



Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

Minute of Decision

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Framework to Accelerate Progress Towards Accessibility in Aotearoa New Zealand

Portfolio Disability Issues

On 17 June 2020, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee:

- 1 **noted** that accelerating accessibility in Aotearoa New Zealand is a significant, complex task affecting all New Zealand society, and therefore needs to be progressively realised;
- 2 **noted** that government thinking about how to recover from COVID-19 and build a more productive, sustainable and inclusive economy needs to consider how the government addresses the rights, needs and concerns of disabled people;
- 3 **noted** that maintaining the momentum of accessibility work will continue to address the disproportionate disadvantage experienced by disabled people, exacerbated by recent COVID-19 impacts;
- 4 **noted** that accelerating accessibility offers a unique opportunity to support an inclusive economic recovery and make New Zealand a global leader by encouraging new smarter ways of working that design for accessibility from the outset, and encourage uptake of new accessible universal technology;
- 5 **noted** that the intended policy approach to accelerating accessibility is a new legislative framework that can act as a vehicle for progressive implementation of a new system of accessibility over time;
- 6 **noted** that the legislative framework would sit alongside awareness raising, education and training, and provide mechanisms for:
 - 6.1 a policy work programme to accelerate accessibility;
 - 6.2 the establishment of regulatory systems for areas of accessibility where none currently exist, including the creation of standards within specific domains of accessibility;
 - 6.3 the progressive review of existing legislation and standards that relate to accessibility;
 - 6.4 Ministerial-appointed advisory councils to make recommendations on accelerating accessibility within domains;
 - 6.5 institutional arrangements to support a new accessibility system;

- 6.6 reporting and monitoring, including review periods of the framework;
- 6.7 compliance and enforcement;
- 7 **agreed** that any new framework should set accessibility as a high-level concept (rather than a detailed, prescriptive definition) about the prevention and removal of barriers, so people can independently access the public spaces, built environments, goods, products or services they need to fully participate and be included in society;
- 8 **noted** that the focus of a new accessibility framework will be on disabled people, acknowledging that it will bring benefits to a range of other groups, including older people, carers, and Māori;
- 9 **noted** that the approach of the Minister for Disability Issues:
- 9.1 sends a strong signal to society about the need for change, and about the value of and commitment to, accessibility;
- 9.2 provides the flexibility to implement a progressive approach over time so governments can set priorities to resource accessibility measures, and obligated parties have time to develop, understand, and adopt efficient or innovative approaches to meeting regulatory requirements;
- 9.3 provides more certainty in the long term, and is the most likely instrument to change behaviour and address problems, as it will provide clear statutory guidance and ‘lift the bar’ on what is expected;
- 9.4 can sit well alongside other accessibility work being undertaken;
- 10 **noted** that accelerating accessibility will require long-term commitment and funding, but further work is required to establish costs in the New Zealand context;
- 11 **agreed** that Ministry of Social Development officials progress further work on detailed aspects of the legislative framework, in consultation with relevant agencies and stakeholders, including on costs, institutional, and administrative arrangements, development of accessibility domains and standards, and giving effect to the Treaty of Waitangi;
- 12 **directed** officials to work with key stakeholders to identify and maximise new opportunities presented within the COVID-19 context for a greater focus on accessibility in future, which will include consultation with business and other stakeholders on details of the final proposal as they are developed;
- 13 **agreed** that consultation with the business sector on the legislative framework proposal can proceed from late 2020 until early 2021, to inform a report-back in May 2021;
- 14 **noted** that the Minister for Disability Issues intends to propose that an Accessible Aotearoa New Zealand bill be introduced to the House during 2021;

- 15 **invited** the Minister for Disability Issues to report-back to the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee further in May 2021, seeking Cabinet agreement to a complete policy proposal to accelerate accessibility.

Vivien Meek
Committee Secretary

Present:

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Hon Kelvin Davis
Hon Grant Robertson
Hon Dr Megan Woods
Hon Chris Hipkins
Hon Andrew Little
Hon Carmel Sepuloni (Chair)
Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Hon Tracey Martin
Hon Willie Jackson
Hon Poto Williams
Hon Julie Anne Genter
Jan Logie, MP

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Office of the SWC Chair