

# A summary of the Briefing to the Incoming Minister for Disability Issues

## Context

This is a summary of the Briefing to the Incoming Minister (BIM) prepared by Whaikaha the Ministry of Disabled people, for the Incoming Minister for Disability Issues Hon Penny Simmonds.

Briefings to Incoming Ministers are briefings received by incoming Ministers following the formation of a new Government.

After each election, or following relevant Ministerial Portfolio change, we provide our Ministers with briefings on their portfolios, the Ministry, and our work.

The purpose of the initial briefing is to be concise and give a new Minister (or new Associate Minister) sufficient information to meet their initial requirements.

The briefing is not intended to be a detailed analysis of the portfolio or of policy issues.

You can find the full Briefing to the Incoming Minister at [Briefings and reports to the Minister | Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People](https://abcnewzealand.sharepoint.com/sites/BlindCitizensNZ/Shared%20Documents/Admin/Alternate%20Information%20-%20Advice/2024/Whaikaha/Originals/Briefings%20and%20reports%20to%20the%20Minister%20|%20Whaikaha%20-%20Ministry%20of%20Disabled%20People) (http://tinyurl.com/4kh2jrua).

## Welcome to the Disability Portfolio

**1.** Welcome to your role as Minister for Disability Issues, Whaikaha is here to support you.

**2.** As Minister for Disability Issues, you:

* Lead efforts to make sure that disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau can enjoy good lives in Aotearoa New Zealand.
* Are responsible for making sure Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People works well.
* Are responsible for the $2.3 Billion appropriation which funds the Disability Support Services Whaikaha commissions.

**3.** Your responsibilities in the Disability Issues Portfolio include leading the government response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

**4.** You assist the Crown in meeting its obligations to work alongside and partner with disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau as agreed in the UNCRPD and Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi.

**5.** You also lead work to transform the disability system in line with the Enabling Good Lives vision and principles, and the shift from the Medical Model of Disability to the Social Model of disability.

**6.** To do this, you will need to encourage ministers responsible for key government agencies to work together to create an organised and better disability system for our communities and ensure the voices of disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori guide their work.

## Disability in Aotearoa New Zealand

**7.** New Zealand has not always treated disabled people well. They have been treated as a problem, excluded, and not allowed basic rights.

**8.** The Medical Model of Disability treats disability as a medical condition and disabled people as needing to adapt and fit in. This has contributed to disabled people being seen as a ‘problem’ and blamed if they can't fit into society.

**9.** The Social Model of Disability is another way of looking at disability that sees the development of impairments as normal. Experiences of disability occur when people with impairments are excluded from places, activities, or information; and when attitudes stop them from taking part equally in society.

**10** The Medical Model way of thinking has led to a lot of discrimination against disabled people. Aotearoa New Zealand has committed to the Social Model in the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026.

### The Disability Community

**11.** The 2013 Disability Survey 2013 shows that there are around 1.1 million disabled people, including 176,000 tāngata whaikaha Māori in New Zealand.

**12.** Not all disabled people need support from the government, but those who do, fit in three broad groups:

* People who need a lot of support with everyday life.
* People who need some support and for accessibility to be improved.
* People who are temporarily or only sometimes impaired.

**13.** Supports for these disabled people are fragmented across government, with a range of government agencies providing different supports, including:

* Whaikaha, if you are under 65 years old, and need ongoing support like home or respite care or equipment like a powerchair or changes to your house to live.
* Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand, if you are over 65, have a mental health condition or long-term health condition.
* the Ministry of Social Development, if you need income or employment supports;
* the Ministry of Transport, if you need transport supports (including cheaper taxis) and;
* the Ministry of Education, if you need support and accommodations in early childhood education centres or at school.

**14.** Disabled people often need more than one kind of support. Because services and supports are spread across many different government agencies, it can be hard for people to find the support that they need.

**15.** Disabled people have poorer outcomes than non-disabled people. Disabled people are more likely to have poor health, poor employment opportunities and wages, not enough money and suitable homes that meet their needs.

**16.** Outcomes are worse for tāngata whaikaha Māori, who also face challenges related to racism and colonization. We know improvements are needed to provide more culturally appropriate disability supports to enable participation in general society and Te Ao Māori.

## Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People

**17.** Whaikaha was set up to ensure that the disability system works better for disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori.

**18.** We do this by:

* working in partnership with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, their families and whanau;
* transforming the disability system to reflect the Enabling Good Lives vision and principles;
* leading on strategic disability policy and helping other government agencies to reflect the needs of disabled people in their policies.

**19.** In pursuing our work, Whaikaha has three Pou (Pillars). These are:

* Te Tiriti O Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi: Whaikaha supports the Crown to uphold its obligations to tāngata whaikaha Māori as enshrined in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
* The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Whaikaha leads the government response on the UNCRPD and aims to ensure the disability system promotes the rights of disabled new Zealanders.
* Enabling Good Lives: The Enabling Good Lives vision and principles are drawn from our communities and help inform what good practice looks like.

**20.** Whaikaha was stood up 1 July 2022, and has confirmed the positions included in its leadership team and hired many senior staff. Whaikaha is making good progress towards becoming fully set up.

## Partnership

**21.** Whaikaha aims to a establish partnerships between disabled people, Māori and the government and is currently working to establish six key groups to start this journey:

* Transformation Management Board: This Board manages the transformation work programme for the Executive Leadership Team.
* Strategic Advisory Group: provides strategic advice work items including policy work, strategic intentions, Cabinet papers and the impact of change on the lives of disabled people.
* Insights Alliance: oversees the monitoring/evaluation of the EGL, system transformation and the implementation of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Analysis and Learning framework.
* Rangatahi / Youth network: provides a forum for young disabled people to provide input into changes that will help them lead good lives.
* Family / Whānau Network: represents the interests of family and whānau in improvements to enable disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori to lead good lives.
* Transformation project groups: The first group, My Home My Choice, Nōku te kainga noho – Nōku te whakatau oversees and informs the design, implementation and evaluation of the project that supports people in residential services to have choice and control over their lives.

**22.** Our partnership role also includes ensuring broader communities of disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori beyond these groups have a voice and can help us make decisions. Disabled people are working with Whaikaha to create voice mechanisms that enable them to do this.

**23.** We have also committed $1 million to support the development of disabled leaders and their organizations to make decisions for themselves, use of available resources, partner with government and advocate for themselves and their communities.

## Key Strategies and Inquiries

**24.** Whaikaha is responsible for five strategies and action plans, all of which are due to be refreshed during this term of Government:

* The New Zealand Disability Strategy: a 10-year strategy which talks about key things we need to focus on to create a non-disabling society.
* Disability Action Plan: a 4-year list of agreed actions government aims to achieve to improve things for disabled people.
* New Zealand Sign Language Strategy: sets out work for the New Zealand Sign Language Board and government agencies to uphold New Zealand Sign Language as an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand.
* Whāia Te Ao Mārama: a 4-year plan which talks about what needs to be done to improve things for tāngata whaikaha Māori and their whānau.
* Faiva Ora National Pasifika Disability Plan: a 4-year plan which talks about what needs to be done to improve things for Pacific disabled people and their families.

**25.** Whaikaha is also involved in three ongoing inquiries will have significant findings and implications for disabled people and how supports funded and delivered by Whaikaha. These are:

* the Abuse in Care Royal Commission of Inquiry;
* the Waitangi Tribunal Health Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry (WAI 2575);
* the All of Government COVID-19 Royal Commission of Inquiry.

## Disability Support Services

**26.** A key role of Whaikaha is to commission $2.2 billion of disability support services for around 50,000 eligible disabled people under the age of 65. Every year, Whaikaha also supports around 100,000 people with equipment or modification services (all ages).

### DSS System Transformation

**27.** Whaikaha is changing the disability system in partnership with disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, their families and whānau.

**28.** This transformation aligns with the Enabling Good Lives vision and principles and moves away from services that are pre-selected by government and towards ensuring disabled people have choice and control over their support.

**29.** Three pilot demonstration sites have been set up based on the Enabling Good Lives vision and principles. These were set up before Whaikaha was established and they are now part of Whaikaha. The sites are in MidCentral (Mana Whaikaha), Waikato and Christchurch:

* The Christchurch site focusses on people aged 14 years and over who receive Ministry of Education Ongoing Resourcing Scheme funding and support.
* The Waikato site allows people to “opt-in” to the programme after they have met disability support eligibility criteria.
* The Mana Whaikaha site allows all people who are eligible for disability support in the Mid-Central region to access its services.

**30.** We have asked disabled people using the services in these demonstration sites about their experiences.

They have told us that they have more independence, self-confidence, and are better connected to social networks.

**31.** In 2021, Cabinet agreed to rollout Enabling Good Lives approach nationally.

**32** Full transformation will take time and support from the government including more funding.

## What Needs Your Early Attention

### Response to UNCRPD Observations

**33.** In 2022, the Minister for Disability Issues led a government delegation to the United Nations to take part in an examination of New Zealand’s progress on disability rights.

**34.** Cabinet has agreed to implement 51 of the 60 UN Committee’s Recommendations. Whaikaha is working with other government agencies on how they will make progress on the Committee recommendations.

### Appointments to the New Zealand Sign Language Board (NZSL Board)

**35.** You are responsible for making appointments to the NZSL Board. These appointments need to be approved by Cabinet.

**36.** There have been several resignations and members not wanting to renew their appointment to the NZSL board. Whaikaha opened NZSL Board nominations and will have appointment recommendations for you to consider in early 2024.

### Paid Family Carers

**37.** A paid family carer is a family member paid to support a disabled person through an employment agreement. The employment agreement is either between the family member and the disabled person or the disabled person arranges the family member’s employment through a service provider.

**38.** The Employment Court found that the Ministry of Health (now Whaikaha) is the employer of two paid family carers. The Court of Appeal is due to decide soon about whether these family carers are employed by Whaikaha.

### High and Complex Framework

**39.** The High and Complex framework provides a separate pathway for people with intellectual disabilities who are accused of a crime and need care and rehabilitation support.

**40.** While Whaikaha commissions services under the framework, responsibility for the legislation supporting it sits with Manatū Hauora – Ministry of Health.

## Contact Whaikaha the Ministry of Disabled people

If you want to get in touch with Whaikaha, please visit our website at [www.whaikaha.govt.nz/contact-us/](http://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/contact-us/)

You can also call us on:

Phone: 0800 566 601

Text: 4206

Our contact centre opening hours are:

Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri: 8am - 5pm.   
Wed: 9:30am - 5pm

If you are Deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, speech impaired or find it hard to talk, you can use the New Zealand Relay Service at [www.nzrelay.co.nz](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nzrelay.co.nz%2F&data=05%7C01%7CRebecca.Haig007%40whaikaha.govt.nz%7C8dc4770efe0d4c346a7b08dbe492f354%7Ce40c4f5299bd4d4fbf7ed001a2ca6556%7C0%7C0%7C638355092740355307%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=PeUfozBemfeXtcAHIHqC4l34oBJObWBEOMPgtJKTg6I%3D&reserved=0).

# End of: Key Topics: A summary of the Briefing to the Incoming Minister for Disability Issues

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