

# Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha

**15 August 2024**

## To be attributed to the Chief Executive Paula Tesoriero MNZM

I want to acknowledge the work of the Independent Review panel and the recommendations and decisions of Government on the future of the Disability Support System.

I want to pay tribute to work of disabled people who fought to have an agency set up to focus on improving outcomes for disabled people.

I also want to acknowledge my staff and leadership team who continue to work tirelessly for disabled peope. The Review never questioned their dedication.

It is a privilege to lead the Ministry of Disabled People - Whaikaha, and to be the first disabled Chief Executive of a Public Service Agency.

The Review acknowledges the past two years have been enormously challenging. We had a big task to turn around decades of issues. I didn’t get as far as I wanted, but I am proud of what we have achieved.

The transition of the Disability Support Services into the Ministry of Social Development brings with it the additional resources that a large agency can offer.

It’s important we build a solid sustainable system so that disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, families and carers can rely on it with confidence.

I welcome the announcement to establish a powered up stand-alone agency where we have the opportunity to drive real change for the more than one million disabled people in New Zealand.

The Ministry will lead strategic policy, be a source of government information and advisory, system level monitoring, and work to bring about societal change for disabled people. We will focus on removing the many barriers experienced by disabled people.

There is much to be done. We all have a responsibility to make real lasting change for disabled people in New Zealand.

**End of information attributed to Chief Executive Paula Tesoriero MNZM**

Link to full document: [Chief Executive's statement | Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People](https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/news/independent-review/chief-executives-statement) or <https://tinyurl.com/3pec2y37>

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