

# Whaikaha Community Newsletter December 2022

A word from Paula

Kia ora and welcome to our very first newsletter as Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People. It felt fitting that I should kick off our community newsletters with a word from me in my new role as Chief Executive.

I cannot believe that the new Ministry is now almost 6 months old and I’ve been in the role for 3 months. So much has happened in such a short time. For me, it's been exhilarating to take the reins and meet so many good people, working hard for our community.

Since 1 July, the Whaikaha team has continued to focus on ensuring the smooth transfer of disability support services from Manatu Hauora, Ministry of Health for the approximately 43,000 disabled people receiving support on any given day. We have been busy preparing a response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) feedback after a delegation from Whaikaha attended the meeting in Geneva in August as well as working through the many offers of help from across Government agencies.

We have been working on growing our website and social media presence to deliver better, accessible information to all our audiences and held our first live community Question and Answer Zoom session with over 300 registrations in November. We have begun our recruitment for permanent members of staff with even more momentum ahead early in the new year.

Change is in the air, and we are rapidly growing our capacity and capability to purposefully help improve outcomes for disabled people, tangata whaikaha Māori and their whānau, as we gear up for a very busy 2023.

From next year, we will begin the work towards implementing the Enabling Good Lives approach to disability support services on a national scale. This work will be done in partnership with the disability community and Māori. We know this is something our community is passionate about, and we are determined to take the time needed to work in partnership, so we do this the right way. It is a huge opportunity to improve lives and create a better, more independent future for all disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau.

There is a lot of work to do, and we are already making progress. I am excited to be leading a talented and motivated team of people and working in partnership with our community to drive this transformation.

On a final note, I wanted to personally wish you all a happy and safe festive season. We all deserve a calm end to this busy year. COVID continued to make life challenging in 2022, particularly for our community so please stay safe and celebrate in a way that feels right to you. I for one am looking forward to spending time with my whānau. Take care and here’s to a settled start to 2023.

Ngā mihi nui

Paula Tesoriero MNZM
Te Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive
Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People

## Live zoom sessions with Whaikaha

As mentioned, in November we kicked off our monthly open Question and Answer sessions via Zoom. We plan to hold these sessions on a regular basis and will be inviting guest speakers from across the community and sector as well as key Whaikaha staff. Updated information on the next session will be posted on our website as well as on our Facebook page so if you haven’t already started following us or subscribing to our newsletter, now is the time to sign up! We will also be posting the questions and answers on our website after the events.

Please email us at Contact@whaikaha.govt.nz to be added to our community newsletter list.

If you missed our first Zoom session, please head to our [website news section](https://whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/news/) (<https://tinyurl.com/y3b27hd8> or <https://whaikaha.govt.nz/about-us/news/>) for a recording of the session.

### Visit us at Whaikaha.govt.nz

Since we launched our website [Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/) (<https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/>) in July we have added a lot more information about what we are doing, how to access supports, news updates and who we are as a new Ministry. Our focus is on accessibility and because the site is a 'living project', designed and built-in collaboration with members of our disabled community, we are committed to continually asking:

* how can we make our website better?
* how can we make it easier for you to access what you need?

If you are unable to find the information you need or have suggestions on how we can make our website better, we encourage you get in touch: [Contact us | Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People](https://whaikaha.govt.nz/contact-us/) <https://whaikaha.govt.nz/contact-us/>)

### Want to have your say?

“Nothing about us, without us” is a core ethos of our Ministry and there are a range of ways for you to stay connected, have your say and keep up to date.

Your feedback, experiences and insights can truly help transform how our government supports our disabled community.

### We'd love for you to get involved!

**Phone**: Freephone 0800 566 601. Our phones are managed by staff who can answer most questions or connect you with the right person to answer any complex ones. You can also leave us a message if you prefer.

**Text**: Send us a message to [4206](http://sms:4206) we will get back to you within 24 hours during working hours.

**Reply Paid (Freepost)**: Write to us without a stamp at: Reply Paid 262204, PO Box 1556, Wellington and we will get your letters to the right person at our Ministry.

**Email:** Send us a message at contact@whaikaha.govt.nz or for our NZSL community, a video to our email address. A translator will be able to connect you with the answers you are looking for.

**Facebook**: Join our [Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People Facebook external URL](https://m.facebook.com/whaikaha.govt) (<https://m.facebook.com/whaikaha.govt> page and start being part of the conversation.

**LinkedIn**: Follow us on [Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People: Overview | LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/whaikaha-ministry-of-disabled-people/) (<https://tinyurl.com/2dvefjk3>)

**COVID-19 disability helpline**: Call free on 0800 11 12 13 or text 8988Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and run by our partners at the Ministry of Health. For help or information about vaccines, testing, face mask exemptions, and managing COVID-19 at home.

## Come and work with us

As we build up Whaikaha, early in 2023 we expect to be advertising for a range of positions across the Ministry.

Vacancies will be listed on this website – <https://jobs.msd.govt.nz/go/Whaikaha/9001500/> (<https://tinyurl.com/yc3zyhk3>)

We’re also working on the accessibility of the Careers site’s experience so if you have any challenges accessing this site, please let us know and we will be happy to help you contact@whaikaha.govt.nz

## Happy new year

And that’s all from us for now! Happy new year to all our community and a big thank you to all of you across the sector who have worked so hard in 2022. We will aim to send the next newsletter out early in 2023.

Ngā mihi nui

All the team at Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People