

Summary of the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha 2024 to 2025 Annual Report



Published: December 2025

Before you start



This is a long document.



It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.



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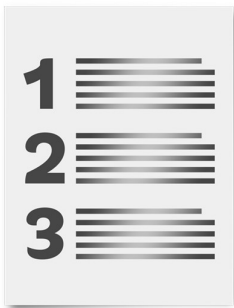


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About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is the **summary** of the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha 2024 to 2025 **Annual Report**.



Here a **summary**:

- is shorter than the full report document
- tells you the main ideas.



An **annual report** tells you about the work an organisation has done that year.



This annual report tells you what work Whaikaha did from **1 December 2024 to 30 June 2025**.

This summary is by the **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha**.



In this Easy Read we call the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha **Whaikaha** for short.

Where it says **our / we / us** this means Whaikaha.



You can read the full annual report document at this **website**:

www.tinyurl.com/whaikaha-reports

About Whaikaha



About 1 in 6 New Zealanders are disabled.



Whaikaha works for all people in New Zealand who:

- are disabled
- have an impairment / disability.



We know that some people do not use the word disabled to say who they are.



They can be:

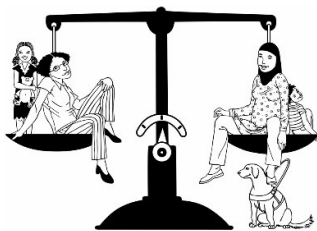
- people in the Deaf community
- Turi Māori / Deaf Māori.



Our values

Our 3 main values are:

- mana taurite / **equity** drives us
- mana kaha / we strengthen and support
- mana tihura / we explore and learn.



Here **equity** is where someone is given the support they need to give them the same chance as others to do something.



Our vision

Here **vision** is what we hope something will look like in the future / years ahead.



The work of Whaikaha is guided by our vision:

Disabled people **thriving** in New Zealand.



Here **thriving** means disabled people can:

- live very good lives
- do all the things they:
 - need to do
 - want to do.



Our purpose



Here **purpose** is the reason why it is important to have a Ministry of Disabled People.



Our purpose is to make real change to support disabled people to have better lives here in New Zealand.

Our leaders



Our leaders are:

- Paula Tesoriero who is Chief Executive
- Ginny Baddeley who is Deputy Chief Executive Strategy and Enablement
- Ben O'Meara who is Deputy Chief Executive Policy and Insights
- Rebecca Elvy who is Deputy Chief Executive Outreach and Innovation
- Ronelle Baker who is Kaihautū – Chief Advisor Māori.



Our history

Whaikaha:

- started on 1 July 2022
- was part of the Ministry of Social Development.



Whaikaha became a **standalone public service department** in December 2024.

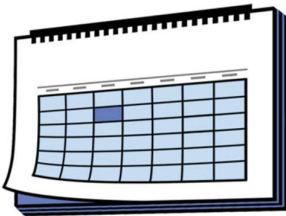


A **standalone public service department** is a part of the Government that works on things to do with a:

- group of people
- part of life in New Zealand.



Our strategic intentions and outcomes



Here **strategic intentions** are the main things we plan to do like:

- what work we need to do
- how we want to do our work
- who should support us with our work
- when we should do the work by.



Our plan shows what work we:

- will do

and

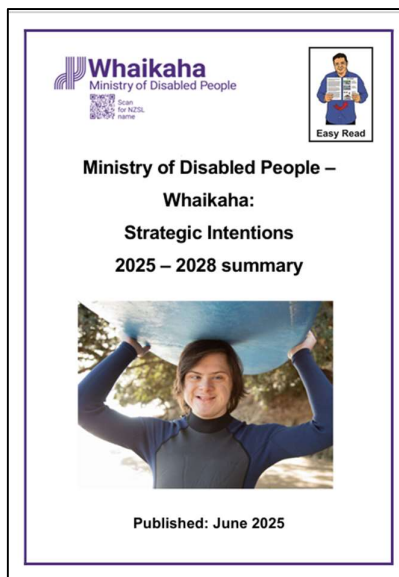
- how we will do it.





Our plan also:

- shows how we want disabled people to:
 - thrive
 - have better lives
- supports the changes needed to make a real difference to the lives of disabled people.



You can read the **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha: Strategic Intentions 2025 – 2028 summary** at this **website**:

<https://tinyurl.com/Whaikaha-SI>

Whaikaha has 6 **strategic outcomes** we think are important to support our strategic intentions.



Here **strategic outcomes** are the:

- things we want to happen to make life better for disabled people
- changes needed to reach these goals.



The strategic outcomes will work to:

- remove **barriers** for disabled people
- make sure disabled people are treated in the same way as everybody else.



Barriers are things that stop people doing the things they need or want to do.



Our strategic outcomes are on **pages 15 to 22.**



1. Accessibility – all disabled people can access the things they need to

Accessibility is when things can be used by everyone like:

- disabled people
- non-disabled people.



We want to remove barriers stopping disabled people being able to take part in society.



Our work in this area will focus on making it easier for disabled people to access:



- buildings
- public transport
- services
- information.





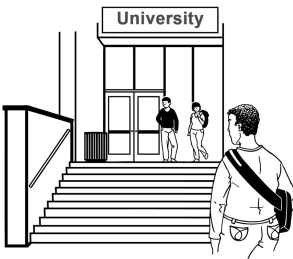
2. Education – disabled people can get a good education

A good education supports disabled people to take part in society in a way they choose.



Our work in this area will focus on supporting disabled people to:

- be able to go to places like:
 - schools
 - universities
- take part in learning the things they want to learn
- reach goals to support them to live a good life like being able to get a job.





Better education outcomes
support disabled people to:

- learn things all through their life
- be confident
- be included in community life.





3. Employment – disabled people can have the same access to jobs as everybody else



We want to work on removing barriers to disabled people getting jobs.



Better employment / job outcomes means disabled people will have more money to support them to have a good life.



4. Health – disabled people can get the best healthcare to support their wellbeing

We want to focus on removing barriers to disabled people getting the healthcare services they need.



The health outcomes for disabled people are not as good as for non-disabled people.

Our goal is to close the gap between the health outcomes for:

- disabled people
- and
- non-disabled people.





5. Housing – disabled people can choose where they want to live

Our work supports disabled people to get housing that:

- is safe
- is accessible
- works for what they need.



Good housing is important for:

- health
- independence
- taking part in the community.





6. Justice – the justice system works for disabled people

Disabled people need to use the **justice system** in a way that works for them.



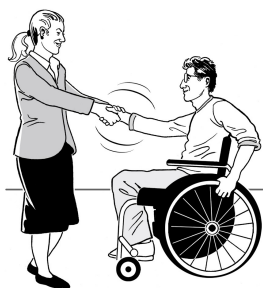
The **justice system** is about things like the:

- law
- police
- courts.



We want to make sure that when disabled people use the justice system they are:

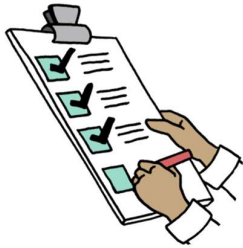
- treated fairly
- feel safe
- get the right:
 - **legal support**
 - information
- respected.



Legal support is getting support from someone like a lawyer when doing things like:

- going to court
- dealing with the police
- looking at very important documents like a will.

Our 7 main projects



We have 7 main programmes / projects that we are working on.



1. New Zealand Disability Strategy refresh



The **New Zealand Disability Strategy** is the long term plan to make lives better for all disabled New Zealanders.



You can read more about the New Zealand Disability Strategy at this **website**:

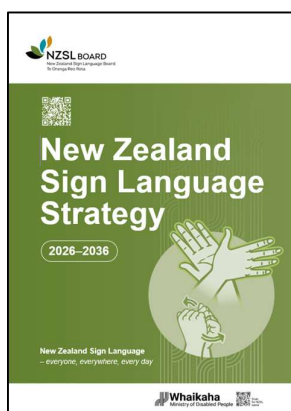
<https://shorturl.at/CCvma>



We have worked:

- to refresh the New Zealand Disability Strategy which will be finished later in 2025
- to get **Cabinet** to agree on the 5 priority outcome areas
- with disability / working groups to finish the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

Cabinet is a group of government ministers who make important decisions.



2. New Zealand Sign Language Strategy refresh

The **New Zealand Sign Language Strategy** is a plan to grow the use of New Zealand Sign Language here in New Zealand.

You can find more information about the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy at this **website**:

www.nzsl.govt.nz/strategy



We have been working with the New Zealand Sign Language Board to refresh the **New Zealand Sign Language Strategy**.



The work we have done this year to refresh the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy has been things like:



- getting Cabinet to agree to the strategy



- working with people around the country on this strategy



- working to support more New Zealanders to use New Zealand Sign Language



- guiding government organisations on how to support the:

- use of New Zealand Sign Language
- Deaf community.



3. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities response



The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** is an agreement lots of countries have said yes to.

It is called the **UNCRPD** for short.



It says what governments must do to make sure disabled people get the same rights as everybody else.



In 2022 the UNCRPD Committee made **recommendations** to support disabled New Zealanders to have better lives.

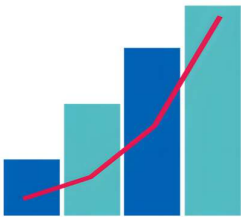


Recommendations are ideas about ways to make something like a service better.



The Government said they would:

- do **all** of the work set out in 30 of the recommendations
- do **some** of the work set out in 17 of the recommendations.



The Government will tell people how they are going with the work on the recommendations.



We will keep working with government agencies to support them to do what the UNCRPD Committee says.

4. Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care response



The **Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care** made recommendations about how government care for disabled people can be better.



We worked with government agencies on their response to the recommendations made by the Royal Commission of Inquiry in its 2024 report.



We supported them to work out ways to make the care system safer for disabled people

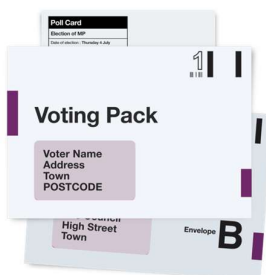


5. Accessibility Work Programme

Our Accessibility Work Programme looked at things like:



- working with the Department of Internal Affairs on the Alternate Formats service
- how to make things accessible for disabled people when they are:
 - using government websites
 - finding information during an emergency like a storm
 - using public transport
 - voting.





We have set up an **Accessibility Advisory Group** to give us advice / information about accessibility.



We are also working to make sure New Zealanders know about disability rights by:

- teaching people around the country about disability rights
- letting people know what accessibility means for disabled people.





6. Making job opportunities for disabled people



We worked with the Public Service Commission to do some of the things in the 2024 to 2026 employment / job plan.



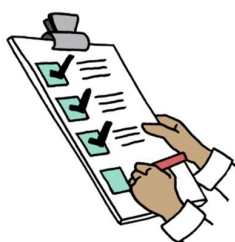
This employment / job plan:

- supports disabled people to get jobs in the public service
- supports staff in the public service to know how to work with disabled people
- is getting better data / information about disabled people working in the public service.





We are also working with the Public Service Commission to make a guide about how to hire disabled people.



7. Reshaping Whaikaha

Work we have done to reshape Whaikaha has been things like:

- making Whaikaha a standalone public service department
- making new ways to do our work
- changing the **structure** of Whaikaha.

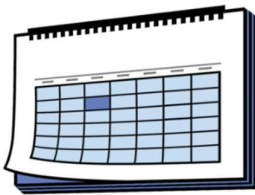


Here **structure** is the different parts of Whaikaha that work together.



Work we have also done to reshape Whaikaha has been things like:

- hiring the right people to work at Whaikaha
- having good processes / ways to support people to do their work well.

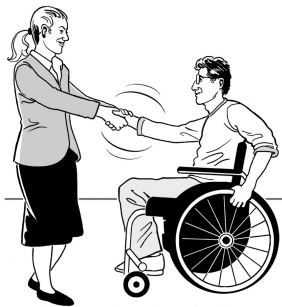


The new structure was finished in **May 2025.**

Our stewardship functions



When Whaikaha became a standalone public service department it was agreed to have 5 **stewardship functions**.



Here **stewardship** is being a kind of leader.



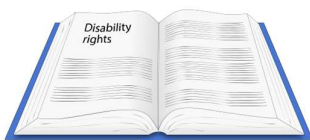
Here **function** means the work we need to do to be good stewards for disabled people.



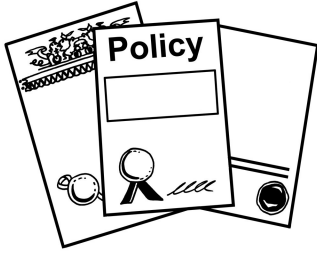
Our 5 main stewardship functions to make the lives of disabled people better are:



- being good leaders to support changes in society to make life better for disabled people
- making good **strategic policies** to support making the right changes for disabled people
- **monitoring** what is happening for disabled people in New Zealand
- being able to give people good:



- disability information
- advice about disability rights.



Here **strategic policies** are the policies we make to support meeting the goals set out in our strategic intentions.



Monitoring is looking at something to find out if changes are needed to make it better.

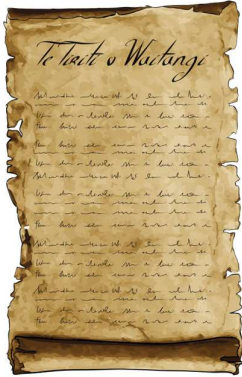


As a steward we also need to build good relationships between:

- disabled people
- and
- the Government.



Our relationship with Māori



Whaikaha follows Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This means we work to support the Māori / Crown relationship by:

- using te reo Māori in our work every day
- following **tikanga**
- supporting our staff to understand Māori ways of doing things
- being leaders in our area of work to support:
 - disabled people
 - staff at Whaikaha.



Tikanga is the Māori way of doing things.

Whaikaha today



When Whaikaha changed to its new structure we needed to think about:



- new ways to do our work
- the people we need to work for us to do our work
- how many people we need to do our work.



We hope our new structure will:

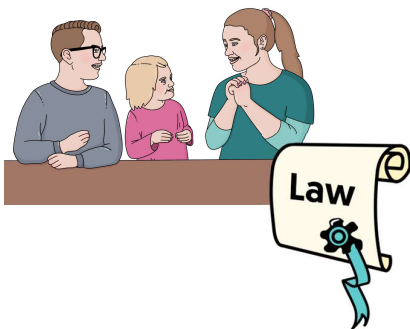
- make how we work with disabled people stronger
- grow our understanding about disability rights.





We want people to know Whaikaha:

- is a place disabled people can trust to support them
- works with government organisations to support them to understand disability rights
- does its work in a way that includes everyone
- follows what Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi says
- works to support the Government to meet its public service targets.



Whaikaha is also responsible for the law called the New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006.

How to contact us



For information on how to contact Whaikaha visit our **website**:

www.whaikaha.govt.nz/contact-us



You can contact us:

- by **email** at:

contact@whaikaha.govt.nz



- by **phone** on:

0800 942 452



This number **does not** cost money to call.



You can **phone** us:

- from **9 am** to **5 pm**
- **Monday** to **Friday**.



If you find it hard to use the phone
the **New Zealand Relay** service is for
people who are:

- Deaf / hard of hearing
- deafblind
- speech impaired / find it hard to talk.



You can find out more about the New
Zealand Relay service at:

www.nzrelay.co.nz



This information has been written by the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha.



Some of the images used have been provided by the Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha.



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