

# Government launches new Ministry of Disabled People

**Hon Carmel Sepuloni**Minister for Social Development and Employment

**Hon Poto Williams**Minister for Disability Issues

**1 July 2022**

In what is a milestone day, the Government has launched Aotearoa New Zealand’s first Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People, and New Zealand’s first Ministry that will have a NZ Sign Language name, as well as Te Reo Māori and English names.

It comes as Health New Zealand and the Māori Health Authority also officially take effect from today, in what is a significant moment for our country as we stand up a fully national health service.

“Today marks a new chapter for approximately 1.1 million disabled people in Aotearoa New Zealand, and is a significant step toward realising true partnership between Government and disabled people, tāngata whaikaha, their whānau, carers and supporters,” Minister for Social Development Carmel Sepuloni and Minister for Disability Issues Poto Williams announced today.

“Last year we announced a suite of changes for disabled people as part of our Health and Disability System reforms. Today we take the next steps in our disability system transformation,” Carmel Sepuloni said.

“Budget 2022 underlined the Government’s commitment to delivering bold and transformational change for the disability community with over $1 billion of new funding for the sector.

“The disabled community has waited decades for this moment. That’s why work will continue to ensure the new Ministry has the time to get its people and systems established so that it’s well placed to get the transformation right.

“The Establishment Unit, Governance Group, Community Steering Group and officials have been making rapid and pragmatic decisions, informed by community consultation, to stand up the new Ministry and ensure we were ready to go by 1 July.

“As the outgoing Minister for Disability Issues, I want to extend my thanks to everyone for the contributions made. The changes being shepherded through are a reflection of hard work and advocacy from across the sector,” Carmel Sepuloni said.

“I know that it’s been a long journey for many in the sector and as the new Minister for Disability Issues, I look forward to this next exciting new chapter as we work together to achieve our shared vision of transforming Aotearoa into a non-disabling society,” Poto Williams said.

“In the spirit of ‘Nothing About Us, Without Us’, the new Ministry will start the ball rolling with ensuring the Ministry’s culture and values are mana-enhancing, the governance and partnership arrangements are meaningful, and the mechanisms that will give effect to disabled peoples voices are enduring.

“The Ministry will lead and coordinate disability policy across government, including improving outcomes for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, health and wellbeing.

“Having worked across the community, voluntary and social services sectors, including in residential disability services, I’m looking forward to engaging with the disability community to achieve better outcomes for our disabled people.

“Today is another step on the journey toward creating a more inclusive society. It’s a journey which must include all New Zealanders in order to grow awareness and recognise disabled peoples’ potential, and the Government is committed to the part we must play along that journey,” Poto Williams said.

**End**