# Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled PeopleMessage from Paula transcript

Kia ora koutou, ko Paula Tesorierro toku ingoa.

Ko te tumu whakarae ahau i te Manaatu Whaikaha.

My name is Paula and I'm the Chief Executive of Whaikaha - the Ministry of Disabled People.

I'm sitting in a chair next to the interpreter wearing a white top, silver earrings, and I have short, light brown hair and my sign name is this, which represents two pedels moving in a forward direction, mimicking a bicycle as I was a former Paralympic cyclist.

I need to talk to you, our community, my community. At the end of what has been a very difficult week for you,

I want to acknowledge that the news about the Purchasing Rules and Equipment Modification Services took you by surprise.

We know that the way in which we went about announcing these changes caused stress and anxiety. And for that, I am sorry.

I also want you to know that lessons have been learned by many and it will inform the way we work in future. Please know that the hard work of family carers is incredibly valuable and we understand that the announcement about the changes and the level of flexibility was particularly tough to process.

I also want to reassure you that supports, including respite, remain and people still have the choice over who delivers that.

It is whoever the disabled person and whānau feel safe with.

These changes were made because we have seen a significant and ongoing increase in the demand for our supports. It was important for us to act immediately.

Here's my pledge to you now. We are doing all we can to help clarify these changes. Including a Q and A section that we've added onto our website. This is being constantly updated as we answer new questions.

We will share these updates directly with Hosts, NASCs, and others. As we know, they are getting a lot of questions too.

The government will be looking at our funding for the upcoming budget. The Minister and I will now work on broader changes to policy settings.

We need to do that to put the system on a more sustainable financial footing.

And most important, disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, whānau, family carers and parents will be involved in this work to ensure that our funding is being spent where it is most needed.

Nō reira, aroha mai, aroha atu.

Ngā mihi nui kia koutou katoa.