

MEDIA RELEASE

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**INTERNATIONAL DYSLEXIA EXPERT TO HOLD
WORKSHOPS FOR NZ TEACHERS**

Kiwi teachers and educators will have the opportunity to benefit from latest international thinking on dyslexia this June, when renowned dyslexia expert Neil Mackay holds a series of workshops throughout the country.

Mackay, architect of Britain's successful Dyslexia Friendly Schools initiative and consultant to governments in the UK, Hong Kong and Malta, will run the half-day workshops in association with Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ).

The workshops are focused on professional development and will provide practical advice on dyslexia best practice in education, taking into account New Zealand's new curriculum and resources available for teachers.

DFNZ Chair of Trustees Guy Pope-Mayell says dyslexia-focused professional development is critical to improving educational outcomes for dyslexic students – and reducing behavioural issues and social problems later in life.

"Low self-esteem engendered by dyslexia often manifests in acting out, both in and outside the classroom. Simple changes in the classroom can have an immediate and positive impact on this.

"Mr Mackay's suggestions are simple, manageable and virtually cost-free. UK schools which have adopted his ideas have noticed instant improvements, not just in areas like reading and writing, but in attendance, punctuality and reduced levels of behavioural problems and expulsions among dyslexic students," Pope-Mayell says.

"There is a clear correlation between failure at school and failure later in life. With ten per cent of New Zealand students affected by dyslexia, professional development for educators is a clear and effective way of removing one of the key early stumbling blocks for Kiwi kids."

Mr MacKay, author of seminal dyslexia publication, *Removing Dyslexia as a Barrier to Achievement*, is also a consultant for DFNZ's own 4D | For Dyslexia schools programme. This free programme, launched late last year and now adopted by more than 160 New Zealand schools, offers teachers guidance on simple classroom changes to help dyslexic students.

Mr Mackay says he is looking forward to the workshops, and to meeting New Zealand teachers throughout the week.

"The enthusiastic response to the 4D programme shows that New Zealand educators are already passionate about improving educational outcomes for students with dyslexia. With schools preparing for the new curriculum and its challenge to find relevant solutions to local challenges, these workshops will draw on the latest international thinking to provide guidance appropriate for New Zealand environment."

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The workshops will be a cornerstone activity for this year's Dyslexia Action Week, a week-long programme of events from 15-21 June. They are open to all teachers, special educators (including RTLBs, RT:Lits and SENCOs) and interested parents. Cost is \$195 per person, with a reduced rate of \$95 for existing 4D members, or anyone who signs up to the programme or support database at www.4D.org.nz before booking. As a complement to the programme for schools, the support database is open to special educators, solutions and assessment providers, and parents.

With limited spaces available for the workshops and tickets selling fast, individuals are advised to book as soon as possible. Further details on the workshops and booking information can be found at www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz/neil_mackays.html.

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For more information please contact:
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Note to editors:

Locations, dates and timings of workshops as below:

Christchurch (Holiday Inn City Centre)

June 13: 8.30am – 12.30pm, 2.00pm – 6pm

June 14: 8.30am – 12.30pm, 1.30pm – 5.30pm

Dunedin (Scenic Circle Southern Cross)

June 15: 12.30pm – 4.30pm

Wellington (Convention Centre)

June 16: 8am – 12pm, 1.30pm - 5.30pm

Palmerston North (Travel Lodge)

June 18: 8am – 12pm, 1.15pm – 5.15pm

Hamilton (Le Grand Boutique Hotel)

June 19: 1pm – 5pm

Auckland (Novotel Ellerslie)

June 20: 8.30am – 12.30pm, 2.00pm – 6pm

June 21: 8.30am – 12.30pm, 2.00pm – 6pm