

Media Release

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NZ musicians join forces to raise awareness of dyslexia – free downloads from tomorrow

Some of New Zealand's most respected music industry figures have come together to produce a single to celebrate Dyslexia Action Week, which runs 15-21 June.

Written by Don McGlashan, produced by Sean Donnelly and performed by dDub, the single 'The Closer You Get, The Bigger I Look' will be released with free downloads to the public from tomorrow, 11 June, at www.dyslexiafoundation.org.nz/biggerilook. A music video has also been created to support the song and further understanding of dyslexia.

Don McGlashan wrote 'The Closer You Get, The Bigger I Look' especially for the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ), inspired by personal experience with the challenges of difference, as well as the creative gifts that dyslexia can bring.

"As a parent of two unconventional children, I now how it feels when the world is quick to judge someone you love. Rather than write something that asked for help or patience, I thought something defiant, a 'don't judge me before you know me-type song would be better,'" Don says.

"The Dyslexia Foundation is doing a great job and when they contacted me I was glad to help. I had the line 'closer you get, the bigger I look' kicking around for awhile and suddenly I had an excuse to turn it into a song."

The Foundation enlisted the help of Sean Donnelly to produce the song and roots/rock band dDub to perform it, and it was recorded in just one day in Sean's studio in Auckland.

dDub lead singer Derek Browne was intrigued by the ideas of using music to increase understanding of dyslexia and excited by the opportunity to work in collaboration with both Don and Sean.

"When I first got chatting to Guy Pope Mayell from the Dyslexia Foundation about what they wanted to achieve for dyslexia and how they were thinking about using music to do this, I was really keen to help out in any way I could."

"The project was a real team effort and what we ended up with was a great mix of Don's vision for the song, Sean's moulding of that vision and our raw input. It was also a great chance for us to be mellow in our sound, and we definitely took a lot of learning from the process – and I love the song we ended up creating!" Derek says.

Conservative estimates are that one in ten New Zealanders is dyslexic, including 70,000 schoolchildren. Sean Donnelly says family experience of dyslexia was a motivating factor for his involvement. A distinguished musician in his own right, Sean helped develop the sound of the song and move it to its final version

"I've always been a big fan of Don's and members of my family have had to deal with dyslexia so I was really keen to get involved in the project. I was just there to put my spin on it – I wanted the melodies to shine through and I wanted to help bring a relaxed enjoyable groove out the band without losing the forward momentum or liveliness of the chorus," he says.

Guy Pope-Mayell, DFNZ Chair of Trustees, is thrilled with the final result and the opportunity the song offers to raise awareness and understanding in a creative way.

“The fact that we are taking a creative approach to raising awareness is very fitting in terms of celebrating the dyslexic mind and its alternative way of thinking. The final song is amazing – the lyrics and upbeat tone of the song reflect the positive aspects of dyslexia and highlight that, with support and understanding, those with dyslexia can achieve amazing outcomes.”

ends

**For more information, more images or to arrange an interview please contact:
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About dyslexia

Dyslexia is an alternative way of thinking which commonly causes unexpected difficulties with reading and writing. But it can cause much wider problems if not dealt with correctly, including low self-esteem, depression and a range of anti-social behaviours

On the flipside, dyslexia can produce great creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. Dyslexics perceive the world from many perspectives and often excel in the fields of arts, design, leadership, engineering, science and technology.

About Dyslexia Action Week

Each year, DFNZ holds a week long programme of activities and events called Dyslexia Action Week, which offers an annual opportunity to raise the issue of dyslexia on a national stage.

The theme for this year’s week is ‘Actions Speak Louder than Words’ – with a focus on action-oriented activities to raise awareness and champion change for dyslexic individuals. In addition to the song project, DFNZ has brought international dyslexia expert Neil Mackay to New Zealand to run a sold-out nationwide series of workshops for teachers and parents. It also has a wealth of new resource material available at www.dfnz.org.nz

About Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand

Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ) was formed in 2006 to provide a voice for, and services to, New Zealanders with dyslexia as well as to those supporting them. Just six months after our launch, it was successful in having the New Zealand Government recognise dyslexia for the first time. Since then, it has been working hard to continue its mission of creating recognition, understanding and action on dyslexia.