

# **Progress in Implementing The New Zealand Disability Strategy**

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**Report of  
the Minister for Disability Issues  
to the House of Representatives**

**for the period**

**1 July to 30 September 2001**

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# Minister's foreword

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It is my great honour as the Minister for Disability Issues to present to the House of Representatives the first government report on implementation of the New Zealand Disability Strategy.



The launch of the strategy in April 2001 by the Prime Minister Helen Clark and former Disability Issues Minister Lianne Dalziel fulfilled a key Labour–Alliance pre-election promise, and marked a turning point in the relationship between the government and people with disabilities.

The strategy was developed with extensive input from people with disabilities and the wider disability movement. Its vision is of a society based on the human rights, empowerment and participation of all New Zealanders; a society that values and celebrates diversity and recognises the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The strategy gives us, for the first time ever, a national framework to address disability issues across agencies, policies, services and legislation. Its 15 objectives and 113 detailed actions will guide government action to promote a more inclusive society.

This report is the first step in measuring our progress. It outlines the activities of the 10<sup>1</sup> key government departments that prepared strategy work plans this year, covering their activities from 1 July to 30 September 2001.

Because of the short timeframe, it is only possible to give a general indication of progress reported by these departments in meeting their targets. However, a heightened awareness of disability issues, and a greater willingness to consider the effects of their policies and services on people with disabilities are already evident. This sort of leadership is critical in removing the biggest barrier to participation – negative attitudes.

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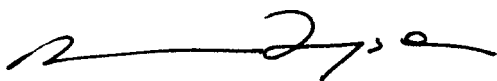
<sup>1</sup> The government originally asked 11 key government agencies to develop NZDS implementation work plans. As of 1 October 2001, the Department of Work and Income New Zealand and the Ministry of Social Policy merged to become the Ministry of Social Development, and the work of both agencies is identified as the Ministry of Social Development in this report.

Future annual reports to Parliament will be more comprehensive, monitoring the progress of government departments over a full year. The government's overall progress will be evaluated after five years and 10 years.

The primary focus of the New Zealand Disability Strategy is on what government departments and other publicly funded organisations need to do to remove the barriers that face people with disabilities. In this report, you will also find examples of the strategy in action in our communities – a tribute to the hard work and growing confidence of the disability movement.

In particular, I want to acknowledge the leadership and commitment of the national advocacy organisation DPA (the Assembly of People with Disabilities) and thank chief executive Gary Williams for his message of support (see page v).

The New Zealand Disability Strategy is already proving a powerful tool for change. I congratulate all those who have contributed to the progress already made, and I am confident that, together, we can create a society that values all its citizens and encourages their full participation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Dyson', with a long horizontal line extending to the left and a small flourish at the end.

Hon Ruth Dyson  
Minister for Disability Issues

# Message from DPA

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On behalf of DPA, I am pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the Annual Report of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. DPA is the collective voice of disabled people in New Zealand based on principles of human rights and equal value of life.

Since the strategy was launched in April, I have noticed an increasing awareness of disability-related issues in both government and non-government agencies. I would like to acknowledge the support and commitment to the strategy of the Minister for Disability Issues, Hon Ruth Dyson. In particular, her active promotion of the strategy whenever and wherever she addresses gatherings is appreciated.

I believe it is also worth noting the almost universal acceptance of the strategy by the disability sector who recognise that it represents the first step of many to really address disability issues. Given that the strategy is based on the premise that disability is caused by artificial barriers created by humans, this level of acceptance is expected.

I would, however, caution that further work needs to be done on resource allocation and time-lines. It was very disappointing to see a lack of detail in the implementation plans of some government agencies but given there was no allocation in this year's Budget for implementation of the strategy, it wasn't surprising. Hence, I look forward to resourcing issues being dealt with in subsequent Budgets.

Finally, DPA is very pleased to be involved in having ongoing input to assist the government to implement the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

G WILLIAMS

Gary Williams  
Chief Executive Officer  
DPA (NZ) Inc



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# 1. Introduction

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The New Zealand Disability Strategy was launched on 30 April 2001, after extensive consultation. This first report on progress in implementing the strategy covers the activities of 10 key government agencies for the three-month period from 1 July 2001 to 30 September 2001.

The strategy presents a long-term framework to change New Zealand from a disabling to a fully inclusive society. Its vision, based on a human rights perspective, is for people with disabilities to be able to say that they live in “a society that highly values our lives and continually enhances our participation”. To achieve this vision, the strategy outlines 15 objectives and 113 associated actions.

In spite of the short time period covered by this report, a considerable amount of progress has been made across departments in a range of areas to improve the participation and inclusion of people with disabilities.

The government will take the lead in implementing the strategy. However, its long-term success will also depend on the active support of other agencies, such as territorial local authorities (TLAs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Although these agencies are not required to develop implementation plans, this first report highlights the efforts of some agencies to build an inclusive society.

## 2. Legislative framework

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The New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 required the Minister for Disability Issues to develop a strategy called the New Zealand Disability Strategy, to “provide the framework for the Government’s overall direction for the disability sector in improving disability support services”.<sup>2</sup>

Under the act, the minister is also required to consult with relevant organisations and individuals before determining or altering the strategy,<sup>3</sup> and to report on progress in implementing the strategy each year.<sup>4</sup> The strategy, and any amendment, replacement or report, must be made available to the public and to the House of Representatives.<sup>5</sup>

In May 2000, the Minister for Disability Issues established a sector reference group to advise on the content of and the consultation process for the strategy. Extensive consultation followed the publication of the discussion document, *Making a World of Difference – Whakanui Oranga*, and 700 submissions were received. They included submissions from individual people with disabilities, their families and whānau, service providers and advocates, and feedback from 68 meetings around the country.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy was released on 30 April 2001. The strategy goes further than required under the legislation, providing a framework to address disability issues (not just services) across society.

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<sup>2</sup> New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000, section 8(2).

<sup>3</sup> New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000, section 8(3).

<sup>4</sup> New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000, section 8(4).

<sup>5</sup> New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000, section 8(5).

# 3. The objectives of the NZDS

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- 1: Encourage and educate for a non-disabling society;
- 2: Ensure rights for disabled people;
- 3: Provide the best education for disabled people;
- 4: Provide opportunities in employment and economic development for disabled people;
- 5: Foster leadership by disabled people;
- 6: Foster an aware and responsive public service;
- 7: Create long-term support systems centred on the individual;
- 8: Support quality living in the community for disabled people;
- 9: Support lifestyle choices, recreation and culture for disabled people;
- 10: Collect and use relevant information about disabled people and disability issues;
- 11: Promote participation of disabled Māori;
- 12: Promote participation of disabled Pacific peoples;
- 13: Enable disabled children and youth to lead full and active lives;
- 14: Promote participation of disabled women in order to improve their quality of life; and
- 15: Value families, whānau and people providing ongoing support.

A number of other strategies and initiatives complement the New Zealand Disability Strategy. They include the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy, the New Zealand Health Strategy, the Māori Health Strategy, the Pacific Health and Disability Action Plan, and the Youth Development Strategy.

# 4. Implementation

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The New Zealand Disability Strategy is the first government strategy to address the needs of people with disabilities on a cross-sectoral basis. The 10 key government agencies most involved in developing the strategy drew up implementation work plans for 2001/2002. These agencies are:

- Ministry of Education;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Justice;
- Department of Labour;
- Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs;
- Ministry of Social Development;
- State Services Commission;
- Te Puni Kōkiri;
- Ministry of Transport; and
- Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and Specialist Education Services also contributed to the development of the strategy and to the implementation work plans, through agencies to which they are linked (ACC worked with the Department of Labour, and Specialist Education Services with the Ministry of Education).

From 2002/2003, all government agencies are expected to develop and report against annual implementation plans. Overarching reviews of progress will also be undertaken after five and 10 years.

In order to objectively measure progress in achieving the strategy's objectives, a long-term monitoring framework is being developed.

## Implementation work plans for 2001/2002

When the New Zealand Disability Strategy was launched on 30 April 2001, government departments had already prepared their annual budgets and overarching work plans for the year. For this reason, the focus of work plans to implement the strategy in 2001/2002 has been on extending or enhancing work that departments already planned to do, within existing financial baselines.

The Ministry of Health's Disability Issues Directorate is currently responsible for coordinating the implementation work plan process on behalf of the Minister for Disability Issues. The ministry consulted with other key departments to develop a work plan template. Agencies were encouraged to target their work plans to:

- identify short-term and achievable projects, as well as steps towards larger, long-term projects;
- approach the strategy at corporate, policy and service-delivery levels; and
- consider generic government activities (such as developing an accessible website), work unique to each department, and intersectoral work, identifying which department would take a leading role.

Work plans also had to take account of:

- the department's assessment of the relative priority of the objectives of the strategy, including intersectoral priorities;
- work that is needed as a matter of urgency or logistical necessity;
- work under way which aligns with the strategy's vision, objectives and actions; and
- the New Zealand Disability Strategy sector reference group's set of proposals for the strategy, put forward to the government in late 2000.

The government approved the work plans of the 10 key agencies. Their work plans can be found on the New Zealand Disability Strategy website at [www.nzds.govt.nz](http://www.nzds.govt.nz), or by contacting the Disability Issues Directorate in the Ministry of Health.

## 5. Wider government initiatives

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The government has established a number of overarching initiatives in response to the strategy. These initiatives also appear on the work templates of agencies that have the lead roles in implementing them.

A review has been undertaken to identify issues affecting equity of access to, and coherence of, services and support for people with disabilities. This review was initiated by government at the time of the launch of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. It was led by the Ministry of Social Policy, and included input from relevant government agencies and key players in the disability sector. The government has now asked the Ministry of Social Development to lead work to address the identified issues.

All Cabinet papers, and policy development, are now required to reflect a disability perspective, where appropriate.

The Ministry of Health is currently responsible for the development and coordination of the strategy. Further work to determine the appropriate mechanism and agency to oversee ongoing implementation and monitoring of the strategy is under way.

## **6. Government department reports on implementing the NZDS**

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The following section is based on the self-reporting of the 10 key government agencies that drew up implementation work plans for 2001/2002, and covers the three months from 1 July to 30 September 2001.

Agencies' achievements and initiatives are grouped under the 15 objectives of the strategy, and where relevant, may be repeated under a number of objectives.

The short timeframe for reporting and absence of a formal monitoring process means that this first report may not cover all initiatives and work in progress. This situation is expected to be remedied in future reports.

## **Objective 1: Encourage and educate for a non-disabling society**

The launch of the strategy has been the catalyst for increased disability awareness by government agencies. Some progress has been made to build disability awareness into regular staff induction and training.

The Ministry of Health's national campaign, "Like Minds, Like Mine", to counter discrimination against people experiencing mental illness, is a good example of how to raise awareness and change public attitudes. This campaign is to be funded for a further three years.

Efforts are also being made to increase numbers of Māori and Pacific peoples with disabilities on agency files of people available to be appointed to decision-making positions (Te Puni Kōkiri; Ministries of Pacific Island Affairs, Women's Affairs).

The Ministry of Education has a number of reference groups that advise on special education policy development and implementation. These groups include representation by people with disabilities.

## **Objective 2: Ensure rights for disabled people**

Many projects related to the strategy have a human rights component.

The government made major decisions in the period under review on a new human rights framework for New Zealand. These decisions will have a major impact on the rights of people with disabilities.

As a result of these decisions, the Ministry of Justice is leading development of the Human Rights Amendment Bill, passed in December 2001. Central to this act is the removal of the exemption of government activities from the Human Rights Act, and the establishment of the Bill of Rights anti-discrimination standard for government activities (with the exception of employment-related discrimination, or racial or sexual harassment, for which the Human Rights Act standard will still apply).

The Ministry of Justice is also:

- advising on possible changes to the Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act 1998, which will improve safeguards for people giving enduring powers of attorney and later becoming mentally incapable of managing their affairs; and
- ensuring that polling places are physically accessible for the 2002 general election, so people with disabilities can more easily exercise their right to vote.

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with stakeholders, has developed two resources on rights and responsibilities for students with special needs – one for parents and whānau, the other for school boards of trustees.

## Objective 3

# Provide the best education for disabled people

The Ministry of Education, supported by Specialist Education Services (SES), is responsible for most reported initiatives relating to this objective.

Amendments to the Education Act (October 2001) will enable the ministry to provide more active leadership to schools. The implementation of recently amended national administration guidelines<sup>6</sup> increases the requirements on all schools to identify and support students with special education needs.

The Ministry of Education is striving to ensure that young people with disabilities help to inform decisions about their education. This has been achieved by students contributing to the scoping phase of the research into integrated, effective practices to support children and young people with physical disabilities, and being given the opportunity to provide feedback on residential services at Homai National School for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

Preparations are being made to integrate SES and the Ministry of Education into a new, more responsive ministry, from 1 March 2002. This includes a staff training component on the New Zealand Disability Strategy as part of the transition planning.

From the end of February 2002, special education services currently provided by SES will be integrated into a new Special Education Group in the Ministry of Education. The group will work with local communities to establish a Learning Support Network to support children, parents, early intervention programmes, schools and specialist service providers.

The Learning Support Network will help provide a more coordinated service for children with special education needs. It will enable special education to be more responsive to local needs, while at the same time creating national consistency, leadership and a direct line of accountability to the government for fundholding and service provision.

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<sup>6</sup> National Administration Guideline 1.3.

A number of new initiatives were launched in October 2001. The Ministries of Health and Education have collaborated on two of these initiatives:

- improving support services for children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD);  
and
- funding a project to develop services for people who are deafblind – the first government funding for these services.

## Objective 4: Provide opportunities in employment and economic development for disabled people

Objective 6 (foster an aware and responsive public service) is closely linked with objective 4.<sup>7</sup>

The launch of the *Pathways to Inclusion* document in September 2001, following a review of vocational services led by the Department of Labour, was the most significant employment-related achievement. The document signals a new direction for vocational services, aimed at achieving greater participation of people with disabilities in employment and in communities. The document contains vocational strategies, which fall under the New Zealand Disability Strategy. These vocational strategies, and the anticipated repeal of the Disabled Persons Employment Promotion Act 1960 (under which sheltered workshops receive a blanket exemption from minimum wage and holidays legislation) will occur within five years.

Reports from other agencies indicate efforts to improve:

- internal Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) processes, employment support and monitoring related to people with disabilities (Te Puni Kōkiri; Ministries of Social Development, Justice, Health, Transport, Women's Affairs);
- transitions for young people with disabilities moving from school to work (a joint initiative of the Ministries of Education and Social Development);
- staff disability and strategy awareness training (Ministries of Education and Social Development);
- recognition of the needs of employees with disabilities where agencies are responsible for work-related legislation, codes and manuals (Department of Labour);
- support and opportunities for Sickness and Invalids Benefit recipients to move into the paid workforce (Ministry of Social Development); and
- support for non-governmental organisation (NGO) projects to improve vocational services and practices, and NGO staff training (Ministry of Social Development).

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<sup>7</sup> Most government-wide initiatives, many by the State Services Commission, are discussed under objective 6. Initiatives listed under objective 4 focus more on employment achievements within particular departments, or on departments promoting employment beyond the government sector.

## **Objective 5: Foster leadership by disabled people**

While few government departments report progress in this area, the inclusion of people with disabilities in working and reference groups has increased markedly and is now considered the norm. The concept of working in direct partnership with people with disabilities on an ongoing basis is also evident in some agencies (the Northern Locality of Disability Issues Directorate, Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education).

The Minister for Disability Issues has established a reference file of people with disabilities available for appointment to committees and boards. Efforts by other agencies (Te Puni Kōkiri; Ministries of Pacific Island Affairs, Women's Affairs) to extend appointment files to include people with disabilities have been mentioned under objective 1.

## Objective 6: Foster an aware and responsive public service

Reports under this objective fell into three main areas.

### 1. **Improved recruitment and advancement for people with disabilities in the public sector.**

The State Services Commission has taken a lead role and initiated a number of projects. These include:

- a survey of graduate students with disabilities about their knowledge and perceptions of the public service as an employer;
- a project to improve senior management development within the public service including removing barriers to recruitment for people with disabilities;
- an EEO disabilities seminar (*Understanding of disability and impairment in everyday lives*) for EEO co-ordinators and human resources advisors in the public service; and
- expansion of the Mainstream programme, which provides supported employment opportunities for people with disabilities within the public service.

### 2. **Improved accessibility of communications and information.**

The inaccessibility of much government information to people with disabilities was highlighted in submissions on the strategy. In response to this, the strategy was released in a number of formats, including large print, Braille, tape, easy-to-read and pictorial versions. It is also available on the Ministry of Health's New Zealand Disability Strategy accessible website.<sup>8</sup>

In July, the State Services Commission E-Government Unit issued the first version of government web guidelines, which aim to standardise the development of government websites. The guidelines include a requirement that websites be accessible to all, including people with disabilities. Other departments report considerable activity in this area (Ministries of Education, Social Development, Justice, Transport, Health, Women's Affairs).

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<sup>8</sup> Accessible in this context means that the website complies with international World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative Guidelines.

Two departments are changing their print standards to make their written material readable by people with vision impairments (Ministries of Health and Education). As part of decisions related to the introduction of a new human rights framework, the State Services Commission will also lead work to produce guidelines on access to non-electronic government information, to improve access for people with disabilities.

### **3. Improved physical access to buildings and equipment for staff or clients.**

For example, several agencies have become more aware of the need to set aside accessible car parks (Ministries of Justice, Social Development, Women's Affairs) and provide accessible computer systems (Ministry of Transport). The Ministry of Social Development is updating its *Manager's Guide to Building Access and Usability Requirements*.

## **Objective 7: Create long-term support systems centred on the individual**

Departments report a range of progress in this area.

The Ministry of Health focused on a number of key areas:

- making services more responsive to Māori with disabilities or mental illness: Māori Health is funding a number of te reo speakers to become sign language interpreters; Disability Issues is developing a Māori Disability Action Plan; and Mental Health is developing a cultural assessment tool for its services;
- making services more responsive to Pacific peoples: for example, the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and Ministry of Health's Pacific Health Team are developing a Pacific Health and Disability Action Plan;
- clarifying responsibility for funding at the boundary between services for people with disability support and mental health needs (the Mental Health and Disability Issues Directorates). A lack of clarity to date has led to clients "falling through the cracks" between these services;
- ensuring District Health Boards address the needs of people with disabilities (whether staff or clients): for example, by ensuring that health services are accessible to people with disabilities; ensuring that information about services is accessible; and acting as good employers;
- contracting new services and arranging training for new staff to ensure the successful implementation of the Intellectual Disability (Compulsory Care and Rehabilitation) Bill, once it is passed;
- continuing deinstitutionalisation: the Kimberley Centre resettlement plan for residents with intellectual disabilities has been agreed. All 375 residents will be resettled in the community over the next four years, beginning in June 2002. The decision recognises the right of people with intellectual disabilities to live in the community with the necessary support to meet their personal, medical and social needs. It is based on the recommendation of a working group representing all stakeholders including the Kimberley Parents and Friends Association, MidCentral District Health Board, Māori, consumers, advocacy representatives and the Ministry of Health;

- continuing to improve particular service areas such as community support services for people with mental illness; and
- improving the health and disability workforce: for example a sector reference group, including consumer representatives, met to develop skills and competencies for Health and Disability Care Workers (personal care workers).

The Ministry of Social Development will report to the Minister of Social Services and Employment by mid-2002 on options to improve current eligibility, assessment and review processes for the Invalids Benefit.

The scoping phase of Ministry of Education–funded research into integrated, effective therapy services for children and young people with physical disabilities has ended. This research was commissioned by an advisory reference group comprising a wide range of stakeholders, including parents, people with disabilities, and educational and health professionals. The Ministry of Health will be a partner in the next phase of the research, which begins in 2002 and will consist of an analysis of overall resourcing and individual case studies in a range of settings.

The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, and the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development have worked together on a cross-sectoral Strategy for Children and Young People with High and Complex Needs. A national unit to deliver cross-sectoral services for this group of young people began operation in July 2001.

## **Objective 8: Support quality living in the community for disabled people**

Many reports under objective 8 are intersectoral in nature. One focus of activity is intersectoral housing issues for people with mental illness, including the consideration of:

- homelessness and transience;
- boarding houses (including extension of the Residential Tenancies Act 1986);  
and
- coordination and support needs.

There are a series of projects to develop an awareness of mental illness for private providers of housing services and opportunities for improving and developing housing facilitation services. The Ministry of Social Development researched housing needs for this group for Housing New Zealand, while the Ministry of Health is leading an intersectoral work programme that includes housing needs, as well as vocational options, for people with mental illness.

The Ministry of Transport is being guided by the New Zealand Disability Strategy when developing policy and legislation for land transport in three main areas: the accessibility of new scheduled public transport; the accessibility of routes to connect buildings, public spaces and transport systems; and nationally consistent access to passenger services where there is no accessible public transport.

## **Objective 9: Support lifestyle choices, recreation and culture for disabled people**

Several reports refer to action area 9.1, “Support disabled people in making their own choices about their relationships, sexuality and reproductive potential”:

- the Ministry of Justice has instructed that the interests of people with disabilities be taken into account in the development of legislation on Assisted Human Reproduction;
- the Minister of Health launched phase one of a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy in September, which makes explicit reference to the needs and rights of people with disabilities; and
- the Ministry of Education has launched a professional development programme and resource for teachers and boards of trustees, called *Inclusive Sexuality Education*.

## **Objective 10: Collect and use relevant information about disabled people and disability issues**

The recent Ministry of Social Development-led review of the equity of access to and coherence of services and support for people with disabilities, and other reviews, have identified the need for more consistent and improved collection of data on disability in the New Zealand population and across government departments.

Data collected by government agencies should be able to be used alongside data from Statistics New Zealand's post census Disability Surveys<sup>9</sup>. Improved data would make it easier to measure equity of access to and coherence of government-funded services and support, as well as assist with monitoring the implementation of the strategy.

The Ministry of Health is currently developing nationally consistent approaches to collecting disability support services data.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs, and other agencies, have worked with Statistics New Zealand's Consultative Committee to refine questionnaires used for the 2001 Disability Survey. The Ministry of Women's Affairs reports that the survey will assist their policy development.

Research on people with disabilities comes under this objective, and many projects (some already mentioned) have a research component. For example, the Ministry of Education has completed the scoping phase of research into developing more effective practices to support children and young people with physical disabilities. Young people with disabilities have had input into decisions on this research.

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<sup>9</sup> Statistics New Zealand carried out the first post-census household Disability Survey in 1996, and an accompanying residential survey soon after. The second post-census household Disability Survey was carried out from June to October 2001, and the residential survey was completed by the end of November.

## **Objective 11: Promote the participation of disabled Māori**

The strategy acknowledges that the Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand's founding document and that the government is committed to fulfilling its obligations as a Treaty partner. Central to the Treaty relationship and implementation of Treaty principles is a common understanding that Māori will have an important role in developing and implementing disability strategies for Māori, and that the Crown and Māori will relate to each other in good faith with mutual respect, cooperation and trust.<sup>10</sup>

The strategy states that Te Puni Kōkiri should undertake a leadership role in promoting the participation of Māori with disabilities.

Consistent with these commitments to Māori with disabilities, Te Puni Kōkiri and other key government departments report considerable activity in:

- developing policy: Te Puni Kōkiri has scoped a project on how Māori with disabilities will be considered in all policy development;
- recruiting Māori with disabilities by government departments (Te Puni Kōkiri, and State Services Commission through the Mainstream programme);
- ensuring mainstream providers of disability services are accessible to and culturally appropriate for Māori with disabilities and their whānau (Ministries of Health and Social Development);
- ensuring accessibility of buildings and websites for Māori with disabilities, and use of interpreters fluent in te reo for Māori Deaf (Te Puni Kōkiri; Ministry of Health); and
- establishing more disability support services designed and provided by Māori for Māori. This is referred to in the draft Māori Disability Action Plan of the Disability Issues Directorate, Ministry of Health.

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<sup>10</sup> The New Zealand Disability Strategy, page v.

## **Objective 12: Promote the participation of disabled Pacific peoples**

The strategy states that the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs should undertake a leadership role in promoting the participation of Pacific peoples with disabilities.

Reports under this objective show several initiatives to make services more appropriate for Pacific peoples, and to build capacity of Pacific providers, for example:

- the government has approved a State Sector Pacific Provider Development Framework, which the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs developed with input from five other agencies;
- the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Pacific Health Team, Ministry of Health are developing a Pacific Health and Disability Action Plan; and
- the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Health and Disability Commissioner's office are working on a strategy to improve responses to Pacific peoples who need advocacy or support services.

## **Objective 13: Enable disabled children and youth to lead full and active lives**

The strategy states that the Ministries of Youth Affairs and Social Policy should undertake a leadership role in promoting the participation of children and youth with disabilities.

Most progress reports did not separately identify the age group focus of projects. However, many of the projects impact directly and indirectly on the ability of children and youth with disabilities to lead full and active lives. These projects are listed under strategy objectives such as:

- *Provide the best education for disabled people (3);*
- *Create long-term support systems centred on the individual (7); and*
- *Support quality living in the community (8).*

Progress reported by the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development and the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services as well as population ministries (Te Puni Kōkiri; Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs) in relation to children and youth with disabilities, includes:

- students with disabilities contributing to the scoping phase of research to develop more effective practices for children and young people with physical disabilities;
- students with disabilities providing feedback on residential services at Homai National School for the Blind and Visually Impaired; and
- a review of Operational Protocols for equipment and therapy is due to be completed by June 2002 by the Ministries of Health and Education. This work will focus on cross-sectoral vision, shared processes for assessment and funding, and will involve a stakeholder reference group.

## **Objective 14: Promote the participation of disabled women in order to improve their quality of life**

Few progress reports separately identified the extent to which women with disabilities were the focus of projects. Many issues relevant to women with disabilities will be included under:

- *Create long-term support systems centred on the individual (7);*
- *Support quality living in the community (8); and*
- *Support disabled people in making their own choices about their relationships, sexuality and reproductive potential (9.1).*

The strategy states that the Ministry of Women's Affairs should undertake a leadership role in promoting the participation of women with disabilities. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is developing a Women's Strategy, which will look at increasing women's equality and participation in society. Priority groups have been identified and include women with disabilities, Māori, Pacific, low income, rural and migrant women. Consultation with women will occur early next year (including women with disabilities).

## Objective 15

### Value families, whānau, and people providing ongoing support

The Disability Issues Directorate, Ministry of Health, has made progress on improving the range of support services provided for people with disabilities and their carers. These include:

- a trial project to recruit and train informal carers;
- extending the range of carers who can participate in family/whānau carer programmes;
- trialling more culturally responsive and flexible carer support options: for example, the Tongan Langafonua Community Centre is operating a mobile service in central Auckland; and
- using flexible funding packages in more creative ways to achieve new options for providing carer relief.

Many children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have high and complex needs, and their families are placed under great stress. The Ministry of Health is responsible for leading an interdepartmental working group to improve ASD services. As part of improving support services, the Ministry of Health is funding the post-graduate diploma at Massey University, which allows people to specialise in working with people with ASD.

There have been a number of new initiatives including the EarlyBird programme, jointly funded by the Ministries of Education and Health, to support and train parents of children and young people with ASD.

At the other end of the age spectrum, the draft Health of Older People Strategy focuses on integrating health and support services to promote positive ageing. The draft strategy has a strong emphasis on services that are responsive to the needs of older people and their family, whānau or carers. Increasing responsiveness requires a greater focus on health promotion and community-level health care and support. Better-coordinated services that are simpler to access and culturally appropriate should greatly assist family and whānau of older people.

## Response of other government departments

Other government departments that did not specifically develop implementation plans for 2001/2002 have also taken steps to support the New Zealand Disability Strategy.

For example:

- the Department of Internal Affairs has made its website accessible in line with e-government standards; and
- the Department of Conservation (DOC) has developed a *People Diversity Strategy* that sets goals, including achieving greater numbers of women, Māori, Pacific peoples and people with disabilities in the DOC workforce, especially at management level.

# 7. Implementation by other agencies

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The Ministry of Health sought informal feedback from a number of agencies on their approach to the strategy. The examples below, while not a representative sample, show that many agencies are taking up the challenge to implement the strategy at local and other levels.

## The Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission has developed a medium-term strategy to address disability issues. This strategy links outcomes to New Zealand Disability Strategy objectives 1, 2 and 5. The commission's strategy emphasises:

- the principles of accessibility, acceptability and appropriateness in its work;
- the need for close consultation with people with disabilities; and
- the need to have staff with disabilities.

The commission notes that disability issues complaints outnumber all other grounds of complaint.

## Auckland Disability Providers Network

In June this year the Auckland Disability Providers Network<sup>11</sup> hosted a forum for community-based agencies, including providers of disability services. The Minister for Disability Issues chaired the forum, which focused on the New Zealand Disability Strategy and how it could be applied. Many people with disabilities spoke of their experiences living in and moving around the community.

Subsequently, a network subcommittee has written a Transport Strategy for the Auckland region. This strategy has been endorsed by network members. The Auckland Disability Issues Advisory Group of the Auckland City Council is supporting advocacy around accessible transport issues including the network's transport strategy.

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<sup>11</sup> The Network is supported by 170 community-based agencies.

The network had input into an Auckland Mayoral Forum held in July, and worked with the Ministry of Health's Northern Locality Team to hold a forum in October on regional implementation of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. The network is currently writing a Disability Strategy Action Plan for Auckland in 2002.

## Local Authorities

The **Auckland City Council** Disability Relationship Project has been strengthened by the strategy and is consistent with its objectives. Initiatives within the project, based on consultation with people with disabilities, include:

- ensuring council communications are in accessible formats, with more positive images of people with disabilities;
- disability awareness training for staff; and
- establishing a Disability Issues Advisory Group (DIAG) and contracting a disability advisor. The position of disability advisor is the first of its kind in New Zealand and recognises personal experience of disability as a specialised area of knowledge.

The Auckland Mayoral Forum in July, which the Minister for Disability Issues addressed, provided an opportunity for the Disability Issues Advisory Group and people with disabilities to make planners, compliance officers and services staff aware of the needs of people with disabilities, and the barriers that daily confront them. The forum pointed to the strategy as a framework to overcome these barriers, and called for an Auckland-wide implementation strategy.

Several other councils have established disability committees, and specific disability policies.

**Christchurch City Council** has produced a policy on Equity and Access for People with Disabilities as part of its efforts to remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating in, and contributing to, community life. This policy was developed after extensive consultation with the wider Christchurch disability community.

**Palmerston North City Council** is working to develop a memorandum of understanding with DPA Palmerston North on how they will work together to implement the strategy. Areas of work have included improving:

- accessibility of public buildings;
- social activities for people with disabilities;
- accessible transport, roading, footpaths and walkways; and
- removing barriers in sport, recreation and leisure.

**New Plymouth District Council** has adopted a policy of a Barrier Free District. The objective of this policy is to make all services, facilities and buildings accessible to people with disabilities. Significant financial resources have been allocated to changing older district facilities that do not have appropriate access.

**Rodney District Council** has worked with the Rodney Disability Advisory Group for a number of years. This is a local initiative to increase inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities living in Rodney. Local initiatives taken by the council are in keeping with the objectives of the strategy.

## **Wanganui Disability Expo**

Inspired by the New Zealand Disability Strategy, in June 2001 Good Health Wanganui, Te Korimako Whanau Ora and the Whanganui Disability Resource Centre held an expo of services, equipment and support for disability organisations and people with disabilities living in the region. The expo encouraged people to take up the strategy at a regional level, and the district council, the local District Health Board and the local hospital all indicated interest in developing strategy implementation plans.

# 8. Monitoring and evaluation

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Effective monitoring and evaluation is critical to the successful implementation of the strategy. In addition to an annual report to the House of Representatives, overarching progress will be reviewed after five and 10 years.

Advice is currently being developed for the Minister for Disability Issues on options for the long-term monitoring of the strategy. This report will consider how people with disabilities and the wider disability community can be involved in monitoring arrangements. This work will also determine the appropriate mechanism and agency to oversee ongoing implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

# 9. Conclusion

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Ten key government agencies developed work plans for 2001/2002 to implement the New Zealand Disability Strategy. This report covers their achievements and initiatives for the three months from 1 July to 30 September 2001. It shows considerable initial progress, given the short timeframe and lack of formal monitoring process.

Overall, agencies have responded well to the strategy's challenge to change attitudes, as well as policies, practices and legislation.

Many departments have focused on infrastructural issues such as human resources, physical access, communications and consultation, staff training and information. Many are working together on cross-sectoral initiatives.

A number of key initiatives have also occurred in the timeframe. These include the decision to close Kimberley and resettle its 375 residents with intellectual disabilities in the community; and the launch of *Pathways to Inclusion*, signalling a new employment focus for vocational services for people with disabilities, and the planned repeal of the Disabled Persons Employment Promotion Act 1960.

Future reports on progress will be more comprehensive and will cover a full calendar year. From next year, all government departments are required to prepare annual work plans to implement the strategy, and will be monitored against them. Work is also under way to determine the appropriate long-term mechanism and agency to oversee ongoing implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

This document (and the 10 government department work plans) are available on the New Zealand Disability Strategy website at [www.nzds.govt.nz](http://www.nzds.govt.nz).

This document is also available in large print, electronically, Braille and audiotape on request from:

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