



**HEALTH & DISABILITY COMMISSIONER**  
**TE TOIHAU HAUORA, HAUĀTANGA**

# **Is your Agency Committed to the Convention?**

**Suggested actions for implementing the United Nations  
Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities for  
government agencies**

## **United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities**

New Zealand signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities on 30 March 2007, and ratified the Convention on 26 September 2008. It received a great deal of support from people with disabilities across the country and provided hope that it will increase the momentum of the implementation of the New Zealand Disability Strategy. The purpose of the Convention as stated in Article 1 reads as follows:

*“The purpose of the present Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all people with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.*

*People with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”*

## **Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa**

### **Greetings to you all!**

It's always good to challenge ourselves and to move out of our comfort zones. It's important to acquire new knowledge and to try working in new ways. I challenge you to create an exciting work environment and to stimulate your staff to go beyond the usual to discover better, more effective ways of doing things to be non-disabling.

As part of our role in promoting the articles of the Convention and the objectives of the New Zealand Disability Strategy, the Health and Disability Commissioner, with the advice and support of the office's Consumer Advisory Group, has devised some useful tips to assist disability service providers across the country to implement the Convention at an organisational level. As part of the same initiative, we encourage you, as office bearers of a public service, to take reasonable actions within your power to fulfil the purpose of the Convention. Please note that New Zealand needs to submit a progress report to the United Nations every four years.

We recognise that your obligation is to 'progressively realise' the articles of the Convention within the bounds of available funding. Accordingly, your agency may already have implemented some of the actions suggested herein, or it could be a work-in-progress. This is an invitation to work towards as many of the suggested actions as possible within your agency. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of all the things you can do to implement various articles of the Convention. Please refer to the Useful Links section for more ideas and resources.

If you have any questions regarding this resource, please contact our office on 09 373 1060 or email [hdc@hdc.org.nz](mailto:hdc@hdc.org.nz)



**Tania Thomas**

**Deputy Health and Disability Commissioner — Disability**

# **Suggested Actions:**

## **1. Accessible Information:**

- a) Ensure that all information issued from your agency is available in various accessible formats. This may include Braille, large-print, easy-read, plain-language, audio, and New Zealand Sign Language
- b) Ensure that your website is tested for accessibility and meets the New Zealand Government Web Standards 2.0.

## **2. Accessible Environments:**

Ensure that all your office premises, including the access routes to your office buildings from the road and/or car parks meet the NZS 4121:2001 – Design for Access and Mobility standards and appropriate provisions of the Building Act 2004. Also ensure that any external venues that you use to host any meetings and/ or events are fully accessible.

## **3. Disability Responsiveness Training:**

Provide Disability Responsiveness Training to all your frontline staff and managers, and to those back office staff who interact with the members of the public either face to face or over the telephone. Also ensure that your staff are aware of current respectful disability language and terminology use.

## **4. Consultation with Disability Community:**

Crucial policy and funding decisions made by you have significant impact on the provision of disability services. Therefore it is important to ensure that the development of such policies and other decision-making processes are actively influenced by the disability community (i.e. disabled people and their wider networks including consumer groups). This will help promote leadership within the disability community.

## **5. Disability Focus on Public Communication:**

Ensure that all public communication (through newsletters, magazines, website, etc.) includes a disability perspective. This includes incorporating disability related issues and stories alongside other material to recognise disabled people as part of New Zealand's diverse population.

## **6. Employment:**

Take reasonable efforts to employ people with disabilities in the public sector and ensure that “reasonable accommodation” is provided to assist disabled employees to carry out their work effectively. This includes advertising using all possible networks to ensure that people with disabilities learn about job vacancies; ensuring that recruitment processes are accessible (i.e. accessible venue and other disability support is provided); and using employment options such as job sharing, providing flexible hours, and providing necessary adaptive equipment.

If you wish to read the articles of the Convention in detail or need more guidance on what you can do to implement the Convention, the following links may be useful.

### **Useful Links:**

To read and understand what the Convention means for New Zealand, visit:

<http://www.odi.govt.nz/what-we-do/un-convention/index.html>

For help on accessible information, visit:

<http://www.webstandards.govt.nz/new-zealand-government-web-standards-2/>

<http://www.rnzfb.org.nz/ourservices/readingandwriting/accessibleinformation>

<http://www.odi.govt.nz/resources/guides-and-toolkits/disability-perspective/resources/plain-language.html>

For help on providing accessible equipment and environments, visit:

<http://www.barrierfreenz.org.nz/>

For information on fundamental human rights, visit:

<http://www.hrc.co.nz/home/default.php>

For information on providing reasonable accommodation in a work setting, visit:

<http://www.workbridge.co.nz/?page=1335>

For other relevant information, visit:

<http://www.odi.govt.nz/resources/guides-and-toolkits/disability-perspective/index.html>

<http://www.eeotrust.org.nz>

<http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/home.asp>

<http://www.hdc.org.nz/publications/other-publications-from-hdc/disability-resources/making-it-easy-to-communicate-effectively-with-disabled-people>



For further information and help:

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