

Parliamentarians for Diabetes in the Western Pacific Region

Making the United Nations resolution come alive was celebrated on 1 April by the launch of this inaugural group in Parliament's Old Legislative Chamber. Over 100 guests from New Zealand and around the world attended.



Tim Barnett, MP, Senior Government Whip and Chair of Parliamentarians for Diabetes in New Zealand welcomed Members of Parliament from Australia, the Cook Islands and Samoa. Hon Steve Chadwick, Associate Minister of Health, gave the opening address and Parliamentarians for Diabetes was launched by Professor Martin Silink, President, International Diabetes Federation.

Background

Parliamentarians for Diabetes in the Western Pacific Region has been established in response to the UN resolution on diabetes which 192 countries have signed.

There is an urgent need for decision-makers in the Western Pacific Region to introduce effective measures to reduce the impact of diabetes.

Parliamentarians for Diabetes will enable parliamentarians and other decision-makers in the region to mutually support each other in this serious public health issue.

Aims

The aims of the parliamentary group are to:

- Provide information and support for diabetes and in particular the UN resolution
- Increase debate and information on regional and global issues of diabetes, allow ideas to be shared and provide networking opportunities
- Create awareness of the important role parliamentarians play in influencing and shaping policy and strategies
- Establish a forum for the exchange of information and use of resources (for example, *Insulin for Life*, research projects, legislative initiatives, prevention campaigns and joint initiatives in the region).

Through membership of the group, parliamentarians will have the opportunity to:

- Attend meetings addressed by experts; for example, from the International Diabetes Federation and Western Pacific Region
- Meet with overseas delegations; for example, at conferences and diabetes future forums
- Visit successful initiatives in other countries; for example, the Diabetes NZ Pacific Wellington service, and the AusDiab research study in Melbourne

- Discuss special areas of common interest such as workforce, costs of diabetes, and effective strategies for management
- Report back to Ministers and parliamentarians in their home countries.

Site visits

The launch and meetings for parliamentarians were organised by Diabetes New Zealand. Members of Parliament came from: Australia, Hon Judi Moylan; the Cook Islands, Hon Terepai Maote Jnr, Associate Minister of Health, and also Dr Raro Daniel, Secretary of Health; Samoa, Hon Gatoloaifanana Amataga Alesena Gidlow, Minister of Health, as well as Hon Leao Dr Talalelei Tuitama, Associate Minister of Health. Dr Vilimai Puloka and Karen Fukofuka came from the Secretariat of the South Pacific Community. All were hosted at site visits by Diabetes NZ Pacific Wellington to hear about its service, and by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs.

Diabetes New Zealand appreciates the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) in bringing to New Zealand Members of Parliament from the Pacific.

It is hoped that in the future Parliamentarians for Diabetes in the Western Pacific Region will attract support from both the International Diabetes Federation and funding from relevant New Zealand agencies.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Thomson".

Sarah Thomson
Chief Executive



Inaugural meeting in Parliament's Old Legislative Chamber to launch Parliamentarians for Diabetes in the Western Pacific Region.