

Cabinet paper:

Approval of the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026 to 2030



Published: January 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.



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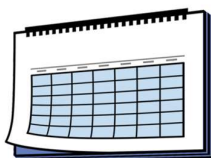
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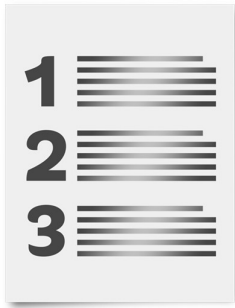


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About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is a **summary** of a **Cabinet paper** from November 2025.



Here a **summary**:

- is shorter than the Cabinet paper
- tells you the main ideas.



A **Cabinet paper** is a document:

- from a **Minister**
- asking **Cabinet** to agree to something.



A **Minister** is an important person who works in the Government.

They are in charge of something the Government does like:

- education
- transport.



Cabinet is a group of the most important ministers.

They make important decisions together.



This Cabinet paper is from the **Minister for Disability Issues**.



The **Minister for Disability Issues** is the person who the Government has put in charge of making things better for disabled people.



The Minister for Disability Issues is Louise Upston.



The **Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha** wrote this summary.



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

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

- the Government
- the community
- businesses.

In this Easy Read we call Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha by the name **Whaikaha**.



This Easy Read Cabinet paper asks Cabinet to approve / agree to the final **New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026 – 2030**.



The **New Zealand Disability Strategy** tells the Government how to make things better for disabled people in Aotearoa New Zealand.



In this Easy Read we call the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026 to 2030 the **Strategy**.



Here a **strategy** is set of long term plans that are made to reach a **goal**.



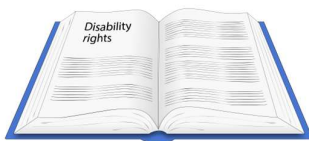
A **goal** is something we want to make happen.



This Cabinet paper also says how the Government is following the **recommendations** made by the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** Committee.



Here **recommendations** are ways to make something better.



The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** is an agreement lots of countries have made.



It is also called the **UNCRPD**.

It says what governments must do to make sure disabled people get the same **rights** as everyone else.

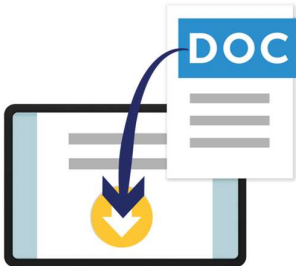


Rights are things that everyone should:

- have
- be able to do.



An example of a right is the right to get married to the person you choose.



You can find the full Cabinet paper at:

<https://shorturl.at/j6idi>



The full Cabinet paper is under the heading **Approval of the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026 – 2030.**



The full Cabinet paper is **not** in Easy Read.



You can find out more information about the final Strategy 2026 – 2030 at this **website**:

<https://shorturl.at/CCvma>

How the new Strategy was made



11 workshops were held about the Strategy where things were talked about like what the:



- **vision** will be for the Strategy
- **principles** will be for the Strategy.



Here **vision** means ideas about what things should be like.



Here **principles** are ideas / beliefs that tell us:

- what we should do
- how we should do things.



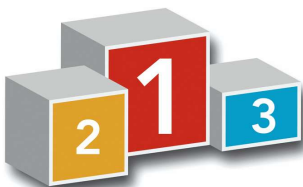
People at the workshops were from communities like:

- disability community groups
- tāngata whaikaha Māori / Māori disabled people.



The new Strategy has 5 **priority outcome areas**:

- education
- employment
- health
- housing
- justice.

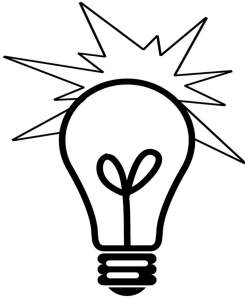


Here **priority outcome areas** are the things that are most important to work on in the Strategy.



Working groups:

- had meetings between April and June 2025
- and
- worked out what they thought would be the best work to do in the 5 priority outcome areas.



Here **working groups** are the different groups of people who worked together to think about what should be in the Strategy.



Members on the working groups were:

- disabled people
- people who worked at government agencies
- people who know a lot about an outcome area.



When the Working Groups decided what they thought should be in the draft Strategy they told the:

- **Ministerial Disability Leadership Group**
- Minister of Justice.





The **Ministerial Disability**

Leadership Group is a group of Ministers:

- who lead change for disabled people
- work with different parts of the Government to decide what work should be done to follow the Strategy.

These ministers then decided what should be in the **draft** New Zealand Disability Strategy.

A **draft** is the first version of something like a document.



A draft New Zealand Disability Strategy was made for **consultation** with the:

- disability community
- public.



Here **consultation** means asking people what they think about the draft New Zealand Disability Strategy.



The draft Strategy was agreed to by the Ministerial Disability Leadership Group.

About the public consultation



Whaikaha held public consultation about the draft Strategy between 19 August and 28 September 2025.



We received 560:

- responses / answers

and

- **submissions.**



Here **submissions** are when people told us what they thought about the draft Strategy.

About 900 people went to the
47 consultation meetings held by:

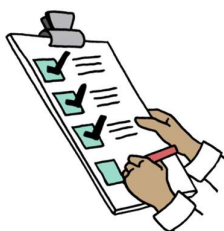


- Whaikaha
- other groups.



Many people told us they supported
the aims of the draft Strategy like the:

- vision
- principles
- actions in the outcome areas.



People also said they were worried
the goals in the Strategy might not be
met.



Many people also want the Strategy to sort out **barriers** making life hard for disabled people.



Barriers are things that stop you doing something.

Barriers can be things like:

- only having stairs to get into a building
- disabled people not being able to use public transport.



People said there are big barriers to sort out in the system like:

- **discrimination**
- problems with **accessibility**.





Discrimination is when people are treated unfairly because of things like:

- how old they are
- if they are disabled.



Here **accessibility** is about disabled people having what they need to be able to:

- use something
- do something.



People also said:

- more funding is needed to support the work in the Strategy
- people need to be held responsible if they do not do the right thing for disabled people
- big changes are needed to be made to:
 - services
 - systems like the health system.



People said that it was very important to have the **Enabling Good Lives** principles in the Strategy.



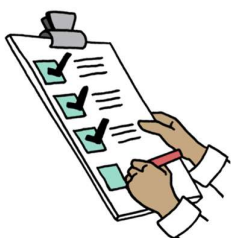
Enabling Good Lives is a different way of thinking about disability support.

Enabling Good Lives is about having:

- choice in your life
- control in your life
- the support you:
 - need
 - want
- a good life.



Enabling Good Lives is a main part of the final Strategy to make things better for disabled people.

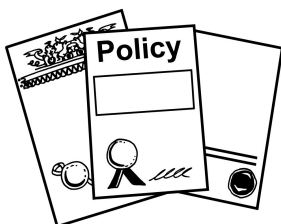


Changes were made in the final Strategy if they could be made.



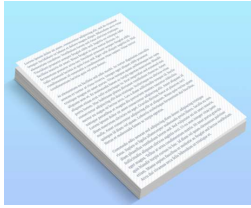
Changes were made if they followed Government:

- priorities
- **policies.**



Here **policies** are like a set of rules to guide the Government when they are making decisions.





This Cabinet paper acknowledges / accepts that the Strategy does not:



- sort out every problem for disabled people
- take away every barrier for disabled people.



There is other work happening that:

- is not in the Strategy

and



- will help make life better for disabled people.

Important things in the new Strategy



The work to follow the new Strategy is guided by its:

- vision
- and
- principles.



The new Strategy will support work to make life better for disabled people by places like:

- the Government
- local government like councils
- organisations that are not part of the government
- community organisations.





The vision of the Strategy is:

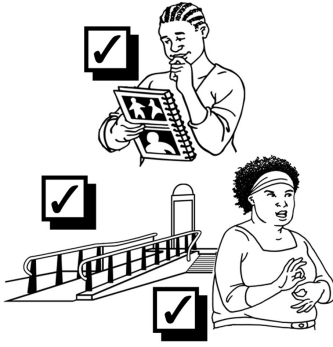
New Zealand is an **equitable** and **accessible** place for all disabled people and their whānau – where disabled people **thrive, contribute,** and **choose the lives they want to lead.**



Here **equitable** means Aotearoa New Zealand is a place where we understand that every person:

- is different
- may need different support to be able to do the same things as others.





Here **accessible** is when something can be used by everybody.



Here **thrive** means disabled people can:

- live good lives
- do the things they want to do.



Here **contribute** means disabled people:

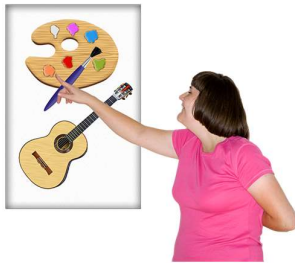
- can be part of their **communities**
- speak up about things that are important to them
- are listened to
- can make changes so life is better for all disabled people.





Communities are groups of people who have something the same about them like:

- living in the same place
- being disabled
- having the same hobbies / interests.



Here **choose the lives they want to lead** means disabled people can make choices about what happens in their lives.



The new Strategy has 5 principles.



1. Accessibility

This principle says accessibility means disabled people can be:

- part of everyday life
- included.

Everyone should think about accessibility from the start of making a new:

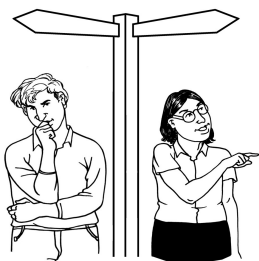
- environment like a:
 - building
 - park
- service like a:
 - shop
 - website.

This makes life better for everyone.



2. Self-determination

Here **self-determination** means that everyone can make decisions about their life.



This principle says disabled people have the same right as other people to make decisions about their lives.



Disabled people should be able to use **supported decision-making** if they want to.



Supported decision-making is when a disabled person is supported to make decisions about their own life.



This principle says the idea of **nothing about us without us** is important.

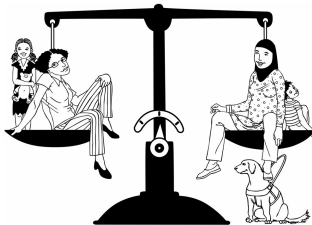


Nothing about us without us means disabled people should be part of making decisions about disabled people.



Disabled people know the most about what life is like for them.

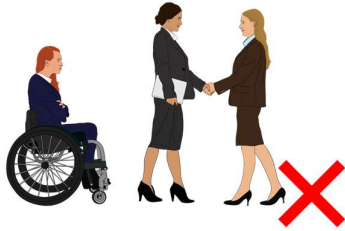
3. Upholding equity and culture and identity



This principle is about:

- equity
- non-discrimination
- inclusion.





Here **non-discrimination** means treating everyone in a fair way.



Here **inclusion** means everyone can be part of their communities.



This principle says disabled people are part of many different:

- whānau / families
- communities
- **cultures.**





Culture is a way of:

- thinking that a group shares
- doing things as a group.

There are many different cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand like:

- Māori culture
- Deaf culture.

The different groups disabled people are part of have their own:

- things that are important to them
- ways of:
 - thinking about who they are
 - doing things.



This principle says the different things that make a person who they are should not make life harder for them.



4. Participation and inclusion

This principle says that disabled people have the right to be part of their:



- communities
- cultures.



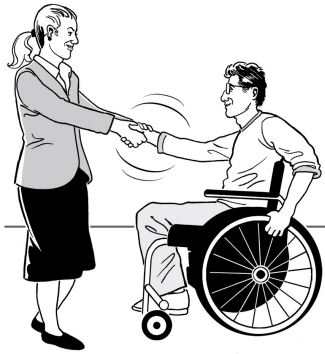
Disabled people have this right in all parts of their lives.



Everyone needs to support disabled people to be part of their:



- communities
- cultures.



5. Respect and dignity

Here **respect** means:

- being kind to people
- believing disabled people can make decisions about their own lives.



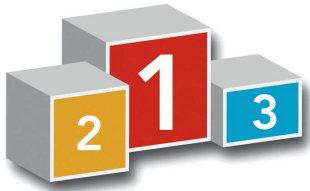
Here **dignity** means treating people with respect.



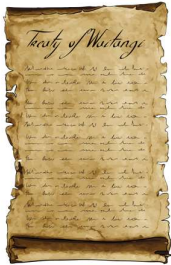
This principle says disabled people do best when:

- we get rid of the things that make life harder for them
- everyone believes disabled people:
 - can do the things they want to do
 - are important members of their communities.





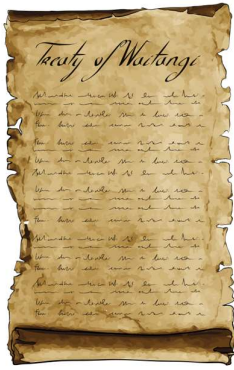
There are 3 important things that make up the Strategy.



These 3 things are the:

- **Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi**
- UNCRPD
- Enabling Good Lives principles.





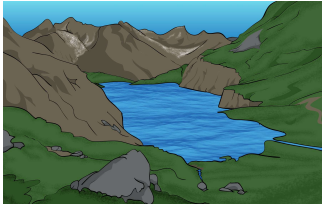
The Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi is an important agreement between:

- Māori
- and
- the Crown.

The purpose of the Treaty is to:

- protect Māori:
 - rights
 - taonga
- keep peace and order
- set up Government.

The Crown means the New Zealand Government.



Taonga means treasures like:

- land / rivers
- te reo Māori / Māori language
- objects like
pounamu / greenstone
- traditional food growing places
- spiritual ideas
- ways of life.

Peace and order means everyone follows the rules / laws.



There are 5 outcome areas in the Strategy.



Each outcome area:

- has a goal
- says what success will look like
- says why change is needed
- says what actions are needed to get the work done.

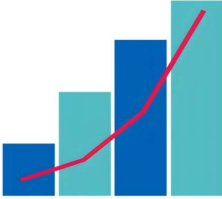


The actions for this work will be done over the next 5 years.



The actions are about:

- making things accessible
- getting better data / information about disabled people
- building a **workforce** that know how to support disabled people.



Here **workforce** are people working at places that support disabled people like at government agencies.



The actions in the Strategy also work on the 63 recommendations made by the UNCRPD Committee in 2022.



Cabinet said they would think about 17 of the UNCRPD Committee recommendations when making the new Strategy.



Work has started on 16 of these recommendations:

- 14 through work in the Strategy actions
- 2 through other work.



This means 46 out of the 63 recommendations from the UNCRPD Committee are now being worked on.



Read about these in Cabinet paper **Appendix 3 – Update on Government response to the UNCRPD Recommendations** at this website:

<https://shorturl.at/j6idi>



Here an **appendix** is extra information you need to know about something.

When the work will start



In 2026 Whaikaha will work with other government agencies on a plan to get the actions done in the Strategy.



The Ministerial Disability Leadership Group will oversee / watch how the work for the new Strategy is being done.



Whaikaha has made ways to **monitor** data / information about things in the Strategy like its:

- vision
- principles
- outcome areas.





Here **monitor** is to watch something to find out how well it is doing.



The monitoring will work to find out what:

- the main **indicators** are
- things need to be done to make the changes happen to follow the Strategy.



Here **indicators** mean information that shows how something is going.



This information will be put in an **online data dashboard** to track how well the Strategy is being followed.



An **online data dashboard** is a tool on a website you can use to get clear information about something.



The Strategy will make things better for disabled people over time.

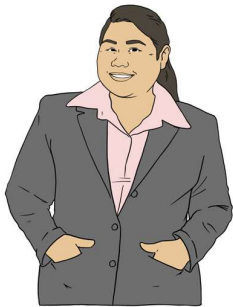
Decisions made by Cabinet



On the 19 November 2025 the Cabinet Social Outcomes Committee made 5 important decisions.



1. Cabinet approved / agreed the Strategy could be released in early December 2025.



2. Cabinet approved / agreed:

- the Ministerial Disability Leadership Group will oversee / watch how the work for the Strategy is being done
- Whaikaha will work with the government agencies doing work to follow the Strategy.





3. Cabinet said Appendix 3 to this Cabinet paper will have:

- an update on progress about the recommendations made by the UNCRPD Committee in 2022
- say how the recommendations have been thought about when making the Strategy.

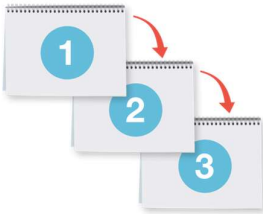


4. Cabinet asked the Minister for Disability Issues to report back about how the work is going to follow the UNCRPD recommendations by March 2027.



5. Cabinet asked the Minister for Disability Issues along with the Ministerial Disability Leadership Group to report back by March 2027 about:

- how the work is going on the actions of the Strategy
- the next steps to get the actions done by 2030





This information has been written by 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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