# Whaikaha October 2023 Community Update

Kia ora koutou katoa. Welcome to our latest community update. My name is Josh, and I am part of the Whaikaha team. I am brown skinned Samoan male, age 30, black beard with streaks of white running through it, I have very short fade cut black hair, and wearing black framed glasses today. As well as this video with captions available, we will provide a transcript on our website along with a copy which will have links to anything that is mentioned here today.

Alternative formats will be added to the website as soon as they are available. So, let's kick in and share what's been happening. First up, we have some important Whaikaha news for you.

The Office for Disability Issues or ODI, was integrated into Whaikaha on 1st of August 2023. The people from the ODI team are continuing their important mahi as part of the policy, strategy, and partnership group within Whaikaha, including partnering on the New Zealand Disability Strategy and Action Plan, interagency advice based on the UNCRPD, and advice for the Minister for Disability Issues.

The New Zealand Sign Language Board and the team supporting them remains the same.

Whaikaha has been leading the coordination of the Government response to the recommendations from the UNCRPD. The committee examined New Zealand in September 2022 and provided 60 recommendations. Since then, Whaikaha has been working with relevant government agencies to respond to the recommendations, and the Government has now agreed to implement 51 of the 60 recommendations.

The next step is for the Minister for Disability Issues to report back to Cabinet on agencies' implementation progress and to seek Cabinet agreement to a monitoring process. This will include the ways recommendations which have not been agreed to can also be monitored.

The Government has also agreed to hold a public forum with the disability community by December 2027. This provides an opportunity halfway through implementation to ensure that progress is being made.

My Home My Choice launched this year as part of the Whaikaha system transformation. It focuses on the work needed to transform the way people in residential services are assisted so they have more choice and control in their lives. This includes supporting disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori to have opportunities for learning, working, having somewhere to call home, and fully participating in their community.

The programme has now appointed its steering group and they have held their first meeting. The group is made up of seven representatives from the community and Sir Robert Martin and Gary Williams will provide leadership as patrons. The programme is in very early stages, but there will be opportunities for the wider community to provide feedback soon.

In September 2023, the Government announced that Whaikaha had secured funding of $73.7 million over the next four years, and $40.5 million each year in the following years to continue the transformation of the disability system in line with the Enabling Good Lives approach. A Transformation Management Office is being established in Whaikaha to oversee the system transformation initiatives.

It will report to our tripartite Transformation Management Board which will provide governance on the initiatives of disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori working alongside Whaikaha executive leaders. We will be inviting expressions of interest to join our Transformation Management Board very soon.

Once appointed, board members will primarily provide advice to support the implementation of transformation initiatives funded through the Budget 2022 contingency. Members will be paid and travel may be needed. There will be more information including what is involved and how to apply on our website and social media channels very soon.

Ever thought about joining the Whaikaha team? Over the coming months, we will be looking for a number of people to join our team and help shape the future of disability services in Aotearoa. All vacancies will be listed on our website and we welcome applications from disabled people or those who have lived experience of disability through whānau or community involvement.

Next up, we have some important community information.

As you may know, voting for the 2023 election started on Monday 2nd of October and finishes at 7pm on Saturday 14th of October. The Electoral Commission website has lots of helpful information with alternate formats on how to vote and how you can access help to vote if needed. This includes things like assistance from a support person, telephone dictation or services for people who can't get to a voting place due to health or mobility reasons.

If you would prefer to speak to someone about voting assistance, you can call 0800 36 76 56. If you are tuning in to the Debates or watching election night coverage on TVNZ1, live captioning will be provided by Able. Whaikaha is proud to support the partnership between TVNZ and Deaf Aotearoa to have live NZSL interpreted versions of the TVNZ1 debates too.

This includes the final one on the 12th of October at 7pm, which will be broadcast live on Kordia channel 200. The signed Debates will also be available to view on TVNZ Plus after the broadcast.

More people now have access to the COVID 19 antiviral treatment. As of 1st of October 2023, Pharmac has expanded access to people who are vulnerable to severe illness following COVID 19 infection, including disabled people and people with one or more severe health conditions that have resulted in severe frailty or vulnerability.

The changes reflect feedback received from patients and carers, health practitioners and Whaikaha in response to a Pharmac consultation that finished in August. We will share another update soon. In the meantime, if you have any feedback for us, check out the contact us section of our website for ways to get in touch.

Mā te wā.