



Whai Wāhi: Participation - an Expression of Self

Accessible and appropriate assistive technology, such as wheelchair, seating and postural care solutions, are essential for enabling people to participate fully in everyday life. The ability to "go", "do", and "be" fosters independence, choice and provides opportunities to be actively involved in family, play, education, work, and community life. Innovations in technology, research into best practice, policy changes, and global initiatives supporting education and training, continue to evolve yet the World Health Organisation reports that in some low income countries only 3% of people have access to the assistive products they need, compared to 90% in some high income countries.

Participation is also about equity. The principle of participation is inherent in Aotearoa, New Zealand's, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. How can we create equity and opportunities for self-governance and support participation at all levels in our communities, enabling people to have a voice and lead change across our sector?

The Oceania Seating Symposium 2025 invites us to consider *Whai Wāhi: Participation* in a broader context as we come together to share innovations, initiatives, communities of practice, service delivery models and resources to meet and surpass our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.