# 

# In Confidence

# Office of the Minister for Disability Issues

# Chair

# Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee

# Accelerating Accessibility in New Zealand

## Proposal

**1.** This paper seeks:

**1.1** agreement to introduce a new framework that takes a progressive approach to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to participation for disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori and others with accessibility needs;

**1.2** approval to issue drafting instructions for stand-alone enabling legislation to support New Zealand to progressively become more accessible and introduce a new Accessibility Governance Board.

## Executive Summary

**3.** Improving access to housing, transport, information, communication, technology, public buildings and spaces is vitally important for disabled people to participate in and belong to the world. Improving accessibility is inextricably linked to achieve fundamental human rights. However, our current framework for addressing barriers that disabled people face has been fragmented, slow, hard to measure, and hasn’t led to the credible policy, system design and service delivery needed to achieve an accessible society.

**4.** In December 2018, Cabinet agreed to commence the design of an approach to achieve a fully accessible New Zealand, in collaboration with key stakeholders [CAB-18-MIN-0591 refers]. In July 2019, Cabinet noted my oral report back, which indicated support from stakeholders for a legislative mechanism [CAB-19-MIN-0329 refers].

**5.** In June 2020, Cabinet [CAB-20-MIN-0295 refers] noted my intention to accelerate accessibility through a new legislative framework that would sit alongside awareness raising, education, and training and agreed that any new framework should set accessibility as a high-level concept rather than a detailed, prescriptive definition.

**6.** I propose to improve accessibility across New Zealand by introducing a new framework that:

**6.1** brings in disabled people through an Accessibility Governance Board (name yet to be confirmed);

**6.2** supports greater Ministerial leadership, particularly on cross-portfolio participation barriers, to improve the authorising environment;

**6.3** increases co-ordination on accessibility through clearer leadership within the public service.

**7.** To ensure that we are taking a progressive approach to identifying, preventing and removing participation barriers, and holding ourselves and future governments to account, I seek agreement to set out this framework in new stand-alone enabling legislation to be introduced in 2022.

**8.** A new approach to accelerating accessibility aligns with some of our key objectives under the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2022 and supports New Zealand to meet its international commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

**9.** There are detailed design and implementation choices within this framework. Following Cabinet’s agreement, I will direct officials to undertake targeted engagement with a broad range of stakeholders. [content redacted]

## Recommendations

The Minister for Disability Issues recommends that the Committee:

**1.** **note** the current framework for improving accessibility has not provided the credible policy, system design, and service delivery needed to achieve an accessible society

**2. note** an innovative and effective approach for disabled people to independently access the public spaces, built environments, goods, products, education, health and services and fully participate in society is needed

**3. note** we need a new accessibility framework that takes a progressive approach to improving participation and ensures:

**3.1** strong leadership and accountability for identifying, preventing, and removing participation barriers

**3.2** clear objectives and consistent methodologies to identifying, preventing, and removing participation barriers

**3.3** current regulations, standards, and enforcement regimes are fit for purpose and new regulatory systems are developed where necessary for improving accessibility for disabled people

**3.4** the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi are upheld and disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori, disabled rangatahi and tamariki, and their family and whānau are visible and able to participate at all levels

**4. note** work to develop a new legislative framework has been done in partnership with the Access Alliance, a collective of 12 disability sector groups, Disabled People’s Organisations (DPO), disability services providers, disability community organisations and disability advocates

**5.** **note** this framework will reflect a partnership with disabled people, recognising disabled people as leaders, as experts on accessibility from a lived experience perspective, and as advisors to hold the system to account

**6.** **note** in June 2020, Cabinet confirmed its intention to accelerate accessibility through a new legislative framework, that sets accessibility as a high-level concept (rather than a detailed, prescriptive definition) through the prevention and removal of barriers [CAB-20-MIN-0295]

**7.** **agree** the legislation will need to include:

**7.1** purpose and principles for the accessibility framework

**7.2** role, purpose, and functions of the Board, including membership appointment processes

**7.3** role and powers of the Minister for Disability Issues, including supporting and providing oversight of the Board tabling

**7.4** role and powers of the Chief Executive, including raising the profile of accessibility across the public service and improving the quality of accessibility related data

**7.5** methodologies for addressing accessibility barriers

**7.6** monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements, including possible information sharing provisions

**7.7** expectations for engaging with and listening to disabled people and tāngata whaikaha Māori as groups and individuals

**7.8** a requirement for periodic reviews of legislation to ensure we are making the desired progress towards an accessible New Zealand

**8. agree** to introduce strong, clear leadership for accessibility by:

**8.1** establishing a new Accessibility Governance Board (name to be confirmed)

**8.2** supporting a stronger Government commitment to accessibility

**8.3** ensuring a public sector Chief Executive is responsible for co-ordinating and overseeing accessibility measures across the public service

**9.** [content redacted]

**9.1** [content redacted]

**9.2** [content redacted]

**9.3** [content redacted]

* 1. [content redacted]

**9.5** [content redacted]

**9.6** [content redacted]

**10.** [content redacted]

**11. Invite** the Minister for Disability Issues to issue drafting instructions to the Parliamentary Counsel Office.

**12.** **Authorise** the Minister for Disability Issues to approve technical elements of the framework within the policy parameters during the development of the Bill.

**13.** [content redacted]

**End of Accelerating Accessibility in New Zealand**