

PRESS RELEASE

TO: THE EDITOR,
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FROM: RAWIRI EVANS, CHAIRPERSON,
HUTT VALLEY DISABLED RESOURCES TRUST
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DATE: 15th August 2016

SUBJECT: LIVING WAGE EMPLOYER ACCREDITATION

The Hutt Valley Disabled Resources Trust wishes to announce that it has formally been accredited as a Living Wage Employer 2016/17 by the Living Wage Movement Aotearoa New Zealand.

Rawiri Evans, Chairperson of the HVDRT, advised that the trust was the first disability organization in New Zealand to achieve this Employer Accreditation. This was great, he said, for a small trust that had been delivering services to disabled people in the Hutt Valley for more than 35 years. Rawiri said that the Board felt the Trust philosophy of valuing the dignity of the individual and their contribution to society applied not only to the clients of the trust but to the staff members as well, and this was one way that the trust could show their appreciation of the work that all HVDRT staff members do.

At the HVDRT Board meeting in May 2016 the board passed a resolution:

“That Hutt Valley Disabled Resources Trust become a Living Wage Employer and pay all staff a minimum of \$19.80 per hour from the 1st July 2016 (new financial year) and instruct the CEO to seek employer accreditation from the Living Wage Aotearoa”

Carried Unanimously

HVDRT’s CEO, Susan Gray said that it was fantastic to work for such an ethical trust that actually walked the talk and she was very proud to advise staff that the

Board wanted to make sure that everyone who worked for them would be in receipt of the living wage or above. She also said that she hoped that this would signal to other trusts within the disability sector that staff should be valued for their commitment and dedication and that without these values in the workforce then service delivery to disabled people would often fall short.

This was also a situation that must be unique in today's world of workforce relationships where the employer gives the workforce a commitment to their worth but also puts a dollar value on that and gets a unanimous vote in favour from the board, said Rawiri Evans. He said how proud he was to be chair of such a board that recognized staff input and was able to make such a significant public commitment. He also said that he believed that the clients of HVDRT would be well served by staff that were appreciated for their knowledge and commitment.

The Living Wage is underpinned by three central tenets: that paying workers higher wages has direct positive benefits for workers and their families; that paying a living wage has productivity impacts for employers and that paying low income working people higher wages benefits society at large by reducing the social costs caused by poverty and low wages. The disability sector along with those working with older persons and in a careing role have always been at the lower end of the wages spectrum and Rawiri said that by making this commitment to the staff of HVDRT both he and other board members were saying publicly that their staff (and others in this industry) were worth the living wage.

Release finishes.

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