

# 2025

(1 July 2024 – 30 November 2024)

## Pūrongo ā-tau | Annual Report



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government



**Whaikaha**  
Ministry of  
Disabled People



Scan  
for NZSL  
name



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Me he aka rātā ka tipu tahi  
ka puāwai tahi kia tū kaha i  
ngā hihi o Tamanuiterā.

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Like the rātā vines growing  
together and flourishing to  
stand strong in the warmth  
of the sun.



# Contents

Chief Executive Foreword	5
Statement of Responsibility	7
<b>SECTION ONE</b>	
Our story	9
About us	10
Our organisation	11
<b>SECTION TWO</b>	
Our key achievements	14
Other reporting requirements	18

## Chief Executive foreword

*E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā kārangatanga maha,*

*Kua tūtaki, kua kōrero, kua whiriwhiri i ngā kaupapa nunui.*

*To the many respected voices and connections,*

*We have gathered, we have spoken, we have woven together important kaupapa*

I present this Annual Report for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 November 2024 as per the Public Finance Act 1989, section 45J (final annual report for disestablished entities).

The Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha has continued to work with, disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, whānau, families, the wider disability sector, and our colleagues across the public service towards a non-disabling Aotearoa New Zealand.

In our final part year as a departmental agency, we focused on implementation of the Independent Review recommendations into the Sustainability of Disability Support Services and the work necessary to transition to a standalone Ministry. Details are contained in this report.

System improvements were required so that disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and whānau can have more confidence about the quality of supports they receive.

During this busy and complex period, we continued to deliver on the Government's priorities, providing advice across government, investing in relationships, and identifying opportunities to advance the rights and interests of the disabled community.

To maintain community engagement in the work of the Ministry, we continued to work with many groups including a Strategic Advisory Group, the Disabled Peoples Organisation (DPO) Coalition, roopū Māori including those representing Turi Māori and Kāpō Māori and the National Enabling Good Lives Leadership Group.

We also supported the Minister for Disability Issues to establish a Ministerial Disability Leadership Group. The issues and barriers facing disabled people tend to be cross-cutting and require collective action. The Ministerial leadership group will provide the necessary joined-up oversight, leadership, and accountability to ensure future progress is made in the right areas.

Thank you to our community and sector who have contributed to the vision of a non-disabling Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ngā mihi manawanui ki a koutou katoa,

My heartfelt acknowledgements to you all!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Paula', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Paula Tesoriero MNZM PLY**

Te Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive

Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha

## Statement of responsibility

I am responsible, as Chief Executive of the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha, for the accuracy of this 30 November 2024 performance information prepared by Whaikaha, whether or not that information is included in the Annual Report.

In my opinion, this Annual Report fairly reflects the operations, progress and organisational health and capability of the Ministry of Disabled People.



**Paula Tesoriero** MNZM PLY

Chief Executive | Te Tumu Whakarae

28 February 2025

# **SECTION ONE**

## **Our strategic direction**



# Our story

**The Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha (The Ministry) was established on 1 July 2022 with a dual mandate to:**

- Improve and strengthen the way disability supports are provided.
- Advance societal change to improve outcomes for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, families and whānau.

The Ministry was established as a departmental agency as defined by section 2 of the Public Finance Act (1989), hosted within the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

An Independent Review into the sustainability of Disability Support Services (DSS) administered by the Ministry was undertaken in mid-2024. Six key findings and seven recommendations were made. In August 2024, Cabinet agreed to transfer DSS functions to a new branded business group within the MSD and to establish a standalone agency - Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha.

The Cabinet paper is located at:

[https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/assets/Independent-Review/07\\_AUGUST-CABINET-Minute-CAB-24-MIN-0301-Minute-redactions-applied-FINAL.pdf](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/assets/Independent-Review/07_AUGUST-CABINET-Minute-CAB-24-MIN-0301-Minute-redactions-applied-FINAL.pdf).

The Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha as a departmental agency was formally disestablished on 1 December 2024.

As a disestablished entity the Ministry is required under the Public Finance Act (S45J) to provide its final Annual Report to the Minister of Disability Issues within three months of its disestablishment (1 March 2025). The report is expected to be presented to the House of Representatives thereafter.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in the Public Finance Act 1989 (S45AA). The financial reporting and performance measures for Whaikaha are contained in the 2024 MSD Annual Report, as the host agency, and can be found on the MSD website at [www.msd.govt.nz](http://www.msd.govt.nz).

Note, this annual report should be read in conjunction with the Ministry's 2024 annual report located at: <https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/corporate-publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2024>. For all performance information content for the period of this report, refer to the 2024 MSD annual report located at: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/corporate/annual-report/2024/index.html>.

The Ministry was underpinned by Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the vision and principles of Enabling Good Lives.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy (2016-2026) has been the key mechanism for the Government and disabled people, their families and whānau to set the direction for a non-disabling Aotearoa. The strategy has guided the work of government agencies on disability issues for the past decade.

During this reporting period the Ministry also worked to enable the government to announce its response to the recommendations (called observations) of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The Ministry worked with other government agencies to identify what observations would be progressed immediately, and which ones require further work before they can be progressed.

## About us

### What we do

For the period which this report relates to, the Ministry was responsible for delivering Disability Support Services for the period 01 July to 16 September 2024, and for managing its smooth transfer into MSD.

It also worked to advance societal change to improve outcomes for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, families and whānau. Key to this approach was to support the building of community capability and leadership, strengthen and build closer relationships with the disability community, representative groups, and organisations, tāngata whaikaha and iwi Māori to inform and amplify its work.

### Programmes we have progressed

The key work programmes that the Ministry progressed during the period 01 July to 30 November 2024 included:

1. Designing and implementing Recommendations 1-3 of the Independent Review of Disability Support Services, which included setting budgets for Needs Assessment and Service Coordination Services and Enabling Good Lives sites and for Equipment and Modification Services; introducing pricing changes for those entering residential care; and pausing all work on disability system transformation;
2. The transfer of all aspects of Disability Support Services, including the High and Complex Framework (HCF) for forensic care, to MSD. MSD took over the implementation of the Independent Review recommendations from 16 September 2024;
3. Supporting work on the government's response to the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care, including the apology process;
4. Continued work on the Crown's response to the Wai2575 Waitangi Tribunal inquiry; and
5. Creating employment opportunities for disabled people in public service (Disability Four-Point Plan).

# Our organisation

## The Ministry was arranged into four business groups:

- Commissioning Design and Delivery
- Policy, Strategy and Partnerships
- People and Culture
- Corporate Services.

Each group was led by a Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) who was a member of the Executive Leadership team. The Executive Leadership team also included a Kaihautū – Chief Advisor Māori who provided strategic advice and led parts of the integrated work programme to ensure our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi is reflected.

## Our organisational values

Our values were developed in collaboration with staff and launched on 1 July 2024. The values were developed in Te Reo Māori, English and NZSL.

### Mana Taurite

Equity drives us

### Mana Kaha

We strengthen and support

### Mana Tūhura

We explore and learn

## Supporting Māori Crown relationships

As a departmental agency of the Crown, the Ministry supported the Crown to honour its obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi.

The organisation sought to actively build cultural capability, and to find ways to partner with others to ensure work programmes reflected the Crown's relationship with Māori and to improve outcomes and equity for tāngata whaikaha Māori.

The Ministry sought to build and maintain relationships with hapū and iwi Māori so that tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau are connected to te ao Māori and could realise their aspirations.

## People and culture

### Our people

Refer to the Ministry's 2024 annual report, page 26 for data in relation to Ministry staff, disability, gender and ethnicity.

A People and Culture plan was developed to describe the key organisational and capability shifts that Whaikaha needed to make to support effective delivery of its dual mandate. Four areas of focus were identified: strengthening our foundations, leadership, being an employer of choice, and influencing across the public service.

The Ministry was a flexible-by-default employer and committed to supporting the provision of flexible working arrangements to reflect the diverse needs of our employees.

### **Pay equity**

For the period of this report, the Ministry had an average gender pay gap of 6.9 percent. This is a reduction of 5.4 percent since the Ministry reported an average gender pay gap of 12.3 percent points on 30 June 2023.

The Ministry sought to continue to understand the drivers of its pay gaps and to address them in accordance with the Kia Toipoto – Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan.

### **Governance and risk management**

Governance and risk management matters for the Ministry for the period of this report remained unchanged and are outlined in the Ministry's 2024 annual report on pages 28 to 31.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **Our key achievements**

## Our work for the period of this report

For all DSS work programmes, disability supports and funding methods for the period of this report refer to the Ministry's 2024 annual report, pages 42 to 45.

### Implementing the Independent Review into the Sustainability of Disability Support Services

The Independent Review was considered by Cabinet in July and August 2024. Whaikaha provided support to the Minister and to the Ministry of Social Development as a part of the Cabinet process.

### Policy work programme

A better, more independent future for disabled people and whānau in Aotearoa New Zealand relies on policy settings that are underpinned by Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi, the UNCRPD and the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles and approach. They are based on the social model of disability, where being disabled is more determined by barriers created within society than the person's impairments.

Key areas of focus for the Ministry's policy work included:

- The policy decisions needed to enable initial implementation of the Independent Review recommendations, including the policy to support Needs Assessment and Service Co-ordination (NASC), EGL Site and Equipment and Modification Services (EMS) budgets; changes to residential care pricing; and pausing the roll out of disability system transformation.
- Supporting the finalisation of the report on the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care (Whanaketia).
- Continued work on the Crown's response to the Wai2575 Waitangi Tribunal inquiry.

### Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions (Royal Commission) Whanaketia – Through pain and trauma, from darkness to light was tabled in Parliament on 24 July 2024 and became public.

Whaikaha supported work on the government's response. This included:

- preparation for the tabling of the report in Parliament on 24 July 2024
- advice on the formal apology event on 12 November 2024, advice on accessibility of the event itself and the apology text
- advice on records improvement processes for Disability Support Services and for DSS providers

- advice and support for the Minister for Disability Issues to meet with disabled people who are survivors of abuse in care on 4 December 2024 and
- support for the development of the response work programme.

### **Crown Response to the WAI2575 Waitangi Tribunal Inquiry**

As part of the Crown's response to the Wai2575 Waitangi Tribunal inquiry senior staff gave evidence to the Tribunal (as Crown witnesses) over two Tribunal hearing weeks (18-22 March and 5-9 August).

In the August hearing week, Whaikaha staff presented evidence on disability data collection and how this data was used; on the March 2024 changes to the Purchasing rules and Equipment and Modification Services; on the disability system as it relates to Kāpō Māori (Māori who are blind or have low vision) and to Turi Māori (Māori who are Deaf or hard of hearing), and on non-accident based home and community support services.

Whaikaha also contributed to evidence presented by the Ministry of Health on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and on the health and disability workforce.

Senior staff attended the Wai2575 closing submissions week in December 2024.

### **The Ministry change programme**

In response to the machinery of government changes to the Ministry, a three-phase change programme was initiated:

Phase One: Transfer the Commissioning, Design and Delivery Group (CDD) to a DSS business unit within MSD on 16 September 2024.

Phase Two: Determine the corporate, people and policy support that would transfer into MSD to support the delivery of DSS; and those that would transfer into the standalone Ministry on 1 December 2024. During this period, Whaikaha provided transitional support services to DSS. All transfers were undertaken using Section 86 of the Public Service Act. 205 people transferred to MSD, 65 people into Whaikaha and five roles were disestablished.

Phase Three: Establish Whaikaha as a standalone Ministry, including the operating model, organisational design, and capabilities (functions, systems, shared services and resources), and ways of working required to succeed. This establishment work is ongoing.

### **Stewardship**

Removing barriers and opening opportunities to live good lives requires joined up efforts across government agencies and wider communities. The Ministry played an important stewardship role to help with this.

Our stewardship approach provided a disability lens and was proactive and targeted to support agencies to meet their responsibilities to disabled people and whānau.

Refer to the Ministry's 2024 annual report, pages 22 and 23 for a list of our work with other agencies.

### Leadership and strategy groups

The Ministry continued to establish and support advisory and engagement arrangements to inform key work programmes:

Formal arrangements included:

- **Supporting the Minister for Disability Issues to establish a Ministerial Disability Leadership Group:** to provide joined-up oversight, leadership and accountability for the government's work on disability matters.
- **The Transformation Management Board:** to oversee the Ministry's disability system transformation work programme until it was paused following the Independent Review of DSS.
- **Strategic Advisory Group:** to give strategic advice on the Ministry's major work programmes and policy areas.
- **Project groups:** to support service design and policy advice (these included the Kōmiti Pasifika, My Home, My Choice and the Tairāwhiti Disability Locally Led Recovery Planning Rōpū).

### Working with the disability community has helped to:

- establish and strengthen community advice for the Ministry to inform our stewardship and policy development roles
- raise awareness of disabled peoples' needs and preferences, and how everyone can contribute to making New Zealand a more inclusive place to live
- influence the priorities and activities of other government agencies, including through the NZSL Strategy, the Disability Action Plan and other work programmes.

### New Zealand Sign Language Board

Latest data from the 2023 Census shows the number of New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) users has increased to almost 25,000 people. Of this group, around 4,500 are estimated to be Deaf. For deaf New Zealander's, NZSL is fundamental to learning, communicating and participating in society. International research illustrates that access to sign language is a strong predictor of good health and wellbeing outcomes for Deaf people.



The Ministry supported the NZSL Board key functions:

- maintain and promote the use of NZSL
- ensure the rights of Deaf people and NZSL users to use NZSL
- provide advice to the Government and the community on NZSL.

This includes co-ordinating government monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the NZSL Strategy, UNCRPD and the New Zealand Disability Strategy, as well as executive support for the Board's Annual Report, responses to Official Information Act requests and correspondence with the NZSL community.

During the period covered in this report the Ministry and the NZSL Board have:

- progressed work to develop the next NZSL Strategy 2025 to address systemic barriers to the use of NZSL and explore opportunities for its growth
- continued investing in strategic contracts aimed at promoting and maintaining NZSL, such as contracting Victoria University to maintain and update the NZSL Dictionary
- allocated \$175,000 in community grants to maintain and promote NZSL
- refreshed the Board by appointing a new Chair and three new members
- strengthened relationships between the NZSL Board and its advisory body, Te Rōpū Kaitiaki, and supported the development of an action plan for Turi Māori
- delivered the Sign Language Proficiency Interview service, to assess the NZSL proficiency of educators and other NZSL users
- progressed policy work to explore how to implement a high-quality, professional NZSL interpreting standards system, and improvements to the accessibility of the NZSL Community Grant process
- launched a new stand-alone website for the NZSL Board.

### **Creating employment opportunities for disabled people in public service (Te Kairangi Tūrama Muri, the Disability Four-Point plan)**

The Ministry is the lead agency championing Te Kairangi Tūrama Muri, creating employment opportunities for disabled people in public service. It sits alongside Papa Pounamu and works to these outcomes:

- Increasing the visibility of disabled public servants – identify better collection of data across the public service.
- Recruiting and promoting more disabled people and tāngata whaikaha to positions in the public service.
- Improving accessibility for disabled people in the public service.

- Identifying and closing inequities disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori face that others don't (for example, pay gaps, career progression).

Progress from July to November 2024:

- Finalised the plan to conduct a survey with government agencies on the disability and rainbow data they capture which will be launched in Q1 2025.
- Evidenced the breadth of barriers to employment for disabled people across the public sector and identified ways individual departments can address these as part of recruitment, development, and career progression.
- Partnered with We Enable Us to support the set-up of an all-of-government Deaf Kaimahi employee-led network in 2025.
- Developed the strategic priorities and work programme of the Disability Four-point plan for 2025.

**Budget significant initiatives**

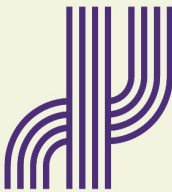
The following table outlines where to find more information on Budget significant initiatives from the last two Budgets.

Table 2: Budget significant initiatives

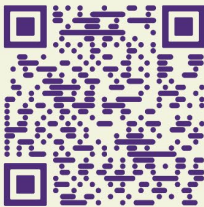
Name of initiative	Budget year first funded	Location of information
Access to essential services, equipment, or support.	2024	<a href="https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/glance/budget-glance-2024">https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/glance/budget-glance-2024</a>
Disability Support Services cost pressures	2023	<a href="http://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/news/budgets/budget-factsheets/supporting-tangata-whaikaha-maori-and-disabled-people-cost-pressures">www.whaikaha.govt.nz/news/budgets/budget-factsheets/supporting-tangata-whaikaha-maori-and-disabled-people-cost-pressures</a>
Establishing a new Ministry	2022	<a href="http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/budget/2022/factsheets/establishing-a-new-ministry-for-disabled-people.html">www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/budget/2022/factsheets/establishing-a-new-ministry-for-disabled-people.html</a>

**Other reporting requirements**

- Our emissions information remains unchanged and is outlined in the Ministry's 2024 annual report on page 62.
- Up to date collection of disability data is outlined in the Ministry's 2024 annual report on pages 64 to 70.



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