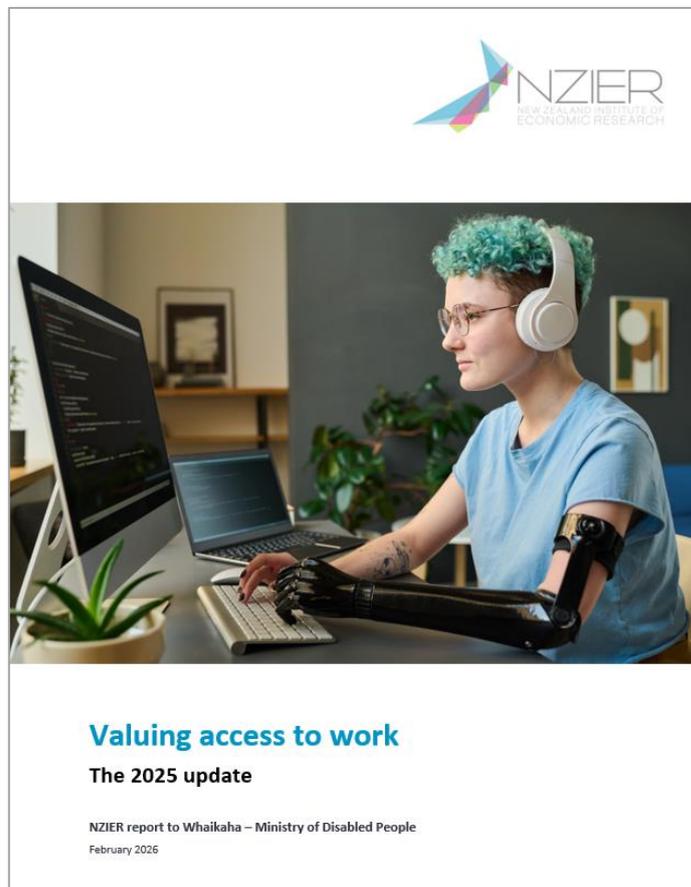




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## Summary: Valuing access to work



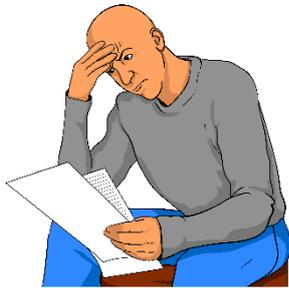
**Everyone should have a fair chance to work**

**Published: March 2026**

# 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.

# What you will find in here

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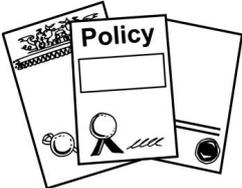
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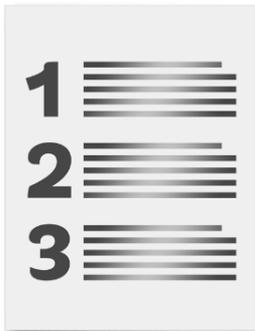


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# About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is a **summary** of the report called **Valuing access to work**.



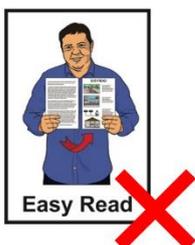
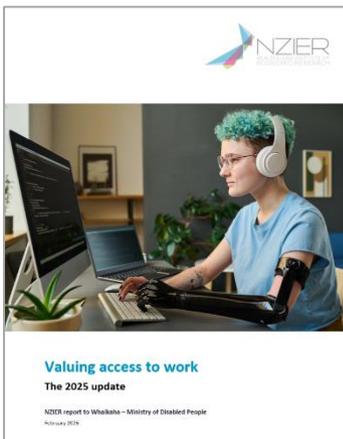
A **summary**:

- is shorter than the original document
- tells you the main points.



Here **valuing** means treating something as important.

This Easy Read is from the **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha**.



The **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha** works to make change for disabled people so their lives are better.

The Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha makes things better for disabled people by working with:

- the Government
- the community
- businesses.

You can read the full report **Valuing access to work** at this website:

<https://shorturl.at/2zwwgM>

The full report is **not** in Easy Read.

# About the report



The **New Zealand Institute of Economic Research** did research in 2017.



The **New Zealand Institute of Economic Research**:

- does research on things to do with work
- gives information to people who make decisions about the economy like:
  - the Government
  - businesses.



In this Easy Read the **New Zealand Institute of Economic Research** will be called **NZIER** for short.



Here **research** is when a lot of information is collected to learn about something.



The research was about the **economy** being better if disabled people had better access to:

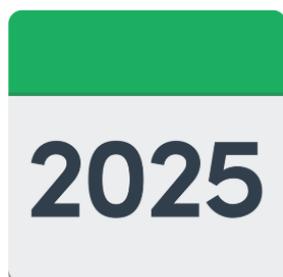
- work
- education.



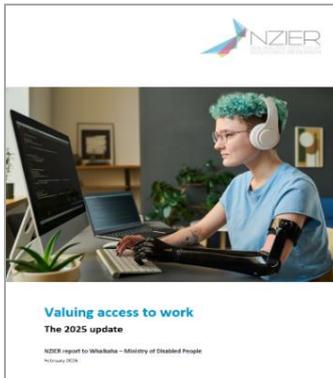
The **economy** is all the things we do in the country where people:



- make money
- spend money.



Whaikaha asked the NZIER to bring their research up to date in 2025.



The information NZIER found out in 2025 was used to make the report **Valuing access to work**.

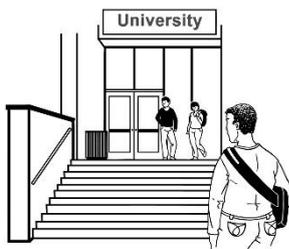


In this Easy Read **Valuing access to work** will be called **the report** for short.



The report makes **estimates** on what would happen if disabled people had:

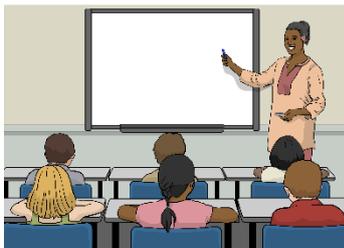
- the same **unemployment rate** as non-disabled people



- better **educational outcomes** that support them to do more at work.



Here **estimate** means making a guess about something using lots of good information.



The **unemployment rate** is the number of people who:

- would like to do work that pays them money

but

- cannot get a job.

**Outcomes** means how things turn out for people.

**Educational outcomes** are the things people get from going to school like:

- what they learn being good for getting a job
- a qualification / record that shows they learned a lot about something.



The research done by NZIER found that better outcomes for disabled people would make good things happen for the:

- economy
- lives of people.



# What is happening now?



Disabled people still have big gaps in:

- employment / getting a job
- education / going to school.



Only about **27 percent** of disabled people are part of the **labour force**.



**Percent** is a number out of every 1 hundred.

For example 20 percent is 20 people out of 1 hundred.



Here **labour force** means all the people in the country who are able to work.



About 73 percent of non-disabled people are part of the labour force.



The **employment rate** for disabled people is about 23 percent.



The **employment rate** is the number of people who have a job.



The employment rate for non-disabled people is about 70 percent.



The unemployment rate for disabled people is about 13 percent.



The unemployment rate for non-disabled people is about 5 percent.



Some disabled people are not asked to do as much work as they would like.



Some disabled people want more hours of work.



Some disabled people:

- want to work

but



- cannot look for work.



Some disabled people:

- can get work

but



- face **barriers** to doing the job.



Here a **barrier** is something that can stop you from doing something.

An example of a barrier is if you have trouble travelling to work.



32 percent of disabled people do not have a qualification / record of things achieved at school.



13 percent of non-disabled people do not have a qualification / record of things achieved at school.



These gaps show there are barriers to work for disabled people that have lasted a long time like:

- employers / managers not willing to make changes



- not having the same access as non-disabled people to:

- education / school

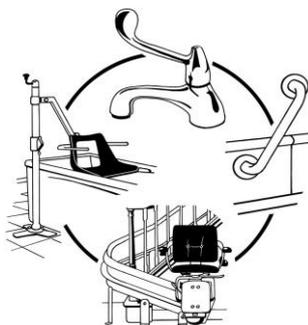
- training



- workplaces that are not **accessible**



- **discrimination.**



If something is **accessible** it means everyone can:

- use it

- take part in it.



**Discrimination** is when people are treated unfairly because of things like being disabled.

# What did NZIER look at?



NZIER looked at 2 questions.



1. What if disabled people looking for work had the same unemployment rate as non-disabled people?



2. What if disabled people could get **higher qualifications** that would lead to more **productivity**?



Here **higher qualifications** means getting more training like at:

- university
- polytechnic.



**Productivity** means being:

- able to do more work
- better at doing your job.



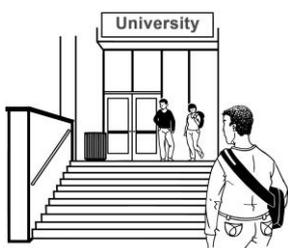
The 2 questions NZIER did research on did not assume / think that all disabled people:

- can get work
- should get work.



The questions looked at making things better for disabled people who:

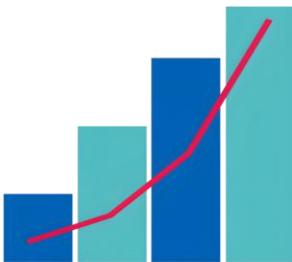
- want to work
- would get good things out of more education.



# What did NZIER find out?



**Reducing unemployment would increase GDP.**



**GDP** is short for Gross Domestic Product.

Gross Domestic Product is how much a country makes each year in:

- goods / things to:
  - buy
  - sell
- services / things that are done for people.





The economy would have been bigger by almost 6 hundred million dollars in 2025 if disabled people had the same unemployment rate as non-disabled people.



The NZIER also found out that reducing unemployment for disabled people would mean more disabled people would:



- earn money
- have the skills employers / managers need.



The NZIER also found out that **household** income / money would rise which would bring down:



- poverty / not having enough money to live on
- hardship / going through something difficult.



**Household** means all the people who live in a home.



The NZIER also found out that the Government would:

- spend less money on welfare / benefits that last for a long time
- get more money from **tax**.



**Tax** is an amount of money taken out of pay to give to the Government.

The Government uses tax money to pay for things like:

- the health system
- disability support systems
- education / schools.





The NZIER also found out that **skill shortages** would get better because there would be more people who could work.



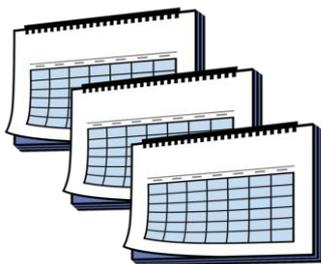
Here **skill shortages** are when there are not enough people who know how to do jobs that need to be done.



The NZIER also found out that Aotearoa New Zealand would use the talents / skills of disabled people better.



The NZIER says the barriers that stop disabled people from getting jobs are costing New Zealand a lot of money.



## **Making education better would increase GDP.**

Making better educational outcomes for disabled people would have added about 1 hundred and 30 million dollars to GDP in 2025.

This would have made productivity in jobs get better by 2 percent.

The NZIER also found out that having better educational outcomes for disabled people would mean disabled people would be able to find jobs:

- with better skills
- that pay better
- that last for a long time.



The NZIER also found out that people with better qualifications:

- earn more money during their lives
- do not use welfare / benefits as much.



The NZIER also found out that having an education:

- makes people feel better about themselves
- lets people have more **independence**
- lets people take part more in community life.

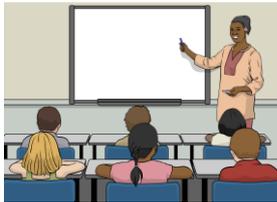


**Independence** means being able to take care of yourself.



The NZIER also found out that having an education means people get to know more about their:

- health
- mental health / how they feel.



The NZIER also found out that people having a **tertiary education** is a good thing for:

- whānau / families
- communities
- the economy.



**Tertiary education** means going to places like:

- university
- polytech
- wānanga.



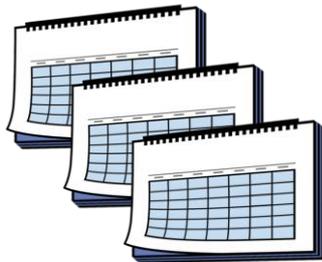


The NZIER says getting an education is one of the best ways to have better **employment outcomes**.



**Employment outcomes** means things like:

- having a good job you like
- getting paid well for your job
- staying in work for a long time.



# Why do these changes matter?



Disabled people would get lots of good things from getting better:

- education
- work.



Disabled people would have better mental wellbeing which means they would:

- feel like what they do is important
- feel like they get along better with more people
- be able to take part in things.





Disabled people would:

- have more money
- be less likely to not have enough money to live on.



Disabled people would be able to take part more in their communities.



Disabled people would have better health.



Doing these changes would mean good things for:

- individuals / people
- whānau / families
- communities
- all of the country.



# What does this mean for policy?



The report says changes to **policy** could make a big difference to disabled people getting:

- education
- work.



Here **policy** means the rules the Government makes.



There needs to be better organising done between:

- education services
- health services
- employment services.





There needs to be more support for employers to:

- hire disabled people
- keep disabled people in jobs.



There needs to be **investment** in **assistive technology**.



Here **investment** means making things better by spending:

- time
- money.





**Assistive** means something that supports someone to do things more easily.



Here **assistive technology** means things to do with computers that support disabled people like:

- screen readers
- talking computers
- computer programs.



There need to be more accessible:

- workplaces
- transport
- digital systems / computers.





There need to be more work options that are good for everyone like:

- remote working / working from:
  - home
  - another place
- **hybrid work.**



**Hybrid work** means being able to work at:

- home
- and
- the workplace.



There needs to be more work done on:

- dealing with discrimination
- giving employers ways to work well with disabled people.



Making policy changes needs people working together well like:

- the Government
- employers.



# What other research is needed?



Getting more information would support people to work out the best things to do to get disabled people into:

- education
- work.



It would be good to know which:

- parts of the country would be good to support
- **industries** would be good to support.



Here an **industry** is a group of business that do the same type of work.



More research needs to be done on what working for a long time looks like for disabled people.

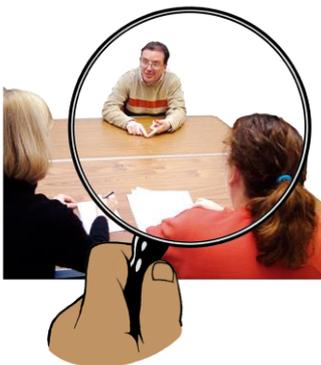


More research needs to be done on how good some **inclusion initiatives** are.



Here an **inclusion initiative** is something that is done to make it easier for disabled people to get:

- education
- work.



More research needs to be done on:

- what employers think about hiring disabled people
- how employers hire disabled people.



More research needs to be done on:

- remote working / working from another place
- hybrid work.



More research needs to be done on the barriers disabled people face to getting work when they have other **disadvantages** in their lives.



Here **disadvantages** means your life is hard because of things like:

- where you grew up
- things being bad at home when you were young
- not having a lot of money to live on.





More research needs to be done on the good things that happen over a long time when a disabled person gets an **inclusive education** when they are young.

**Inclusive education** means a person gets all the things they need to take part at school.

## Summing up what NZIER found out



Aotearoa New Zealand has a big opportunity to make:

- work outcomes for disabled people better
- the economy better.



Lots of money could be put into the economy each year by taking away the barriers for disabled people to:



- education
- work.



Removing the barriers could also:

- make disabled people feel like they have enough money to live on
- make people more equal
- make disabled people feel more included
- support whānau / families
- bring communities together
- build an economy that:
  - does more things
  - works well most of the time.



It is the fair thing to do to make better access for disabled people to:

- education
- work.



It is also a good thing to do for the **future** of Aotearoa New Zealand.



The **future** is a time that is yet to happen.



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



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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