



Media Release
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Council leads the way in commitment to accessibility for all

Selwyn District Council has laid a marker in its commitment to all Selwyn residents by becoming the first local government authority to sign an accessibility charter.

Mayor Sam Broughton signed the Te Arataki Taero Kore Accessible Selwyn Charter at a ceremony on Monday attended by disability groups and organisations.

Anne Hawker, Principal Disability Advisor to the Ministry of Social Development who attended the ceremony, says it was a first for New Zealand.

“You are the first local government authority to sign an accessibility charter,” she told the audience at the signing.

The Charter is based on the Ministry of Social Development’s Accessibility Charter launched last year, and is adapted to meet the needs of Selwyn.

The charter and the Council’s Accessibility Action Plan adopted at the same time, is the beginning of an ongoing commitment to all Selwyn residents, Mayor Sam Broughton says.

“It’s a start – we’re not going to be perfect at the very beginning, but by 2025 we want to be well down the road and by 2030 this will look different again. It is a document that has been designed for Selwyn and needs to be flexible to meet the needs of our community. Diversity strengthens our community and this document is part of the Council’s commitment to lead on issues of making Selwyn a great place to live for people of all abilities.”

The Council also values feedback and suggestions for accessibility, Mr Broughton told the audience of around 50 people from groups including IHC, Selwyn Launch Group, Waitaha School, Rolleston Star Jam, New Zealand Disability Advisory Group, Deaf Aotearoa, Brackenridge, New Zealand Sign Language Interpreters and Aspire Canterbury.

The signing ceremony opened with a performance by Jolt Dance Group – a group supporting opportunities for everyone to dance and find their creative voice.

The charter commits the Council to working in four key areas of leadership, education, technical expertise and health and wellbeing. It sets a path for the Council to build on steps it has already taken in accessibility, such as equipment and classes at the Selwyn Aquatic Centre to assist people with access to the pool. The design of the Rolleston Town Centre and Te Ara Ātea also includes accessibility elements including parking space, wayfinder markers for people with visual impairments, sensory features and a quiet room.

ENDS

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