

Visual description: A purple Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha logo. On the left is a QR code and underneath the words ‘scan for the NZSL name’.

# Accessibility Advisory Group Terms of Reference

## Purpose

This document sets out the role of the Accessibility Advisory Group (AAG), its membership, how members are selected and paid, expected conduct, and how meetings will be run.

## Background

Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha is leading a programme to improve accessibility in Aotearoa New Zealand. This mahi fits with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the Human Rights Act (1993), and our Strategic Intentions.

To ensure the programme reflects what matters to disabled people, Whaikaha is establishing the AAG to provide advice on which initiatives to prioritise and how to deliver them.

It is expected the AAG will reflect the voices of tāngata whaikaha Māori and Turi Māori and will uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi.

## Work Programme approach

The Accessibility Work Programme (AWP) will be delivered through a structured group of initiatives. While many valuable ideas will emerge, Whaikaha must prioritise those with the greatest potential impact, given limited resources.

The AAG will play a key advisory role in this process, including:

* identifying ideas.
* assessing and prioritizing.
* planning and scoping.
* delivery readiness.

This staged approach enables Whaikaha to focus on a manageable number of high-impact initiatives—both short-term and long-term—at any given time. It also supports transparency and accountability, allowing the community to understand how decisions are made and how progress is tracked.

## Role of the AAG

The AAG will work collaboratively to:

* provide practical, strategic and innovative advice based on lived experience and strong community connections.
* focus on equity, particularly for tāngata whaikaha Māori and Turi Māori.
* ensure advice reflects Te Tiriti principles of partnership, protection and participation.
* embed values in the way the rōpū works together, such as Mana taurite -Equity drives us, Mana kaha - We strengthen and support, and Mana tūhura - We explore and learn.
* share expertise and leadership.

This rōpū will uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori-Crown partnership ensuring that the voices of tāngata whaikaha Māori and Turi Māori are central to shaping accessibility in Aotearoa New Zealand.

For the avoidance of doubt, the AAG is an advisory group and does not hold decision making rights. All final decisions will be made by the Ministry.

## Scope

The AAG will:

* collaborate on priorities and support key projects.
* share knowledge to support strategic decisions.
* connect with relevant groups and experts.
* review and contribute to project plans.
* as appropriate, the rōpū will support approaches grounded in kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori as pathways to improved accessibility outcomes.

## Membership

The rōpū will include up to ten members from the disability community, representing:

* a range of disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, Turi Māori, Pacific peoples, neurodivergent individuals, the Deaf community, family, whānau.
* a diversity of cultures, regions, disabilities, ages, genders and identities.

Members must understand and support:

* Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori–Crown relationships.
* the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Members will be selected through an Expression of Interest (EoI) process, overseen by a selection panel.

## Selection process

Expressions of Interest (EoI) will be invited through a public call out.

Applications will be reviewed by a selection panel. This panel may include representatives of key disability community organisations. It will include tāngata whaikaha Māori representation and be chaired by Whaikaha.

Applications will be accessed against agreed criteria, with a strong focus on diversity and expertise in accessibility.

## Capacity and length of terms

Most members will be appointed in an individual capacity. However, up to two positions may be filled by organisational representatives where this supports equitable participation.

Terms will be staggered. In the first year five members will be appointed for one year, and five members for two years.

There will be an annual EoI process for future appointments, with five new members appointed each year.

## Member roles

Members of the Accessibility Advisory Group will:

* select a Co-Chair from among themselves to work in partnership with the designated Whaikaha Co-Chair.
* contribute their expertise and lived experience to support the group’s advisory function.
* participate in discussions and decision-making processes related to the Accessibility Work Programme.
* support collaborative engagement and ensure diverse perspectives are considered.
* select two members to participate in the Whaikaha Accessibility Work Programme Steering Group meetings as required.
* where required, additional subject matter experts may be invited to contribute to specific projects or discussions.

## Meeting arrangements

Hui will begin and close with karakia and provide time for relationship building and whakawhanaungatanga. Waiata may be included where appropriate. The Accessibility Advisory Group will meet four to six times each financial year.

Most meetings will be held online to support accessibility and flexibility, with the possibility of one in-person meeting in Wellington each year.

Each meeting will run for up to four hours. Members will also be paid for up to two hours of preparation or follow-up work per meeting. This recognises the time needed to read materials, reflect, and contribute meaningfully.

Meeting times, breaks, and accessibility needs (including reasonable accommodations) will be discussed with members to ensure sessions are inclusive, manageable, and respectful.

## Remuneration

Members will be paid for their time in line with the Cabinet Fees Framework:

* general members will receive $61 per hour.
* the Co-Chair will receive $77 per hour. This includes time spent in meetings and any agreed preparation or follow-up work of up to two hours per AAG meeting.

Whaikaha will also cover reasonable costs related to accessibility and participation. This may include travel, NZSL interpretation, assistive technology, or other accommodations needed to support equitable engagement.

## Support provided by Whaikaha

Whaikaha will provide practical support to help the AAG to operate effectively, including:

* facilitating tikanga practices such as karakia, waiata and whakawhanaungatanga and providing cultural safety guidance for hui.
* organising meetings, including scheduling, sending invitations, and preparing agendas.
* taking notes during meetings, recording actions, and following up on tasks.
* providing help with technology, such as setting up online meetings or troubleshooting access issues.
* processing payments and reimbursements for members.
* arranging accessibility support such as interpreters, captions, note-taking, meeting assistance and other reasonable accommodations.

## Conduct

Members are expected to be respectful, inclusive, impartial, and trustworthy, upholding values such as Mana taurite (equity drives us), Mana kaha (we strengthen and support), and Mana tūhura (we explore and learn) in their engagement.

Members are expected to bring their own expertise, rather than to be representatives of particular organisations. However, up to two positions may be filled by organisational representatives where this supports equitable participation.

## Confidentiality and conflicts

Members must comply with the Privacy Act 2020 and Official Information Act 1982.

Relevant documents such as Appointment Letter, Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest documents will be provided.

## Closure

Whaikaha may conclude the AAG if operational needs change.

## Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually, or earlier if agreed by Whaikaha and the AAG. Reviews will consider whether the rōpū is fulfilling its intended purpose.

**End of: Accessibility Advisory Group Terms of Reference**

This Large Print document is adapted by Blind Citizens NZ from the standard document provided by Whaikaha, Ministry of Disabled People.