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New Disability Strategy drives change

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Blind Low Vision NZ, Auckland

Transcriber's Note: The image at the top of the page shows the Coat of Arms of New Zealand, with a detailed description provided in the alt text.

New Disability Strategy drives change

Hon Louise Upston

Minister for Disability Issues

Minister for Disability Issues Louise Upston says a new action-focused disability strategy will be a lever to drive positive change.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026-2030

released today includes a refreshed vision and principles to guide work affecting the lives of disabled people. It also features goals and actions in education, employment, health, housing and justice.

"This strategy shows what the Government will do over the next five years through meaningful, measurable actions to improve the lives of disabled people," Louise Upston says.

"This is our country's third disability strategy. While much has already been achieved, disabled people still face barriers preventing them from thriving and leading full lives.

"Today's strategy is an important—but not the only—lever for driving positive change for the disabled community.

"I look forward to seeing improvements in the lives of disabled people, their family and whānau as its actions are implemented."

In employment, the strategy includes actions to assist disabled people to have meaningful work and careers. They include providing employers with resources and guidance, and the expectation government departments will lead by example.

In health, it emphasises making the system more accessible and inclusive, and normalising tools for self-determination and supported decision-making.

In housing, the Government will develop and consult on clear definitions for what makes a home accessible. There will also be a review of the social housing system to help it better meet the needs of disabled people.

In justice, actions include early intervention to reduce the number of disabled children and young people entering the youth justice system and developing a framework to safeguard disabled people in long-term detention and DSS funded residential facilities.

In education, early intervention to identify children's learning needs sooner are highlighted, as well as finding new ways to reduce wait times for specialist learning support.

As part of its own strategic intentions, the Ministry of Disabled People—Whaikaha is working to improve accessibility for disabled people.

The new strategy will also assist in progressing 14 of the 17 remaining recommendations, made by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, that the Government agreed to consider through the refresh of the strategy. A further two of these recommendations will be progressed through work outside the strategy.

Of the 63 recommendations made by the UN Committee in 2022, 46 are now being progressed by work already underway or will be implemented through the strategy.

Whaikaha will report annually to Parliament on progress against the strategy and will be measuring its impact.

End of New Disability Strategy drives change.