

# Breakout Room Notes from Facilitators

## Breakout Room – Pip Townsens

### Session 1

#### Principles

- Not enough focus on family/whānau, their role in the community, and how we all work together.
- EGL principles – the full version needs to be included, not just choice and control.
- Not enough reference to UNCRPD and the pillars that support the vision.

#### Cross-cutting

- There is a focus on data, but not enough focus on how data helps with implementation.
- We have such poor data; we need it to make business cases, but we don't get the funding (explains the strong emphasis on data).
- Example: lack of traction in the safeguarding space due to insufficient data.
- Concern that there was not enough on individual advocacy – where people struggle to get their needs met and to know where to go to speak up.

#### Goals

- The goals are vague and not measurable.
- The goals do not necessarily reflect what disabled people want; they are more about what the government wants to achieve. There's a lack of detail.

#### What's missing

- Absence of discussion about children under 5.
- Lack of information about training for those assessing children's needs.
- Lack of reference to other strategies and key work being undertaken in the disability space; the strategy needs to be integrated with existing work.
- Choice of care and accessibility – unclear alignment with recent changes to carer support and funding inflexibility.

- There needs to be mention of service continuity and funding levels, ensuring a level playing field across the country.

## **Session 2**

### **Education**

- Positive: increased funding for early intervention, addressing delayed interventions.

### **What people want to see:**

- Life-long learning and transition pathways from school to work and other areas.
- Consistent support across the country; currently, many are declined services and must prove the extent of their disability. A coordinated approach is needed.

### **Employment**

- Broader context: employment for all disabled people.
- Repeal of sections of the Public Services Act affecting people with learning disabilities.
- Some disabled people cannot access employment due to criteria or hours required.
- Minimum wage exemption equates to “slave labour” due to low rates; this must be addressed.
- Use of “normalise” and “normalisation” is ableist and should be changed.
- Mahi Ora / carers strategy – does not mention employment for family carers who wish or need to work.
- Strategy lacks specific training to support people with learning disabilities in employment.

### **Health**

- Actions focus on what disabled people can do for the health system rather than what the health system can do for them.

## **Breakout Room – Mark Benjamin**

### **Breakout One – Key Discussion Points**

- Ensure use of plain language; some words (e.g., "intersectionality") are not widely understood.
- Concepts of "equity" and "equality" are used inconsistently; equity should be emphasised.
- Aspirational ideas exist but are not new; previous strategies did not realise these ideas. Leadership and attitude change need addressing.
- EGL is not specifically mentioned; it should be a foundation for cross-government change.
- Partnership between disabled people, families, and whānau is indicated in the vision but not carried through principles and outcomes.
- Absence of input from people with learning disabilities.
- No confidence that current vision and principles will drive meaningful change; existing frameworks (Te Tiriti, UNCRPD, EGL, Whānau Ora) should be affirmed.

### **Breakout Two – Key Discussion Points**

- Add a "Social Change Campaign" (attitudinal shift) and "Rolling out the EGL approach" as key priority outcomes.
- All actions need to clearly link back to principles in Te Tiriti, UNCRPD, EGL, and Whānau Ora.
- Emphasise developing community leadership and enhancing the voice of disabled people, families, and whānau.
- Increased emphasis on cross-government actions is needed (not silo-specific).

### **Breakout Room – Ollie Goulden**

#### **Notes**

- No focus on social well-being.
- Absence of the Enabling Good Lives vision and principles.
- Strategy does not address capability and capacity.
- Discussion on "poverty of experience" – disabled people have fewer experiences than non-disabled people, affecting job skills.
- Participation: unclear if this includes rainbow community members; safeguarding measures are weak.
- Discussion of inclusion versus equity.
- Importance of agency – strategy is not person-centred.
- Overemphasis on unemployment; not enough attention to those unable to gain employment.

- Participation emphasis is not always appropriate.
- Limited focus on digital and other forms of access.

## **Breakout Room – Rebekah Graham**

### **Feedback**

- Vision, principles, cross-cutting themes, and action areas are confusing, poorly thought out, overly complicated; different parts do not “join up.”
- Strategy lacks cohesion; agreed action points may not achieve the vision.
- Clear call for a strategy that is clearer, coherent, and uses appropriate language; current tone is inconsistent and overly wordy.
- EGL principles were not used; doing so would address issues in the principles section.

### **Vision**

- Aspirational but possibly too big; gaps exist between vision and action points.
- Unclear if sector practitioners will understand the vision.
- No accountability, measurement, or mention of ableism/barriers.
- Passive vision; lacks action and enforcement.

### **Principles**

- Words unfamiliar to some; feel like buzzwords.
- Need simpler, clearer explanations.
- “Control” has negative connotations; “intersectionality” is too complex.

### **EGL Principles**

- Participants unfamiliar with EGL; once introduced, group supported using plain-language EGL principles instead of ministerial/ministry language.
- EGL principles are simple, well understood, and already in use. Whānau Ora ideas could also be incorporated.

### **Cross-cutting Themes**

- Too much information; unclear purpose.
- Accessibility as a theme is confusing.
- Themes should reflect foundational requirements underpinning strategy outcomes.
- Communication is poor; overly wordy, needs clarity and connection.

## **Outcome Areas**

- Enforcement of existing legislation is lacking.
- Education: poor complaints procedures, unaware Boards of Trustees; children's voices absent.
- Action points across areas do not connect (e.g., education to employment).
- Reasonable accommodations should be embedded across all areas.
- Health safety measures should be consistent across sectors.

## **Breakout Room – Mojo Mathers**

### **Session One**

- Vision: Terms like “accessible” and “equitable” are interpreted differently.
- Definition of “thrive” unclear – does it mean living without fear or barriers?
- Principles: Participation and inclusion not strong enough; leadership and voice of disabled people need emphasis.
- Accessibility must be integrated across all themes and systems.
- Turi Māori/Deaf people with multiple disabilities need targeted support for justice, employment, and information access.

### **Session Two**

- Housing is foundational and impacts all areas of life; stronger action and legislation required.
- Employment and education linked; need support for Deaf teachers.
- Strategy should actively support disabled people to find work and access training/upskilling.
- Question: How will success of the strategy be measured?

## **Breakout Room – Patti Poa**

### **Key Feedback**

- No reference to EGL principles.
- WSSQ provides some info but more comprehensive data needed (e.g., counting accessible houses).
- Enforceable actions are required.
- Emergency preparedness for pandemics missing.
- Transport is missing.

- School-to-work transition missing.
- Health disparities (ACC & Ministry of Health) missing.
- Indicators not provided; need to measure progress.
- Education budget limits could restrict funding.
- Partnered supports drop off; pay equity cancellation affects care workers.
- Legislative changes needed in transport, housing, footpaths.
- Climate justice, poverty, income solutions, and homelessness are missing.

## **Second Breakout Room Feedback**

- Employment: disabled people underemployed, excluded from senior management roles.
- Employers need responsibility; supported employment costly but worthwhile.
- Disabled people often remain in the same roles for years; meaningful work needed.
- Minimum Wage Exemption Act – need reform for meaningful employment.
- Income supports are missing.
- Service systems need EGL transformation; AI impacts employment.
- Residential support services not addressed; deinstitutionalisation efforts like My Home, My Choice should continue.
- Employment support services funding partially reliant on fundraising.

## **Breakout Room – Chris Ford**

### **1. What are your thoughts on the vision? Is there anything you'd add, change, or clarify?**

- Tāngata whaikaha Māori not included in strategy as tiriti partners.
- Like words thrive and lead – however, these words need more emphasis on disabled people leading their lives.

### **2. How do the principles sit with you? Do they feel right, or is there something missing?**

- EGL principles should be emphasised – they need to be inserted in the Strategy.
- No mention of rights-based way of thinking – saying we want to bring equity, inclusion, etc but no mechanism of how they're going to do that – disabled rights predominantly human rights - get that right, everything will fall into place.

### **3. What's your take on the cross-cutting issues? Are they relevant and well-addressed?**

- What were the considerations that the ministers decided not to include – how do we find what was suggested but not included by the ministers?
- What is meant by accessibility?
- Needs to be examination of what is meant by built environment?
- Need for more effective data should be emphasised, e.g. how many people accessing family/sexual harm services? No questions being asked around what constitutes baseline.
- Workforce across the board in disability services need education on what constitutes violence as this shouldn't be referred to as 'critical incidents – also sexual violence services need to be accessible to everybody.
- Point out that communication accessibility needs to be incorporated into all areas, rather than just be placed in education.
- Access to information is a much broader area – should be highlighted.

### **4. What do you like? Do you feel confident that this strategy will lead to real, meaningful change? Why or why not?**

- Housing actions focused on the private sector and not on government sector.
- Why are there only expectations on private housing providers rather than public providers as well.
- No mention of universal design in the section.
- Language around housing is unclear in the document.

## **Specific Questions**

### **1. Looking at the outcome areas—education, employment, health, housing, and justice. Is there anything you'd change or improve?**

- Additional funding and teacher resources – is it for disabled students or for wider group?
- Why does Māori learning have to stay within existing budget.
- Where did \$266 million figure for education come from?
- Pacific Island – what about other ethnic groups within the strategy?
- Kaupapa Māori education – need investment to combat colonised ableism.
- Education and all settings – impossible to audit as goals are too broad – too impossible to ascertain what success is.

**2. Does the strategy reflect what’s important to disabled people and their whānau? Does it feel aligned with your experiences or aspirations?**

- In housing, mention of voluntary guidelines – no teeth to that.
- Unless some basic barriers like attitudinal around other people deciding for disabled people – nothing in the strategy about combatting systemic ableism within systems.
- Fraction of disabled learners get any support – need to ascertain as to what they need to do with each goal.
- Are we confident? No.
- Working with disabled people needs to be explicitly stated.

**3. What changes do you want? Is there anything else you’d like to see included in the strategy?**

- Monitoring mechanisms
- No tick boxes
- More teeth
- Putting things into law.

**4. Are there any ideas, perspectives, or areas you think are missing? What else should be considered?**

Couldn’t get to this question in time.

## **Breakout Room – Helena Tuteao**

### **1. Accessibility & Digital Inclusion**

- While “accessibility” is mentioned, digital accessibility is not explicitly addressed.
- Needs to be a cross-cutting theme with clear references in law and enforced standards — unlike Australia, Canada, the UK, and the EU, where accessibility frameworks are legislated.
- Confusion remains over Whaikaha’s definition of “accessibility” and “equity” — these need clarity.

### **2. Principles & Leadership**

Lack of explicit principles on:

- Participation and inclusion of disabled people.

- Leadership by disabled people and upholding disabled voices.
- Recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and specific rights of Māori.
- Inclusion of Deaf communities, those with multiple disabilities, and rainbow disabled people.

The Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles must be fully embedded — they are simple, effective, and widely understood.

### **3. Social Wellbeing & Community Participation**

The vision fails to address:

- Social connection and belonging within communities.
- Barriers disabled people face in accessing education, employment, housing, and health services.
- Needs stronger focus on living independently and self-determination.

### **4. Language, Tone & Plain English**

Language in the draft strategy is:

- Overly bureaucratic and not accessible to most disabled people.
- Confusing on core concepts like equity vs equality.
- Uses ableist language (e.g., “normalising”), which should be removed.
- The final strategy must use plain language and be translated into Te Reo Māori and Easy Read.

### **5. Employment, Education & Supported Pathways**

Employment is over-emphasised without recognising:

- Some disabled people cannot work due to their circumstances.
- Persistent employer bias against hiring disabled people.

Strategy should:

- Link education, training, and supported employment pathways.
- Ensure dignity in pay and monitor pay equity.
- Provide supported employment programmes and hold employers accountable.

## **6. Housing, Built Environment & Standards**

Clear accessible housing standards are missing.

The draft fails to:

- Define what constitutes accessible housing.
- Require legislated minimum accessibility standards.
- Address the private housing sector where major gaps persist.
- Without enforceable standards, change will not occur. Note the PM has just signed an agreement with Australia on sharing of Australia – NZ standards – what does this mean for Australian disability access standards

## **7. Data Gaps & Measurement**

Strategy relies too heavily on the Washington Group Short Set — this is insufficient to capture:

- Complexities of disability.
- Access to accessible housing, digital services, and education pathways.

Needs:

- Better data collection frameworks.
- Indicators and measurable outcomes to track progress.
- Clear reporting on what will change for disabled people.

## **8. Implementation & Accountability**

Concerns that the strategy:

- Lacks actionable steps and clear responsibilities.
- Doesn't specify who is accountable for delivery.
- Fails to provide a long-term plan or explain how a five-year timeframe achieves transformation.

Needs:

- Enforceable standards and legislation.
- Stronger cross-agency leadership.
- A roadmap showing short-, medium-, and long-term actions.

## **9. Advocacy, Safety & Representation**

Disabled people have not led the development of this strategy:

- Unclear who was at the table.
- Limited early engagement — consultation only happening now.

Key gaps:

- Lack of focus on individual advocacy services.
- Emergency preparedness for disabled people is absent.
- No clarity on violence definitions or safeguarding vulnerable groups.

## **10. Other Major Issues Raised**

- Poverty of experience — disabled people often lack opportunities to learn, work, and participate.
- No public education or social change campaign to address ableism.
- Climate change, income insecurity, and homelessness are ignored.
- No rights-based framing aligned to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

Missing focus on:

- Children under five and their parents.
- Parents with disabilities.
- Intersectional communities.

## **11. Key Recommendations**

- Embed Enabling Good Lives principles throughout.
- Strengthen leadership and voice of disabled people.
- Use plain language and accessible formats.
- Establish legislated standards for accessibility, housing, and digital inclusion.
- Develop clear indicators and accountability mechanisms.
- Include social change campaigns to shift attitudes and tackle ableism.
- Ensure cross-agency delivery with meaningful partnership.