



Post-Event Insights Note

NZ Disability Strategy Feedback Session – 1 September 2025

Hosted by Access Matters, Disabled Persons Assembly and Enabling Good Lives

Facilitators:

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Executive Summary

Participants welcomed the opportunity to contribute feedback on the Draft New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026–2030. Overall, while the aspirational intent was acknowledged, concerns centred on lack of clarity, overuse of jargon, and absence of enforceability. The Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles were consistently highlighted as a stronger, simpler, and community-owned foundation.

Housing was seen as foundational to wellbeing, while employment, education, and justice require enforceable action. Confidence in the strategy's ability to drive meaningful change will depend on legislative levers, plain language, robust data systems, and embedding disabled leadership throughout.

Audience Overview

Registrations: 183



Participants: 112

- **Diverse representation:** Participants included disabled people, advocates, government officials who identified as disabled, health professionals, and researchers.
- **Strong lived experience presence:** Many participants had direct experience with disability, advocacy, or accessibility work.

Key Insights

Vision

- Support for aspirational terms ('thrive', 'lead'), but lack of clarity and accountability.
- Need for definitions of 'accessible', 'equitable', and 'to thrive'.
- Concern that disabled people have not truly led the strategy process.

Principles

- Overly complex, jargon-heavy; words like 'intersectionality' confusing.
- Strong call to adopt Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles instead.
- Missing focus on family/whānau, leadership, advocacy, and agency.

Cross-Cutting Issues

- Confusion over purpose; seen as bolted-on.
- Accessibility should underpin all areas, not siloed.
- Data critical for funding and accountability but current approach weak.

Confidence in Change

- Participants skeptical of impact without enforcement and clear accountability.
- Tone described as 'buzzwords strung together'.
- Ableism and systemic barriers absent from draft.

Outcome Areas



Education

- Early intervention investment welcomed.
- Missing focus on life-long learning, transitions, and school accountability.

Employment

- Minimum wage exemptions criticised as discriminatory.
- Need for systemic employer responsibility, leadership roles, and supported employment.

Health

- Felt provider-centric; needs to embed supported decision-making and equity.
- ACC vs DSS disparities unaddressed.

Housing

- Identified as foundational; current actions lack strength and enforceability.
- Need universal design and inclusion of deinstitutionalisation and homelessness.

Justice

- Safeguarding, accessibility, and rights protections must be strengthened.
- Particular concerns for Deaf, Turi Māori, and multiply disabled people.

Opportunities

- Adopt EGL principles as a set of key foundational principles.
- Use legislative levers for housing, employment, and education.
- Co-design data indicators with disabled communities.
- Plain language rewrite to improve accessibility.
- Embed disabled leadership across all action areas.
- Ensure cross-government collaboration rather than siloed approaches.

Barriers

- Draft strategy lacks coherence and clarity.
- No accountability or enforcement mechanisms.
- Disconnect between aspirational vision and weak actions.
- Minister-driven priorities instead of community-set ones.



- Exclusion of children, learning disabled, Deaf, rainbow disabled, tangata whaikaha Māori.
- Underlying mistrust between government and community.
- Missing climate justice, digital divide and transport.