



# Cabinet

## Minute of Decision

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### Accelerating Progress Towards Accessibility in New Zealand

#### Portfolio                      Disability Issues

On 3 December 2018, following reference from the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee (SWC), Cabinet:

- 1        **noted** that barriers to accessibility prevent disabled New Zealanders from fully participating in society and realising their full potential in life;
- 2        **noted** that the prevalence of disability is increasing as the population ages;
- 3        **noted** that New Zealand is not fully accessible at present, and that disabled New Zealanders continue to report major areas of non-accessibility and uneven compliance with voluntary accessibility standards;
- 4        **agreed** to commence the design of an approach to achieve a fully accessible New Zealand, in collaboration with key stakeholders;
- 5        **noted** that the design of an approach to achieve a fully accessible New Zealand will include exploring the feasibility of using legislation that provides for standards and codes for accessibility;
- 6        **noted** that pursuing a policy work programme on achieving full accessibility would provide many advantages, including:
  - 6.1      enabling New Zealand to meet its international obligations, including Article 9, Accessibility, in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
  - 6.2      strong alignment with emerging themes in the new strategy for an ageing population;
  - 6.3      consistency with the age-friendly cities and communities approach promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO), which New Zealand is committed to as a member of the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities;
  - 6.4      enabling the achievement of national obligations, including Outcome 5: Accessibility, in the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016 – 2026;
  - 6.5      alignment with government priorities, including the wellbeing of New Zealanders, and ensuring that everyone is earning, learning, caring or volunteering;
  - 6.6      achieving change faster, and promoting sustained change;

- 6.7 improved economic and social outcomes for disabled people;
  - 6.8 economic benefits and cost savings;
  - 6.9 positive benefits to both public and private organisations, such as higher patronage from disabled people, and the retention of highly skilled workers who become disabled;
  - 6.10 sending a clear message that disabled people are equal citizens, with the right to participate fully and equally in society;
- 7 **noted** that a review of similar international jurisdictions offers valuable insights on possible approaches to accelerating accessibility in New Zealand;
- 8 **noted** that there are future challenges and issues to be aware of, including:
- 8.1 a current lack of clarity on potential costs to the public and private sector;
  - 8.2 that developing and implementing an accelerated accessibility approach would be resource intensive and require a long term work programme;
  - 8.3 that the effectiveness of any approach requires the support of interested parties;
  - 8.4 that the timeframe required for any solution might exceed the government's term of office;
  - 8.5 that any accessibility legislation could be controversial, given the likely impact on business, and that stakeholder concerns will need to be managed;
- 9 **invited** the Minister for Disability Issues to report back to the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee with an interim update on progress of the policy work programme, by 30 June 2019;
- 10 **noted** that the Minister for Disability Issues intends to publicly announce the decision to commence the design of an approach to achieve a fully accessible New Zealand.