# Plain language summary – Cabinet paper about the New Zealand Disability Strategy Refresh: Approval for Approach and Consultation

This summary is about decisions made by Cabinet in March 2025 on the approach to refreshing the New Zealand Disability Strategy. Some of these decisions are about consulting with disabled people.

## Disclaimer: This summary was produced by the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha. More information, including the full paper, is available at [www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/corporate-publications/cabinet-papers](http://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/corporate-publications/cabinet-papers). You can find this under the heading New Zealand Disability Strategy refresh – approval for approach and consultation.

## Summary

The Disability Strategy sets out how the government will improve the lives of disabled people in New Zealand. There are about 851,000 disabled people in New Zealand, which is 17 percent of the population. Disabled people face challenges in achieving the same outcomes in many areas of life compared to non-disabled people.

The current Disability Strategy was agreed to in 2016, and it expires in 2026. The Minister for Disability Issues is responsible for the Disability Strategy, and asked Cabinet to agree on how a refreshed (new) Disability Strategy will be developed. The Minister for Disability Issues wants to put in place a new Disability Strategy that lasts 5 years - between 2026 and 2030.

The new Disability Strategy will have a vision and principles and will focus on actions in 5 priority Outcome Areas. These Outcome Areas are Education, Employment, Health, Housing and Justice. The Disability Strategy will help government, local government, non-government, and community organisations to be accessible and effective for disabled people.

The new Disability Strategy will be developed during 2025. To develop the vision and principles for the new Disability Strategy, the Ministry of Disabled People will work with groups who represent disabled people, including tāngata whaikaha Māori (Māori disabled), their whānau, and Disabled People’s Organisations.

Working Groups will develop proposed actions in the 5 priority Outcome Areas. Working Group members will include disabled people, government officials, and members of the relevant sector or industry (for example, education).

Consulting with the public on a draft Disability Strategy is planned to start in August 2025. The Minister for Disability Issues wants to release the final Disability Strategy on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2025.

The Minister for Disability Issues has formed a Ministerial Disability Leadership Group to lead change for disabled people across the Government’s priorities. The Ministerial Disability Leadership Group will oversee and make decisions about the new Disability Strategy. The main members of this Group are the Ministers for Disability Issues, Social Development and Employment, Housing, Health, Education, Local Government, and Children. Other Ministers can also be invited to attend.

## Decisions made by Cabinet

On 11 March 2025, Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee agreed:

* To the Minister developing a new Disability Strategy with a vision and principles to guide all work for disabled people.
* The 5 priority Outcome Areas for the new Disability Strategy will be Education, Employment, Health, Housing and Justice. This is because these are important areas for disabled people and their families, as well as the Government. The Government has public service Targets in these areas.
* The approach to engaging and consulting on a new Disability Strategy. This includes using Working Groups to develop clear actions under the 5 priority Outcome Areas for Ministers to consider. Working Groups will be made up of government officials, disabled people representing the disability community, and people with knowledge of the sector or industry in each Outcome Area.
* That the Ministerial Disability Leadership Group and the Minister of Justice can approve the draft Disability Strategy before consulting the public on this draft later in 2025. These Ministers are responsible for the 5 priority Outcome Areas for the new Disability Strategy. If anything in the draft Disability Strategy is significant or controversial, the Minister for Disability Issues will report back to the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee to get approval.
* To invite the Minister for Disability Issues to report back to the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee by November 2025 to seek agreement to the final Disability Strategy.