1992 – 2021 – 29 years. She has a strong sense of social justice. Her great grandparents fled Ireland's famine to NZ. Teresa says; "I have a responsibility to do something, however pathetic and small or insignificant, to honour a legacy, that I, from some accident of birth, have benefited from."



Hiraina McKenzie

Iwi affiliations include Ngati Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Te Aitanga-a-Mahaki and Rakaipaaka. She is currently the MHAIDS Kaitohutohu / Principle Advisor Māori, a new role within the senior leadership team, specifically to support establishment of equity strategies within regional mental health services. Hiraina completed her Comprehensive Nursing Diploma at Nelson Polytechnic in 1994 and has been working in mental health services since.

Her mental health roles have been varied across the sector in Aotearoa, Australia and United Arab Emirates. She remains passionate about mental health and feels now, with the changes in health systems, is an exciting time with many opportunities for addressing the inequities Tāngata Whenua are experiencing. – "we need to do things differently to improve Tāngata Whenua health outcomes".