

# 2023

## Pūrongo ā-tau | Annual Report



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government



**Whaikaha**  
Ministry of  
Disabled People



Scan  
for NZSL  
name



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Me he aka rātā ka tipu tahi  
ka puāwai tahi kia tū kaha i  
ngā hihi o Tamanuiterā.

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Like the rātā vines growing  
together and flourishing to  
stand strong in the warmth  
of the sun.



# Purpose

## of this Annual Report

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Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People (Whaikaha) was established on 1 July 2022 as a Departmental Agency hosted by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

This Annual Report provides information on the services, activities and achievements of Whaikaha during the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

The financial reporting and performance measures for Whaikaha are contained in the 2023 MSD Annual Report, as the host agency, and can be found on the MSD website at [www.msd.govt.nz](http://www.msd.govt.nz).

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# Chief Executive

## foreword

Whakarongo mai

Whakarongo mai

Whakarongo mai

Ki te reo Rangatira

Ki te reo Ingarihi

Ki te reo rotarota

He puna wai, he puna kai, he puna reo, he puna ora, ita-a-ita

Nō reira, e ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā iwi katoa o te ao whānui -  
tēnā koutou katoa

Nau mai haere mai ki te rīpoata-ā-tau mō Whaikaha.

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Listen with your ears

Listen with your eyes

Listen with your heart

To the Māori language

To the English language


To the Sign language

A water spring, a bountiful spring, a language spring, a life spring –  
hold fast together.

Accordingly, prestigious people of every nation, tribe and language,  
I greet you all.

Welcome, welcome to our Whaikaha annual report.






Established on 1 July 2022, Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People is the first in the world of its kind. It is a privilege to lead this young organisation that holds so much promise for our community’s future. I would like to thank our community – disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, their representative organisations, and whānau who advocated for our establishment and now continue to guide us and hold us to account.

Together with disabled people and allies supporting the community, we work to achieve a non-disabling society in Aotearoa New Zealand. We are working with government agencies and others to identify and remove systemic barriers to participation and contribution, and ensuring that disabled people and their whānau get the assistance they require to live a good life.

Whaikaha and all our mahi is underpinned by our three pou: Aotearoa New Zealand’s commitments under Te Tiriti o Waitangi; the Enabling Good Lives vision and principles; and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Our work is important to progressing the rights and opportunities of disabled New Zealanders, tāngata whaikaha Māori, and their whānau. We do this through:

1. Commissioning \$2.07 billion of disability supports (see page 199 in the MSD 2023 Annual Report) for approximately 45,000 disabled New Zealanders with a clear mandate to transform the supports funded, based on the Enabling Good Lives principles and approach.
2. Our stewardship role to help other agencies remove barriers and improve outcomes for tāngata whaikaha Māori, disabled people and their whānau.
3. Effective engagement and partnering with disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori in our strategic planning, policy development, service design and development, stewardship functions and disability system transformation.



The first year of Whaikaha has been a year of establishment and progress as well as responding to several challenges, some of those unique to Whaikaha and some experienced by other agencies. Throughout the year we responded to the ongoing impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic and significant weather events which continue to affect the community we serve.

I am proud of what Whaikaha has achieved and we accept the challenge from the community we serve to build on early successes and achieve even more.

From the first day of our establishment, Whaikaha has ensured the ongoing availability of the supports we commission and fund. Around 45,000 disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau receive support via our provider network or directly through our Enabling Good Lives sites. We acknowledge the kaimahi who worked carefully in the initial establishment of Whaikaha to ensure the supports funded and commissioned, and provided, by Whaikaha were maintained without disruption.

Whaikaha has valued the contribution of our provider network, non-government organisations and our cross-government colleagues who have continued to work alongside and support us.

This year we have laid solid foundations, and I look forward to continuing our partnership with disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori as we advance the transformation of the disability support system, steward further changes across government and improve outcomes for our community.

Nāku noa, nā



Paula Tesoriero MNZM  
Te Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive



**Whaikaha:**

**Who  
we serve**

**Article 1 of the UNCRPD states that for the purpose of progressing the Convention, persons with disabilities** “include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

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The experience of disability is influenced by the nature of a person's impairment. Gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status and culture can also have a profound, and sometimes compounding, effect on an individual's experience of disability. Disabled people are part of the vast and diverse human experience. Just as we accept and respect differences like gender, ethnicity, language or belief, the difference and diversity of disabled people needs to be understood, acknowledged and celebrated.

The Government's *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026* states that:

- “We must continue to acknowledge and respect the diversity within the disability community and recognise the value it adds to the community.”
- “Many disabled children and adults still face some barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential. If these barriers are not dismantled and removed, then all of us miss out. We will not prosper if disabled people are not able to participate in and contribute to our communities on an equal basis with others.”

The prevalence of disability is proportionally higher among Māori and Pacific people. The Appendix attached to this report provides further information about the diversity of the disability community and the barriers experienced.

**Whaikaha:**

**Who  
we are  
and what  
we do**

## **Whaikaha was established as a Departmental Agency on 1 July 2022.**

With its establishment, disabled people now have a dedicated agency committed to progressing the rights and opportunities of disabled people underpinned by the whole-of-life and social model of disability.

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“Even if we have the same impairment as someone else, we will experience different opportunities and barriers because of where we live and how we are treated by those around us. The time and context in our lives when we may acquire our impairment(s) also informs what barriers or opportunities we may experience. This is the social model of disability ....” (*New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026*).

Whaikaha brought together the functions and people from the Disability Directorate in Manatū Hauora, the Office for Disability Issues (administered by MSD), and the Enabling Good Lives sites in Christchurch, Waikato, and MidCentral (Mana Whaikaha) (administered by MSD and the Disability Directorate).

Most of the funded supports for disabled people previously commissioned through Manatū Hauora, Ministry of Health are now commissioned through Whaikaha.

A Shared Services hosting arrangement with MSD enables Whaikaha to access MSD’s administrative systems, services and infrastructure. Whaikaha maintains a relationship with Manatū Hauora and Te Whatu Ora in order to maintain access to data and records and for administration of payments.

Whaikaha is focused on creating an inclusive and accessible Aotearoa New Zealand, recognising the importance of involving people from the disabled community in decision making which affects their lives.



Whaikaha, as expected by the disability community, is committed to inclusive employment policies and practices that remove barriers for disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori to work within Whaikaha at all levels of the organisation. Currently nearly 40 percent of our kaimahi identify as disabled with further work to implement our new structure this will increase. Many of our people are family members and whānau of disabled people or have other links to the community. Whaikaha has also built on close relationships with disability community groups and organisations to inform and guide its work.

## Our people

As of 30 June 2023, Whaikaha had 175 kaimahi. They represent the following communities:

- Disability: 36 percent as disabled.
- Gender:
  - 67 percent female
  - 32 percent male
  - 1 percent non-binary.
- Acknowledging intersectionality, our kaimahi have identified to being members of the following communities:
  - 80 percent as European
  - 19 percent as Māori
  - 7 percent as Pacific peoples
  - 8 percent as Asian
  - 2 percent as Middle Eastern/Latin American/African
  - 9 percent as other.

## Gender pay gap

As of 30 June 2023, Whaikaha had a gender pay gap of 12.3 percent. This is a reduction of the gender pay gap that Whaikaha reported as being 14.1 percent at 31 March 2023.

Whaikaha is continuing to better understand the drivers of the gender pay gap and working to address them in accordance with the *Kia Toipoto – Public Service Pay Gaps Action Plan 2021–24* mahi.

## Organisational structure

On 1 July 2022 employees transferred from Manatū Hauora and MSD. Whaikaha had a disproportionate number of staff in fixed term roles, on secondment from other organisations, and inherited vacancies.

Establishment activities at Whaikaha have continued, getting the right people for the right roles, developing our strategic intentions, prioritising our work programmes, establishing the processes and systems for continued improvement, confirming our organisational design and structures, developing the partnerships and relationships with disabled people and the disability community so that our work is effective, strongly tested and informed by the people we serve.

From 1 July 2022 Whaikaha has confirmed the key work programmes required to progress the strategic and operational expectations of the Government and the community. This has informed the development of a more fit-for-purpose organisational structure that was confirmed on 1 August 2023 which has enabled a more confident approach in our permanent recruitment to vacancies.

There are four groups within Whaikaha, reflecting our four key areas of work underpinned by our Te Tiriti o Waitangi relationship: People and Culture; Corporate Services; Commissioning Design and Delivery; and Policy, Strategy and Partnerships.



## Supporting Te Tiriti o Waitangi relationships

Underpinning all four areas of work is our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. A Kaihautū – Chief Advisor Māori role has been established within the Executive Leadership Team to lead and advise on the work of Whaikaha in supporting Crown relationships under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Whaikaha is committed to equity of access and outcomes for tāngata whaikaha Māori.

Twenty-six percent of Māori identify as disabled, meaning tāngata whaikaha Māori are overrepresented compared to the overall population. Whaikaha recognises most tāngata whaikaha Māori identify as Māori first.

As a Departmental Agency of the Crown, Whaikaha is committed to honouring its obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, supporting and enabling Māori, whānau, hapū, iwi, and communities, so that tāngata whaikaha Māori me ō rātou whānau realise their aspirations. This will include embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi into the way Whaikaha works with and for Māori.

## People and Culture

This group is responsible for how we work, and the people practices that shape our culture. Importantly, the initial focus is on helping ensure we are the exemplar in recruiting and retaining disabled people. This mahi will include working across government, being the predominant group supporting the Whaikaha sponsor leading the Papa Pounamu Disability Pou. Papa Pounamu sets the diversity and inclusion work programme for the wider Public Service.



## Corporate Services

This group includes the Ministerial and Executive Services function, Communication and Engagement support (including developing community engagement activities in partnership with community organisations), and Finance services (supported by MSD's People and Capability group under the Shared Services hosting arrangement).

## Commissioning, Design and Delivery

This group is responsible for commissioning, designing, and funding and supporting the delivery of about \$2.07 billion annually of supports appropriated to Whaikaha in 2022/23 through Vote Social Development. This funding supports approximately 45,000 people and their whānau, as well as equipment and aids for about 100,000 disabled people.

The three Enabling Good Lives sites in Christchurch, Waikato, and Mana Whaikaha are also located within this group. In 2022/23 there were ninety people working across these locations, with approximately 4,500 disabled people accessing support through them.

## Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

This group leads the following elements of the Whaikaha work programme:

- strategic policy advice to Ministers on disability issues and options to address them
- monitoring and quality assuring the supports we commission within the disability support system



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- stewardship of disability related matters across government based on the UNCRPD and the principles of Enabling Good Lives
  - establishing and maintaining partnerships between Whaikaha and the community organisations that represent disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori
  - supporting the work of the New Zealand Sign Language Board
  - establishment of a Transformation Management Office to coordinate the transformation of the disability support system and a Transformation Board to govern this transformation work
  - stewardship of data and insights on disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori.

## **Types of support funded**

### **Disability supports and funding methods**

Generally, disabled people and their whānau, who are eligible for Whaikaha funded support, access their support through Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) organisations.

Disabled people receive funded support from Whaikaha through:

- Standard contracted arrangements
- Specialist supports
- Individualised Funding
- Choice in Community Living
- Carer Support
- Personal Budgets.

## **Standard contracted arrangements**

These supports are commissioned and funded by Whaikaha<sup>1</sup> and include:

- Facility-Based Supports, including residential support for people to live in a group home, alone where required, or in an aged residential care facility – especially where people have higher medical needs requiring hospital level care. There is also Facility Based Respite, which is short term relief support provided in a residential setting for eligible people.
- Home and Community Supports include a range of supports, assisting people to live in their community. This includes supported living, household management, and personal care.
- Community Day Services include Whaikaha funding day supports to enable disabled people to participate in their community through things such as social activities and daily living skills. MSD is the primary funder of Day Services.
- Disability Information and Advisory Services provide independent information and advice to people and their whānau.
- NASC organisations support people through allocating funding and advising on or co-ordinating supports for eligible people.

## **Specialist supports**

- Child Development Services provide specialised services to support tamariki to reach milestones.
- Equipment and Modification Services provide free or subsidised equipment and modifications to disabled people.

<sup>1</sup> Enabling Good Lives sites are delivered by Whaikaha.

- Behaviour Support Services provide people with access to specialists to set and support goals to assist them.

## **Individualised Funding**

Individualised Funding is a mechanism to purchase Household Management, Personal Care and Respite.

It is accessed through a NASC and allocated to a disabled person so they can organise their own support – in some cases including engaging care and support workers.

Individualised Funding was initially developed to increase flexibility and provide disabled people and their whānau with more choice and control over their support.


Enhanced Individualised Funding (EIF) was developed as a broader approach to flexibly support a disabled person's needs. Flexible Purchasing Guidelines were developed to support disabled people in how they use their funding with EIF.

Use of the flexible Purchasing Guidelines was extended to Individualised Funding and carer support during the COVID-19 response and continues to be available.

## **Choice in Community Living**

Choice in Community Living (CiCL) offers disabled people more control over where they live, who they live with and how they are supported. It is an alternative to residential services and is for people with high support needs.

CiCL is currently available in the Auckland, Waikato, Hutt Valley, Otago and Southland regions, testing a more person directed support option in preparation for system transformation.



CiCL is a type of hosted support based on a person's plan. Funding is managed by the disabled person and their family or whānau, in partnership with the person's chosen CiCL provider. The flexible Purchasing Guidelines are used to support a disabled person in how they use their funding.

### **Carer Support**

The disabled person is allocated Carer Support by a NASC. The disabled person or their whānau organises and pays for support needs to be delivered to the disabled person. They then claim the subsidy amount (currently \$80 a day) from Whaikaha.

### **Personal Budgets**

Person budgets are available in the Christchurch, Waikato and Mana Whaikaha Enabling Good Lives locations.

A personal budget is allocated to support people to achieve the outcomes outlined in the plan they have developed with their Kaitūhono/Connector. Funds can be deposited directly into a specific bank account for this purpose with some oversight by the Enabling Good Lives team. The disabled person may choose to have a host agency to help manage their personal budget.

## Family/whānau perspectives

We know there is much more work to be done. However, within the Enabling Good Lives sites we are noticing improved outcomes for disabled people and family/whānau, who have shared their experiences with us.

“A good life for my son looks like, I get to choose where I live. I get to choose who I live with.

I get to choose when I get up and when I go to bed (sometimes I miss the bus).

I get to choose what I have in my cupboard.

If an activity or support worker isn't working out I get to change it.

I get to have success and failures. I am able to feel safe at all times.

This required a lot of trial and effort, flexibility and funding. Information and advice. Support and supervision.


Many people don't know what a good life might look like, for some they know what it is not.

Beginning early and scaffolding helped. As did plenty of time and courage.

Our son had a good life before he left home. To watch him now making decisions, good or not so good, and the new opportunities, some by choice and others by default, is wonderful.

Yes it had and has challenges. For us and for him. He will need lifelong support and lots of it.

I sometimes worry about tomorrow but today is worth living, so we are giving it a go.”



“I wanted to reach out to thank you and the wonderful team. Nxxx, Jxxx, Rxxxx and Txxxx, have been life changing for my child. After all that went on from previous professionals involved. The damage as you know was huge.

These professional ladies and their care has blown me away. The world has opened up for my daughter. I cannot thank you enough.”

“For myself as for years it's just been me fighting tirelessly for my daughter. Trying to balance my own disability and my sons. It's made a huge difference in my life. It's not heavy now for me. I get to take on that supportive friend role now. It's feeling so good.

I'm so grateful that Monday morning you got my message to call me. You called with an instinct you needed too.

Thank you again.”




## Stewardship in action

While Whaikaha is responsible for the commissioning and funding of disability support services, it has a broader purpose to progress disabled people's rights and opportunities by:

- lifting the profile of disability and driving better outcomes for all disabled people, through the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026, the Disability Action Plan, the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy, and through progressing our implementation of the UNCRPD
- leading work on cross-government strategic policy, stewardship, and public sector capacity and capability building
- supporting government agencies to incorporate disability perspectives and needs into their work to meet their responsibilities to disabled people and whānau.

Whaikaha has engaged with other government agencies on a large number of work programmes to improve outcomes for disabled people, including:

- New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Board community engagement on the amendment of the New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006
- providing secretariat and programme support to the ministerially appointed NZSL Board and its strategy and work programmes to maintain and promote NZSL as an official language of Aotearoa
- continued work on the nominations data base - assisting other government agencies to access representation of disabled people on government boards and advisory committees

- 
- providing disability advice during the 2022/23 year to other government agencies, Ministers, and the community. Just over 200 Cabinet papers were reviewed by Whaikaha and responses were provided to over 580 requests for disability advice or assistance from other government agencies
  - joint stewardship of the Disability Action Plan with the Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO) Coalition – six monthly monitoring of progress of the Action Plan work programmes led by government agencies
  - publication of cross-government disability data relevant to the eight outcomes in the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026
  - support for the Education Review Office (ERO) evaluation and report *Thriving at school? Education of disabled learners in schools*
  - leading and co-ordinating the cross-government attendance at the United Nations examination of New Zealand's implementation of the UNCRPD
  - contribution of evidence to and participation in the Abuse in State Care - Royal Commission of Inquiry, and the Waitangi Tribunal Wai 2575 Health Services and Outcomes Inquiry.





## **In partnership with the community**

The international catch cry of disabled people is, 'Nothing about us without us.'

As outlined in the Cabinet papers that established Whaikaha, we have been working to develop strong and community-led engagement and partnership with disabled people, and tāngata whaikaha Māori. This gives full effect to Article 4.3 obligations of the UNCRPD and ensures that disabled people are involved in decision making that impacts them.

This is even more important for disabled people who have experienced a long history of the development and provision of services and approaches that denied disabled people's choice and control over the services funded and provided.

In its first year Whaikaha sought to bring together the diversity of views within the disability community to inform the design of disability system transformation and to build a work programme for the future.

To ensure  
our first  
year was  
successful  
we prioritised  
our mahi by  
the following  
work streams



## **Establishment**

- Designing an organisational structure, systems, processes and policies to ensure Whaikaha can deliver its system stewardship functions and transform the disability support system. The organisational structure was confirmed on 1 August 2023.

## **Continuity**

- Promoting the rights of disabled people including responding to almost 2,000 requests for disability advice from the public, other government agencies and the Minister for Disability Issues.
- Providing stewardship of the Disability Action Plan.
- Progressing the flexible approach to Carer Support and Individualised Funding, including the ability to pay family members to provide support.
- Maintaining the provision of \$2.07 billion of support through our network of contracted disability providers for approximately 45,000 disabled New Zealanders requiring daily access to those supports.

## **Stewardship**

- Supporting the Minister for Disability Issues and preparing the small team of officials from across government for the examination by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the UN Committee) of New Zealand's implementation of the UNCRPD. This work has included co-ordinating the work across government as agencies have committed through a Cabinet process to progress 51 of the 60 Concluding Observations and Recommendations provided by the UN Committee.



## **Transformation**

- Developing the High and Complex Framework Strategy in response to the Ombudsman’s report *Oversight: An investigation into the Ministry of Health’s stewardship of hospital-level secure services for people with an intellectual disability, 2021* (2021 Oversight Report), which made a series of recommendations on improvements required in the compulsory care and rehabilitation of people with intellectual disability. It supports around 250 disabled people, who have committed serious offences and deemed to be a risk to themselves and others.
- Involving representatives of the disability community in the development of the business case to draw down a Budget 2022 contingency to progress the implementation of systems transformation based on the Enabling Good Lives principles and approaches.

## **Partnership**

- Working with the range of partnerships and groups on key pieces of work.
- Working with the community to confirm the long-term strategic partnership arrangements that will complement the partnership and voice approaches developed for specific work programmes and projects.



## **Detail on key projects progressed in 2022/23**

### **Enabling Good Lives**

Embedding the Enabling Good Lives approach across disability support services is a key component of the Whaikaha work programme.

Cabinet agreed to the national implementation of the Enabling Good Lives approach in October 2021.

The approach focuses on providing disabled people with more choice and control on how they are supported to live a good life. Developed by disabled people, families and whānau, the approach has been demonstrated in the Christchurch, Waikato and Mana Whaikaha Enabling Good Lives sites.

Evidence from these sites shows that disabled people report living better lives and having more choice and control over their lives.

Over 2022/23, approximately 4,500 people were supported in the Enabling Good Lives sites.

In Budget 2022, tagged contingency funding was set aside for the next stage of implementing the Enabling Good Lives approach nationally. A tagged contingency means that there are criteria that must be met before the funding can be drawn down and is available for spending. Disability community leadership groups supported Whaikaha to develop advice for Ministers to approve the contingency to be drawn down to begin the next stage of the transformation.

Advice on the most appropriate way to advance transformation of the disability support system was also developed with disability community leadership groups. The disability community will continue to be actively involved in system transformation.



## **Examination by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Whaikaha led the delegation on the examination on New Zealand's implementation of the UNCRPD by the UN Committee in August 2022.

Following the examination, New Zealand received sixty Concluding Observations with recommendations on how it could enhance implementation of the UNCRPD.


Whaikaha led a process with responsible agencies on responding to the recommendations and develop implementation plans for the observations by the end of 2023. 51 of the observations will be implemented, and nine have been noted. Cabinet has agreed to this overall response.

The observations are broad and cover the work of several government agencies. Whaikaha is investigating the most practical ways the implementation of the observations could be put into practice, and how to provide agencies with guidance on implementing specific observations relevant to their work.

## **High and Complex Framework**

The High and Complex Framework (Framework) provides a diversionary pathway for people with an intellectual disability who are engaged with the criminal justice system towards more appropriate supports with a strong rehabilitative focus. Around 200-250 disabled people, many of whom have committed serious offences, are supported through the Framework.

The commissioning responsibilities for the Framework transferred to Whaikaha on 1 July 2022.



The Ombudsman's 2021 Oversight Report identified that the current Framework does not always meet the needs of all care recipients. Living environment and infrastructure deficits, workforce shortages, and funding and capacity challenges are multi-causal and result in critical issues, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles are not well embedded into the approach.

Whaikaha has developed a work programme to address the key issues raised in the 2021 Ombudsman's investigation and in the wider Framework. Whaikaha released the High and Complex Framework Operational Strategy in August 2023 which is a strategic response to the Ombudsman's 2021 Oversight Report.

This Operational Strategy outlines the desired future state as shared with Whaikaha by those engaged with the Framework and describes the steps to take toward realising this vision.

Work is progressing with longer term initiatives with associated Cabinet papers across 2023/24.

## **My Home My Choice**

Approximately half of the Whaikaha non-departmental budget is spent on residential care. Around 7,700 disabled people currently live in residential care funded by Whaikaha. This includes disabled people aged under 65 years who are living in aged residential care facilities due to a lack of age-appropriate community-based options which can provide the higher levels of clinical support they need.

Whaikaha is developing the My Home My Choice programme to focus on transforming the way people in residential services are assisted so they have more choice and control in their lives. This includes developing options and alternatives for people who are considering entry into or exit out of residential care.

## **Collection of disability data**

The collection of reliable and valid data is important for disabled people as bearers of rights, and to understand their life-outcomes. An increasing need for information about disabled people is driven by the government's commitment to tracking progress in the implementation of the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026, effectively monitoring and evaluating the country's progressive realisation of the UN Committee Observations, and informing policy development, service planning, and practice.

Whaikaha is working with Statistics New Zealand to progress the UNCRPD's recommendation that New Zealand develop a national disability data framework. The Disability Data and Evidence Advisory Group co-facilitated by Statistics New Zealand and Whaikaha works with representatives from government agencies, Disabled People's Organisations, and the disability sector to create a structure that supports the collection and dissemination of quality disability data. This work has resulted in an increasing number of government surveys collecting disability data.

Lack of disability data at the individual level (as opposed to surveys and the Census, which help understand population-level trends) is a barrier to service development for disabled people, and a gap in responsiveness to Article 31 of the UNCRPD, which focuses on the need for New Zealand to ensure data collection that is responsive to disabled people's needs.

To mitigate this, the Patient Profile and National Health Index Project is a Te Whatu Ora-led disability data kaupapa that aims to identify all disabled people and their access needs in health datasets by a National Health Index identifier. This will enable health entities and Whaikaha to identify and monitor outcomes for the broader disabled population and enhance service responsiveness and accessibility.



## **Family violence and sexual violence**

Disabled people are significantly more at risk than non-disabled people of experiencing sexual assault and intimate partner abuse. Disabled people may also be subjected to forms of abuse relating to their impairments such as the removal of access to medications, mobility aids and access to disability services.

Addressing this issue has historically been under-resourced, and in response government funding has been increasing over the last few years.


It is important that existing services are accessible to disabled people, including specialist services that meet the specific needs of disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori, when they experience violence and abuse.

In 2022, the Safeguarding Adults from Abuse programme in the Waitematā was expanded to include tāngata whaikaha Māori, the Deaf community and disabled people. This project has provided valuable insights for the wider roll-out of the Safeguarding Framework and Safeguarding Adults from Abuse response.

Budget 23 allocated Whaikaha \$6.11 million over four years to increase access to specialist supports through the Waitematā Safeguarding response and to expand the initiative to other localities, while also supporting improved access to mainstream family violence and sexual violence services.

## **New Zealand Sign Language Board**

New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) is an official language that is fundamental for Deaf people to learn, communicate, participate in society and achieve good health and wellbeing outcomes.



Around 23,000 people use NZSL as a form of communication. Census 2018 shows this includes approximately 4,500 Deaf people and Turi Māori (Māori Deaf).

Whaikaha provides programme office support for the NZSL Board, a non-statutory Board made up of users with a lived experience of using NZSL daily in New Zealand. The NZSL Board's role is to maintain and promote the use of NZSL, ensure the rights of Deaf people and NZSL users to use NZSL, and provide advice to the government and the community on NZSL.

Whaikaha also monitors the New Zealand Sign Language Strategy 2018-2023 and supports the NZSL Board's allocation of community grants and other activities to promote and maintain NZSL.

In early 2022, the NZSL Board supported the development of a sign name for Whaikaha. Three options were developed by an NZSL expert group, which included people from the Board, Te Rōpū Kaitiaki, Deaf Aotearoa, Deaf Action and the Deaf Studies Research Unit at Victoria University of Wellington.

This sign name was voted on by the Deaf community and gifted to Whaikaha by the NZSL Board and representatives of the Deaf community at Parliament on 29 June 2023. The chosen sign name is the one-handed sign TREE moving upwards reflecting the rātā vine in the Whaikaha visual brand and whakataukākī:

“Me he aka rātā ka tipu tahi, ka puāwai tahi kia tū kaha I ngā hihī ō Tamanuiterā. Like the rātā vines growing together and flourishing to stand strong in the warmth of the sun”.

Whaikaha is the first government agency to have a name in NZSL, te reo Māori and English.



Over the first year of Whaikaha, the NZSL Board has also:

- agreed to a three-year contract to “promote NZSL to all New Zealanders”
- initiated a work programme for the development of a NZSL interpreter standards and accreditation process aligned with the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment’s “standards and accreditation” processes for community language interpreters
- agreed funding for the maintenance of the online NZSL Dictionary
- established Te Rōpū Kaitiaki in response to the call from Turi Māori to create opportunities for access to Te Ao Māori, tikanga and heritage through NZSL, Turi Māori by Turi Māori
- consulted the NZSL community through the NZSL Survey on the update of the MSD policy led update of the NZSL Act
- allocated \$175,000 in community grants to maintain and promote NZSL.

**Whaikaha:**

# 2022/23 Significant Budget initiatives

## Treasury requires Departments to provide information that sets out their significant Budget 2022/23 initiatives.

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The significant Budget 2022/23 initiatives<sup>2</sup> set out below have been selected by Whaikaha using the following criteria:

- we have excluded initiatives before 1 July 2022 as Whaikaha was established on this date
- we have applied a threshold of \$30m to this reporting given the size of Whaikaha appropriations
- we have excluded initiatives where funds are held in contingency.

All of the funding noted below is from Budget 2022 and is allocated over four years.


### **Title: Disability Support Services Cost Pressures**

Total expenditure of \$704m over the period 2022-2026.

*"This initiative funds cost pressures on the Government Disability Support Services budget, including price increases due to inflationary pressures and increases in service volumes due to demand for services. Funding provided in Vote Social Development is for anticipated ongoing pressures on the disability budget managed by the Ministry for Disabled People in the 2022/23 financial year."*

Whaikaha has utilised these funds in the first year to meet ongoing cost pressures and expects to use the full value over the forecast period.

<sup>2</sup> Source: [www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-05/b22-wellbeing-budget.pdf](http://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-05/b22-wellbeing-budget.pdf)



## **Title: Ministry for Disabled People – Establishing a new Ministry**

Total expenditure of \$107.8m over the period 2022-2026.

*“This initiative will fund the establishment of the new Departmental Ministry and support its ongoing operation from 1 July 2022. The Ministry will drive improved outcomes for disabled people, lead cross-government strategic disability policy, deliver Disability Support Services, and lead ongoing work on Disability System Transformation. Funding also includes investment to develop disability leadership and capability within the disability sector. This initiative will potentially benefit up to 1.1 million disabled people in New Zealand.”*

Whaikaha has utilised this funding by developing its core and support functions and built its infrastructure. A number of infrastructure projects have been deferred into outyears with funding being transferred to meet these costs.

## **Title: Payment to Family Members for Support Services**

Total expenditure of \$39m over the period 2022-2026.

*“This initiative will ensure that people receiving disability supports have the option to choose to pay a family member to provide those supports. This applies to supports that would otherwise be provided by a support worker through Ministry for Disabled People-funded disability support services and Health New Zealand-funded support services.”*

Whaikaha has utilised this funding to address increases in costs where disabled people were receiving Family Funded Carer services and are now receiving Individualised Funding and other flexible supports.



# Looking to the future

**We are proud to be the world's first Ministry of Disabled People**, specifically dedicated to the disabled community, and we are committed to meeting the responsibility that entails.

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Whaikaha will continue working hard to serve the community and support our government colleagues to improve the lives of tāngata whaikaha Māori, disabled people, and their families and whānau.

The future holds both many challenges and many rewards as we continue to build a more inclusive and accessible Aotearoa New Zealand.

Nō reira, me mahi tahi tonu tātou mō te oranga o te katoa. And finally, we should continue to work together for the wellbeing of everyone.



# Statement of responsibility



I am responsible, as Chief Executive of Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People, for the accuracy of any end-of-year performance information prepared by Whaikaha, whether or not that information is included in the annual report.

In my opinion, this annual report fairly reflects the operations, progress and organisational health and capability of Whaikaha.

Paula Tesoriero MNZM  
Te Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive  
28 September 2023

**Appendix:**

# Disabled people population and life outcomes statistics



## The number of people with disabilities

The data below is taken from the *2013 New Zealand Disability Survey* (2013 Disability Survey). Data from the 2023 Disability Survey will become available in 2024. The 2013 data shows that:

- an estimated 1.1 million (24 percent) of New Zealanders are disabled at any one point in time
- prevalence of disability increases with age. Of people aged 65+ years, 59 percent are disabled
- the three most common impairments New Zealanders experience relate to mobility (13 percent), hearing (9 percent) and agility (7 percent)
- some people report multiple impairments – males tend to experience multiple impairments more frequently than females in lower age groups (0-14 years), while this trend reverses for the higher age groups (65+ years)
- prevalence of disability is proportionally higher among Māori and Pacific peoples: 26 percent Māori and 19 percent Pacific peoples are identified as disabled. Māori disabled are overrepresented compared to the overall population, and due to cultural perspectives on disability under-reporting is likely among Pacific peoples.

Of the 45,000 New Zealanders supported by Whaikaha through Disability Support Services:

- 42 percent have an intellectual disability as their principal disability (many of whom also have a physical disability)
- 29 percent have autism as their principal disability
- 20 percent have a physical disability as their main disability.




## Disparities in economic and life outcomes

Many disabled people live full, productive lives with mana and dignity. However many disabled people also face significant disparities in economic and life outcomes compared to non-disabled people.

For example, according to Statistics New Zealand's *Household Labour Force Survey, 2022*:

- 42 percent of disabled working age New Zealanders (aged 15-64) were employed, compared to 80 percent of non-disabled people
- of working age disabled people who were not in paid employment, 74 percent said they would like to work if a job were available (2013 Disability Survey)
- 32 percent of disabled young people are not in employment, education or training, compared to 10 percent of non-disabled young people
- disabled people from demographics who traditionally experience hardship, such as Māori, Pacific peoples and the LGBTQI+ community, are more likely to have poorer life outcomes than their non-disabled counterparts
- the median income for disabled people in and out of employment is \$451 per week, compared to \$1,000 per week for non-disabled people
- while there was an increase of \$36 per week in median income for disabled people in employment from June 2020 to June 2022, over the same period the increase was \$126 per week for non-disabled people

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- the rate of disability among tamariki engaged with Oranga Tamariki is much higher than the general population, estimated to be between 47 percent to 87 percent. Evidence from Oranga Tamariki found that 66 percent of tamariki whaikaha in out-of-home care were identified as having high or very high support needs.

## Disparities in wellbeing

Statistics, as per the sources set out below, also show disabled people are likely to experience considerable wellbeing challenges.

- A much greater proportion of disabled people gave a low overall score for life satisfaction (42 percent provided ratings between 0-6 out of 10) compared with non-disabled people (18 percent). *New Zealand General Social Survey 2021, Statistics New Zealand.*
- Disabled youth are twice as likely to experience serious distress (scores higher than 13 out of 24) compared to the New Zealand average (56 percent vs 28 percent). *National Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021, Ministry of Social Development.*
- Disabled people are at higher risk of victimisation than non-disabled people. For example, disabled adults have a higher lifetime prevalence rate of sexual assault and intimate partner violence than non-disabled adults (48 percent vs 30 percent). *New Zealand Crime & Victims Survey 2022, Ministry of Justice.*



**Whaikaha**  
Ministry of  
Disabled People



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