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# Part 3: Vision and principles for the strategy

**Draft for consultation: New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026-2030**

Adapted in 2025 by Accessible Formats Service,  
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**Transcriber's Notes:** The logo at the top of the page is Whaikaha–Ministry of Disabled People.

The visual details of the logo are described in the alt text.

To support accessibility, link is labelled with the corresponding webpage heading, followed by shortened URLs

Bold formatting has been removed from lists.

# **Part 3: Vision and principles for the strategy**

August 2025

This is part 3 of the draft New Zealand Disability Strategy. It is the vision and principles for the strategy.

The other parts of the strategy are:

- Part 1: Introduction to the strategy
- Part 2: Background to the strategy
- Part 4: Priority outcome areas and actions for the strategy

Parts 3 and 4 of the strategy are the parts where people are invited to give feedback.

You can read, watch or listen to only the parts of the strategy that you want to.

You can find all parts of the strategy in alternate formats on our website under the heading "Read the draft strategy 2026-2030" visit [Refresh of the New Zealand Disability Strategy whaikaha.govt](https://shorturl.at/18ALN) [short url: <https://shorturl.at/18ALN>]

## **Vision and principles for the strategy**

### **A vision for the strategy**

The vision is a statement describing the future that disabled people want to achieve through the strategy. The vision will help set the course for the strategy.

### **Proposed vision:**

"New Zealand is an accessible and equitable society for disabled people and their whānau—a place where disabled people thrive, lead, and participate in all aspects of life."

You are invited to give feedback on the proposed vision for the strategy.

### **Questions**

- How much do you agree with the following statements?
  - The proposed vision is clear and easy to understand.
  - The vision aligns with the values and aspirations of disabled people.

- I feel confident that the vision will lead to meaningful change.
- Do you have any further comments or suggestions on the proposed vision and how well it reflects the needs, aspirations, and rights of disabled people in New Zealand?

## **Principles for the strategy**

Principles are the key values, ideas and commitments that underpin this strategy. The principles will help make sure the strategy reflects the things that are important to disabled people.

Focusing on making a tangible difference in disabled people's lives, seven possible principles have been proposed for the strategy:

### **Accessibility**

This principle recognises that accessibility is fundamental to participation and inclusion. When environments and services are designed with accessibility in mind from the beginning, they benefit everyone, not just disabled people.

### **Choice and control**

This principle recognises that decisions about disabled people's lives have often been made by others. It asserts that disabled individuals are the experts in their own lives

and should have the same right to self-determination as everyone else.

### **Equity, cultural inclusion and intersectionality**

This principle brings together concepts of equity, non-discrimination and inclusion. It acknowledges that disabled individuals belong to diverse whānau, communities, and cultures, each with its own unique identities, values and practices.

### **Human rights**

This principle anchors the strategy in international human rights frameworks, including the UNCRPD, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### **Participation and inclusion**

This principle recognises that disabled people have the right to be active members of their communities and cultures in all aspects of life.

### **Respect and dignity**

The principle confronts the negative attitudes, stereotypes, and discrimination that many disabled people encounter. It emphasises that everyone deserves to be treated with respect, regardless of their abilities, and acknowledges that societal attitudes can be as significant a barrier as physical accessibility issues.

## **The Treaty of Waitangi (te Tiriti o Waitangi)**

This principle acknowledges that the Treaty establishes the relationship between Māori and the Crown, recognising the unique position of Māori as tāngata whenua, and ensuring partnership, participation and protection for tāngata whaikaha Māori.

You are invited to give feedback on the proposed principles for the strategy.

### **Questions**

- How important is each of the following principles?
- Is there anything you would want to add or remove from the list of principles for the strategy?
- Do you have any further comments or suggestions on the proposed principles?

## **Cross-cutting themes**

There are some key cross-cutting themes that emerge from the 5 priority outcome areas.

### **Accessibility**

The importance of accessibility is clear across all priority outcome areas. Accessibility can relate to physical access, for example to a building or transport; access to services such as education or health services; or access to information, including support for a person to make decisions that affect their life.

The working groups for all 5 priority outcome areas discussed issues about accessibility.

In education, a key issue is the ability of disabled students to access early childhood education, schooling or tertiary education. This can be the physical ability to get in and around buildings, the need for equipment to help students communicate, or the ability to learn and communicate in New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). It can also mean the teacher's time and knowledge to plan for diversity so disabled students have access to the curriculum.

In employment, access issues include the ability to access online information about jobs, having equipment that can enable a person to do a job, or the ability to get to a place of employment using public transport.

In housing, lack of accessible places to live is a key barrier to disabled people having secure, healthy, and comfortable homes where they can be part of their community.

An important aspect of accessibility is the ability to access government services. This includes "mainstream" services—those that are provided to most people in New Zealand, for example seeing your local GP, claiming a tax refund, taking a problem to the Tenancy Tribunal, or undertaking tertiary study. These services need to be available in forms that are accessible for disabled people.

At the same time, the need to access government services also includes services that are "disability-specific"—for example, the Total Mobility scheme, disability employment brokers, and access to NZSL interpreters.

In the youth and adult criminal justice systems, the lack of accessible information and appropriate and timely supports for disabled people can mean they are treated differently and unfairly.

## **Data**

The working groups for all 5 priority outcome areas discussed the need for better, more consistent, and more detailed data about disabled people in that area or sector. Better data provides an evidence base to understand how well services are working for disabled people, and how well disabled people can access services and participate in their communities.

There has been a significant improvement in the availability of survey data that allows us to compare outcomes for disabled people since the last New Zealand Disability Strategy. The challenge is that survey data cannot easily be broken down by disability and other demographics such as age, gender and ethnicity, to get a more detailed understanding of the diverse experiences of all disabled people. This makes it hard to develop well-tailored solutions.



There is also a lack of administrative data (data collected by organisations as part of their day-to-day business). This means there is a lack of information on how well services are meeting the needs of disabled people. Filling this administrative data gap is increasingly important and will provide opportunities for producing more disability information in areas where this is currently limited, including in the priority outcome areas of the new strategy.

The data that we do have makes clear that there is inequity of outcomes for disabled people, and for different groups of disabled people. In particular, outcomes are worse for tāngata whaikaha Māori in many aspects of life—this is discussed in more detail in the priority outcome areas. There is also inequity of outcomes for Pacific disabled people and for people with intellectual disabilities.

The working groups recommended better collection of data in education, health, housing, and justice.

## **Workforce**

Several working groups recommended actions relating to the government workforce—in education, health, and justice in particular. They saw a need for the workforces in these sectors to have a much better understanding of disability, and a commitment to the rights of disabled people to access services on an equal basis with other New Zealanders. If people working in these areas have a better understanding of disability, they are less likely to

make assumptions about disabled people's ability to make their own decisions, and more likely to have high expectations for their success. This will help prevent bias and discrimination and will help to overcome barriers to access.

The working groups also recommended action is taken to increase the number of disabled people working in these areas. This will contribute to disabled leadership, to visibility and normalisation of disability, and to better services for disabled people.

**End of Part 3: Vision and principles for the strategy**