

Forwarded this email? [Subscribe here](#) for more



[Ableism and transphobia be like](#) 🤝

Plus: Win a double pass to RAY! at NZ International Comedy Fest 🇳🇿

May 8



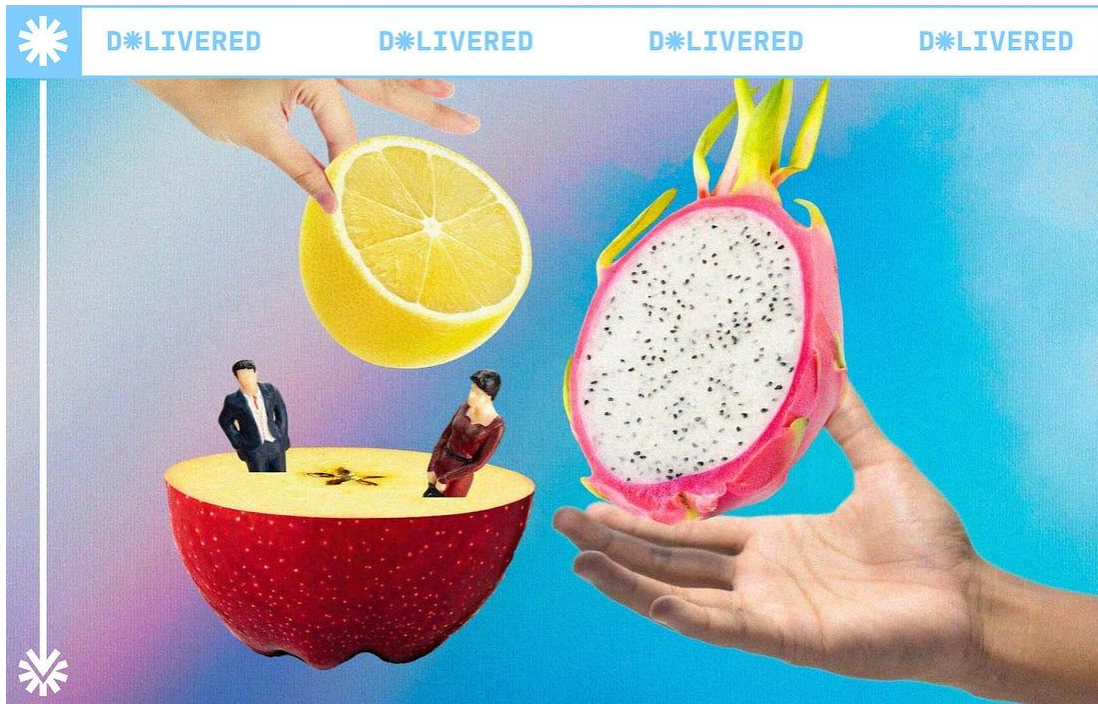
[READ IN APP](#) ↗

Kia ora! 🙌 Ngā mihi o te wā o ngahuru, where the kūmara are big and the night falls quicker ✨

And of course it's **New Zealand Sign Language Week!** 🙌 We were lucky to have Sejin Bae and Prakashni Prakash lead a great session on the basics of NZSL earlier this week and we look forward to another tonight, taught by Jon Tai-Rakena. Kia kaha te reo rotarota!

In the last week, The D*List has welcomed **two new kaimahi, Etta Bollinger** who is our grants and partnerships lead and **Becki Moss** who joins us a storyteller. Tēnā kōrua!

Straight off the bat, **Etta** writes about why **disabled people should push back against New Zealand First's attempts at policing gender.** 🗳️



Not only are **33% of trans and non-binary people in Aotearoa disabled**, but there are similarities in how trans/non-binary people and disabled people move through the world:

*"But more than our oppressions are the same. Time and time again, the law has failed to imagine disabled people's right to majority experience. As disabled people, we are painfully familiar with our bodies and ways of being over-scrutinised, over-medicalised, unimagined and excluded. **We too defy definition.**"*

I've always known Etta to be a disability rights advocate, and so it felt consolatory to read their honest reflection of unknowingly perpetuating ableism in the past.

"There was a time when I too would have worried about who used which spaces. Parked in my wheelchair in front of what was often the only accessible bathroom in a given building...and I would defend my use of my bathroom.

*I may have in fact been demanding explanations from people with invisible disabilities or chronic conditions, who, like trans and non-binary people, also find their **rights to an accessible space scrutinised** from all sides...*

*People with bodies, identities and histories not apparent to me without their active disclosure, which I may have felt entitled to but didn't deserve. I don't know. I had not imagined their stories because **policing these spaces in my own small way felt like activism.**"*

Etta's articulates the **entanglement of ableism and transphobia** with humility and with the reminder that our activism and actions should be regularly checked and balanced against relative harm.



IN THE NEWS

🗣️ Disability support worker [Jo-Chanelle Pouwhare](#) **did not hold back in their interview** on RNZ's Checkpoint yesterday, after their **pay equity claim was slashed** alongside 32 others under the [rushed pay equity law change](#). **Pouwhare challenged workplace relations minister, Brooke van Velden to do her job for two week:**

"I challenge her to go and give it a go, sister. And if you can handle it and you still believe that these women in the care and support sector, or in any of these claims, actually, give it a go. And you tell us how you can come up with a resolution to say that this is still just. Because I guarantee you, she'll probably have a nervous breakdown. She'll go running to daddy, 'I want an Oompa Loompa now, daddy.'

I put that challenge out to you because the other thing that frustrates me is the majority, the statistics and the majority of these women that are getting impacted are Māori and Pasifika."

🚀 [Pacific Media Network](#) reports the launch of the **refreshed strategy of Atoatoali'o, the National Pacific Disability Approach**. The strategy was developed through extensive talanoa with over 1000 Pacific disabled individuals, their families, caregivers, and community leaders across New Zealand.

The report emphasises several critical areas for action, including culturally tailored leadership programmes, increased training in cultural competency for the workforce, and greater support for family-based caregiving models...

A draft of the refreshed strategy will be presented to Minister Louise Upston and the Ministerial Disability Leadership Group in July for approval. It will likely be made public in August and September.

📞 Wellingtonian Felicity Maera-Wallace [told The Spinoff](#) that she was **accused of faking her deafness** when she called Work and Income to check on her benefit via the NZ Relay service. The agency has since apologised and pledged to review its processes. *The Spinoff* reports:

[Maera-Wallace] is on the jobseeker's benefit with a medical exemption, meaning she does not need to meet the sanctions required to keep the benefit, which she secured

after two face-to-face interviews at Work and Income's Lower Hutt branch with an interpreter present. This is the information the agency neglected to keep on her client file.

👉 A new **accessible gym** has opened in Hamilton, [reports the Waikato Times](#).

NextStep is part of a worldwide franchise known for spinal cord injury rehab. Casey Brady and Aaron Balsom are the co-owners of the new gym which aims to fill a gap within the **Hamilton disability community**.



OVER ON THE D*LIST



🗣️ I sat down with **award-winning musical comedian and screenwriter, Jess Karamjeet**, to [chat about all the things leading up to her new show RAY!](#) which is on next week [15 & 16 at Q Theatre as part of NZ International Comedy Festival](#). In the periphery, we had chats about chronic illness, boundaries and energy:

ET: *I guess it's like the, the world isn't just you and your work. How do you manage your energy with the people around you and other joys and loves in your life?*

JK: *I feel like I'm really lucky in that I the joys that I get through creative output and through nature and those two things are really, really good for someone in my current sort of recovery phase or just, you know, with my fibro. So things like playing guitar or singing or, yeah, going, going for short walks, and kind of connecting in that way.*

★ If you'd like to be in to win a double pass to **RAY!**, comment below or reply "RAY!" to this newsletter. Winners will be drawn and notified on Tuesday 13. ★



A TID-BIT TO GO

 **Add it to your library!** Late last month, Faber & Faber published, [*Owning It: Our disabled childhoods in our own words*](#), an anthology of 22 autobiographical stories from the **childhoods of international disabled writers**, including: Ali Abbas, Polly Atkin, Imani Barbarin, Jen Campbell, James Catchpole, Christa Couture, Carly Findlay, M. Leona Godin, Eugene Grant, Jan Grue, Matilda Feyisayo Ibini, Ilya Kaminsky, Sora J. Kasuga, Jessica Kellgren-Fozard, Elle McNicoll, Daniel Sluman, Nina Tame, Rebekah Taussig, Steven Verdile, Alex Wegman, Ashley Harris Whaley and Kendra Winchester.

Have a great weekend! 🍷

Eda

✓ [Subscribed](#)



  
[Lik](#) [Comme](#) [Resta](#)
[e](#) [nt](#) [ck](#)

© 2025 The D*List
PO Box 68372, Victoria St West, Auckland 1142
New Zealand
[Unsubscribe](#)

Get the app

 Start writing