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Visual description: A purple Whaikaha logo with a QR scan for the NZSL name.

Briefing

Date:	16 January 2025
For:	Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Disability Issues
File reference:	REP/WHK/24/12/191
Security level:	In confidence

Progressing the New Zealand Disability Strategy refresh

Purpose

This updated briefing seeks your agreement to proposed outcome areas for the New Zealand Disability Strategy, the approach for working with the community on the strategy, and the timeframes for the strategy refresh.

Following the discussion with you in December, we have made the following updates to the previous version of this briefing:

- Changing the cross-cutting themes for the strategy to be cross-cutting considerations, making it clear that they are not equivalent in status to the outcome areas of the strategy.
- Clarification that the outcome areas of the strategy are intended to align with the Public Service Targets, UNCRPD concluding observations, and the work of the Independent Monitoring Mechanism.
- Altered timings for the phases of the strategy, allowing more time for public consultation on a draft strategy in phase three (now August to December).

Executive summary

In October you agreed to a 'mixed model' approach where the Government sets the outcome areas for the Disability Strategy, and the community informs the activities and measures under each outcome area [REP/WHK/24/10/170 refers].

The 'building blocks' of the strategy will include the outcome areas that the strategy will aim to improve.

We are seeking your agreement to five outcome areas: education, employment, health, housing and justice. We also propose that each outcome area will consider data, accessibility and equity issues.

We propose developing the refreshed strategy with extensive input from disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori. We will work with tāngata whaikaha Māori roopū on their preferred approach for integrating the needs of tāngata whaikaha Māori within the strategy. We will also use the recently developed Pacific disability planning document to incorporate the views of Pacific disabled people into the strategy.

For this Disability Strategy refresh, rather than appointing and funding a new and specific reference group, as has been done for previous strategies, we seek your agreement to:

- Utilise the Ministry's Strategic Advisory Group to provide initial advice on the development of the strategy and associated community engagement plan.
- Appoint individuals to take part in five working groups focused on each of the outcome areas of the strategy.

We seek your agreement to three phases of development for the strategy. The main aspects of each phase are:

- Phase one (now until March 2025): Preparing for March Cabinet agreement to the process for refreshing the strategy, and development of an engagement plan.
- Phase two (March to July 2025): Outcome area working groups developing draft content for the strategy, supported by targeted community engagement.
- Phase three (August to December 2025): Community engagement on the draft strategy, November Cabinet agreement to finalised strategy, 3 December launch (International Day of Persons with Disabilities).

Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Agree that the outcome areas for the Disability Strategy to be proposed to Cabinet are education, employment, health, housing and justice – aligning with the Government's public service Targets, the UNCRPD concluding observations, and the work of the Independent Monitoring Mechanism | Agree Disagree |
| 2. Note that we are beginning discussions with tāngata whaikaha Māori roopū to determine an approach for integrating the needs of tāngata whaikaha Māori within the refreshed Disability Strategy | Noted |
| 3. Note that the aspirations of Pacific disabled people collated through community engagement in 2024 will be integrated into the Disability Strategy | Noted |
| 4. Agree to the following arrangements for community input into the Disability Strategy refresh: | Agree Disagree |

- a. Utilising the Ministry's Strategic Advisory Group to provide advice on development and engagement planning.
- b. Appointing individuals to sit alongside officials in five topic-based working groups focused on each of the outcome areas of the strategy.

5. **Agree** to a three-phased approach to refreshing the Disability Strategy:

Agree | **Disagree**

- a. Phase one (now until March 2025): Preparing for Cabinet agreement to the building blocks of the strategy, and concurrent development of engagement planning.
- b. Phase two (March to July): working groups on each outcome area develop content for the draft strategy, supported by targeted community engagement.
- c. Phase three (August to December 2025): Public engagement on the draft strategy, November Cabinet agreement to finalised strategy, 3 December launch (International Day of Persons with Disabilities).

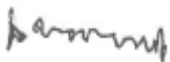
6. **Agree** to forward this briefing to Ministers who lead other portfolios for the proposed outcome areas of the strategy (Education, Health, Housing, Justice).

Agree | **Disagree**

Hon Louise Upston

Minister for Disability Issues

Date



Ben O'Meara

Deputy Chief Executive, Policy and Insights

Date 15 January 2025

Actions for private secretaries:

Progressing the New Zealand Disability Strategy refresh

Background

- 1 The Minister for Disability Issues has an obligation under the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022 to determine a strategy, called the New Zealand Disability Strategy. The Act requires that the Minister for Disability Issues:
 - Consult any organisations and individuals that the Minister considers appropriate.
 - In each year report on progress in implementing the disability strategy.
 - Make publicly available, and present to the House of Representatives a copy of the strategy, amendment, replacement, or report as soon as practical after this has been determined or made.
- 2 In October, you agreed to a 'mixed model' approach where the Government sets the outcome areas for a refreshed Disability Strategy, and the community informs the activities and measures under each outcome area [REP/WHK/24/10/170 refers].
- 3 This mixed model approach upholds the government's relationship with disabled communities and ensures community input, while leading to a strategy that is focused on fewer priorities, is aligned to longstanding government priorities, and has a more robust measurement framework.

Establishing the building blocks of the refreshed Disability Strategy

- 4 We propose you seek Cabinet agreement in March 2025 to a framework that sets out the 'building blocks' of the strategy. Alongside preparation of the Cabinet paper, we will develop a community engagement approach.
- 5 The building blocks are:
 - A draft vision – a description of the aspiration we want the refreshed Disability Strategy to achieve. There is potential to retain the vision of the current Disability Strategy as a draft vision statement to retest with the community. The current vision is *"New Zealand is a non-disabling society – a place where disabled people have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and all of New Zealand works together to make this happen"*.
 - Outcome areas – the broad areas on which the strategy will focus, and potentially some priorities within the outcome areas.
 - Impacts – how success will be measured in the outcome areas.

- 6 Following Cabinet agreement, we will begin engagement with the broader disability community, using the building blocks as our basis. Engagement will be largely focused on supporting working groups to identify activities and actions to progress each outcome area and to test their work with others in the disability community. (Phasing and engagement are discussed further below.)
- 7 To develop the March Cabinet paper and prepare for engagement, the Ministry seeks your agreement to the draft outcome areas for the strategy:
 - Education – Educational outcomes are lower for disabled learners than non-disabled learners across all settings, and they are more than twice as likely to leave school without qualifications. A shift is required, for example, across teacher confidence and effectiveness and supporting students to attend and remain in school.
 - Employment - Disabled people are less likely than non-disabled people to be employed (39.8% vs 80.3%), have a bachelor's degree or higher (15.0% vs 35.0%), and are paid significantly less (\$523 vs \$1,141 weekly income). For tāngata whaikaha Māori, the employment gap is even higher, with an employment rate of 27.2 percent, compared to 71.2 percent for non-disabled Māori. Many barriers to employment exist, including discrimination, attitudinal barriers and lack of knowledge of how to adapt jobs, and a lack of targeted support for those furthest from the labour market.
 - Health - Disabled people have significantly poorer health outcomes compared with non-disabled people and on average have a lower life-expectancy. For example, disabled people have poorer cancer survival rates – 32% of disabled people aged 65–74 years died within one year of diagnosis compared with 16% of non-disabled people. In the 2023 General Social Survey, 17.0 percent of Māori disabled people self-rated their health as excellent or very good, compared with 41.4 percent of Māori non-disabled, and 48.3 percent of the total population.
 - Housing – Disabled people face poorer outcomes than non-disabled people in housing, due to a lack of affordable, accessible housing, particularly in public and community housing. There is poor data on the number of disabled people in emergency housing, and the availability of accessible and affordable housing stock. Recent data from the 2023 Census shows that disabled people (based on the WGSS) were more than twice as likely to experience severe housing deprivation than non-disabled people. This was across all categories, including:
 - Temporary accommodation or without shelter (77.3 disabled compared with 34 non-disabled per 10,000 usual residents).
 - Sharing someone else's private dwelling (64 disabled compared with 34 non-disabled per 10,000 usual residents).
 - Uninhabitable housing (273.3 disabled and 125.3 non-disabled per 10,000 usual residents).

- Across the categories of temporary accommodation or without shelter.
 - Justice – Disabled people are often over-represented as victims of crime, with higher lifetime prevalence rates of victimisation, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence than non-disabled adults. Disabled people continue to report low confidence in the courts and police, poor quality of service using 111, perceptions of safety, access to supported decision-making, and getting access to NZSL interpreters.
- 8 These outcome areas align with the Government's nine public service Targets, reflect important elements in the UNCRPD concluding observations considered by Cabinet in December and reflect the work of the Independent Monitoring Mechanism to highlight areas where progress is needed. We will build the Cabinet agreed approach for progressing UN Convention obligations into the content for relevant outcome areas.
 - 9 We also propose taking a 'life-course' approach to presenting the strategy, to explain how the relationship between the outcome areas (for example, education and employment) plays out in the lives of disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori. A life-course approach aligns with social investment, recognises that people have different needs at different stages, and uses the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) to identify key risk and protective factors, as well as touchpoints with government services that impact the trajectories of people's lives.
 - 10 We think that each outcome area should include consideration of three specific matters, because considering these matters is consistent with a life course approach. They are data, accessibility and equity for disabled people.
 - 11 These matters are particularly relevant for groups who experience intersectionality, such as tāngata whaikaha Māori, resulting in more disadvantage and barriers to achieving a good life. Intersectional impacts are noted by the UNCRPD, Māori, Pacific peoples, LGBTQI+, women, girls and children.

Reflecting tāngata whaikaha Māori in the Disability Strategy

- 12 Tāngata whaikaha Māori have the highest needs of any sub-population group, and experience poorer outcomes when compared with disabled people more generally, or non-disabled Māori across most outcome areas.
- 13 Previously, the aspirations of tāngata whaikaha Māori have been reflected through Whāia Te Ao Mārama, the Māori Disability Action Plan. There have been two action plans, with the Ministry of Health the lead agency involved in development. The most recent action plan spanned 2018-2022, so has expired.
- 14 Both action plans have had a high level of ownership from tāngata whaikaha Māori. The development of the action plans involved Kāpō Māori Aotearoa, who are a kaupapa Māori Disabled People's Organisation that provides support for people who are blind, vision impaired and deafblind; and Te Ao Mārama, the

Māori Disability Advisory Group established by the Ministry of Health to co-develop the plan. Te Ao Mārama have since become an independent entity, registering as a charitable trust in August 2021. Te Roopū Waiora and other groups have had a relationship with the plan since its earliest iteration in 2012.

- 15 As a part of refreshing the Disability Strategy, we propose developing a document that reflects the voices of tāngata whaikaha Māori, as shared through the engagement. This will be similar to the document developed in 2024 to summarise engagement from disabled Pacific people, discussed below.

Reflecting Pacific disabled people in the Disability Strategy

- 16 Throughout 2024, the Ministry engaged and consulted with the Pacific disabled community on national Pacific disability action planning. Pacific disabled people also experience particular disadvantage. We have prepared a document to acknowledge and record the feedback and aspirations shared by Pacific disability communities during this engagement. The Ministry will build the results of the engagement into the refresh of the Disability Strategy.
- 17 Based on the work completed this year, the Pacific community will be keen to see immediate progress on Pacific disability actions. We will therefore need to clearly communicate the value of making Pacific disabled people an explicit focus within the refreshed Disability Strategy, and seek to move ahead on any actions identified through engagement that can be progressed within baselines.

Community input into the Disability Strategy

- 18 Past strategies, developed from a more community-led perspective, have had a reference group drawn from the community. For the 2016 strategy, the 14-member reference group outlined the process for revising the previous strategy and guided the development of the content.
- 19 For this strategy refresh, rather than appointing and funding a new and specific reference group, we propose a different approach with two aspects:
 - 19.1 Utilising the Ministry's Strategic Advisory Group to provide high-level advice on the development of the strategy.
 - 19.2 Appointing individual subject matter experts to take part in five working groups focused on each of the outcome areas of the strategy.
- 20 The Strategic Advisory Group is already up and running with a Terms of Reference (ToR) and confidentiality agreements in place. It can therefore be utilised to provide initial advice to inform strategy development and a community engagement plan. This is within scope for the group's ToR and avoids a separate establishment process for the sole purpose of progressing the Strategy refresh.
- 21 To reflect the mixed model and encourage a more hands-on approach to developing the strategy, the Ministry proposes setting up one working group for each outcome area.

- 22 Each of the five working groups will comprise of an official from the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha, one or two officials from the relevant government agency for the outcome area, up to two members appointed from disabled communities, and relevant industry leaders. They will be appointed based on their experience, knowledge and skills in a particular outcome area, including knowledge of the experiences of tāngata whaikaha Māori, Pacific disabled people, and disabled children and young people.
- 23 Community appointees will be required to be strategic – the working groups will be a testing ground for the evidence base and priority activities for the outcome area they are working within. Community appointees will also need to be pragmatic and action-focused – they will be working alongside government agency appointees to assess, filter and prioritise the activity and actions identified for each outcome area.
- 24 If you agree to this approach the Ministry will commence a recruitment process for members of the working groups during February, so that the working groups can commence immediately following the March Cabinet decision.
- 25 The Ministry has begun discussions with government agencies who lead the outcome areas, and you may wish to forward this briefing to your Ministerial colleagues.

Proposed process and phases to develop the Disability Strategy

- 26 The three phases of strategy development we propose are as follows:

Phase one (now until March 2025):

- Engagement with the Strategic Advisory Group and agency officials on the building blocks for the refreshed Disability Strategy ahead of Cabinet decisions.
- Developing draft policy papers on the proposed outcome areas.
- Concurrent development of the phased community engagement plan.
- Cabinet agreement in March to the building blocks of the strategy and the process for the strategy refresh.
- Recruiting to working groups, including appointing working group members.

Phase two (March to July 2025):

- Support the working groups to develop activities and actions for each outcome area.
- Support working groups to implement targeted community engagement.
- Develop measures for the outcome and priority areas.
- Prepare a draft strategy based on feedback on building blocks and proposed actions under each outcome area (with prioritisation of the actions).

Phase three (August to December 2025):

- Consultation on a draft strategy and actions.
 - Produce a summary document of feedback and insights gathered during engagement.
 - Cabinet agreement to finalised strategy and actions, and plan for launch.
 - 3 December launch of Disability Strategy (International Day of Persons with Disabilities) and approach for implementation.
- 27 Engagement will involve a range of methods, to ensure we are inclusive and accessible while being able to stay within baselines and timeframes. For example, wider engagement will likely include focus groups and hui, asking other agencies with a regional presence to support engagement on relevant outcome areas, and seeking opportunities to get on the agenda at other organisations' meetings and events.
- 28 More detailed project planning is underway, including the development of an approach for supporting tāngata whaikaha Māori participation and writing of a communications and engagement plan.

Future of the Disability Action Plan

- 29 For both strategies so far, a shorter-term Disability Action Plan (DAP) has been used to drive action to achieve the outcomes of the strategy. Government agencies have committed to actions under the DAP, with the Office of Disability Issues and then the Ministry running six-monthly reporting rounds. The previous DAP spanned 2019-2023 and has expired.
- 30 Previous DAPs have included a lot of actions, making it difficult to ensure that all actions are completed within the period of the plans. Once the strategy has been refreshed, we will be better positioned to determine a mechanism to drive action and monitor outcomes. To be successful, implementation will need to concentrate on a limited range of impactful actions that can focus the attention needed to ensure completion within agreed timeframes.

Implications, risks and issues

- 31 Across all aspects of strategy development, there is a risk that some members of the community will not support the mixed model approach, including the decision to not establish a reference group. The Ministry will mitigate this risk by consulting with the Strategic Advisory Group on the early development of the strategy building blocks, communicating clearly the opportunities for community members to provide feedback on the draft strategy, that the selection of outcome areas is based in evidence, and that topic-based community expertise is being sought to drive development of the actions.
- 32 At this early stage, there is some uncertainty around strategy refresh costs. For example, the costs of reasonable accommodations (such as New Zealand Sign Language interpreters) for working group members will not be known until we have appointed members. We will manage costs within baselines by making

choices about how we undertake wider consultation, and through mechanisms such as managing the number of working group meetings.

Next steps

- 33 If you agree to the proposals and recommendations in this paper, we will engage with the Strategic Advisory Group on the five outcome areas and concurrent development of the engagement approach, set in place an expression of interest process to appoint community working group members, and discuss with tāngata whaikaha Māori members of the Strategic Advisory Group how to best integrate the needs and aspirations of Māori into the Disability Strategy refresh.
- 34 In early February, we will provide you with an initial draft Cabinet paper on the building blocks for the refreshed strategy.

End

Responsible manager: Sheryl Pinckney, Group Manager, Partnerships & Stewardship