

Open letter:

Enable disabled people, family and whānau to thrive

14 May 2024

**To: The Honourable Louise Upston, Minister for Disability Issues
and of Social Development**

The Honourable Nicola Willis, Minister of Finance

Tēnā kōrua Minister Upston rāua ko Minister Willis,

We write as organisations representing disabled people, their families and whānau, disability support services, and the wider disability community.

We know that disabled people and those who love, support and care for us could be thriving right now. We could contribute to our communities in ways that work for us without fear of losing the income we need to support us.

But persistent underinvestment from successive Governments for disabled people and our wellbeing means many of us are spending precious energy just trying to keep our heads above water.

When others decide who is worthy of support and on what conditions, they often fail to recognise the extent to which health conditions, disabilities, cost of living pressures and employment-related barriers impact on our community.

When Government fails to resource our disability ministry enough to flexibly support our disabled community and whānau, we are funnelled towards poverty, stress, and isolation.

It doesn't have to be this way.

We urge Government to:

- Fully reverse the restrictions within the Disability Support Services Purchasing Guidance and to Equipment and Modification Services made on 18 March 2024.
- Recognise disability support and services as frontline work and fund accordingly.
- Ensure an equitable, culturally responsive approach to resourcing support and services to disabled people across the whole of Government.
- Recognise that people with disabilities and health conditions are the experts on the barriers we face by increasing income and employment support and removing sanctions that cause harm to disabled people.
- Support meaningful involvement of disabled people, whānau and the wider disability sector in all Disability Support System reviews and high-level decisions.

There is a pressing need for Government to demonstrate that it values disabled people as key members of our community by ensuring that disabled people and their families and whānau have the resources they need to thrive.

With hope,

- Disabled Persons Assembly NZ Inc.
- Access Community Health
- ActionStation Aotearoa
- Adult Guardianship Services Trust
- Aotearoa New Zealand Adult Safeguarding Alliance
- Ara Hina Consultancy
- Association of Blind Citizens of New Zealand (Blind Citizens NZ)
- Auckland Action Against Poverty
- Auckland Women's Centre
- Beneficiaries and Unwaged Workers Trust
- Carers NZ
- CCS Disability Action
- Child Poverty Action Group
- Complex Care Group
- Continence NZ
- Deaf Aotearoa
- Deafblind Association of New Zealand Charitable Trust
- Disability Connect
- Disability Leadership Canterbury
- Disabled People Against Cuts Aotearoa
- Donald Beasley Institute
- Enabling Good Lives Taranaki
- Fairer Future Coalition
- Foundation for Equity and Research New Zealand
- Fragile X New Zealand
- Good Lives Wairarapa
- liFUNZ
- Inclusive Education Action Group Incorporated
- Kanohi ki te Kanohi
- Methodist Alliance
- Migrants Against the Acceptable Standard of Health Aotearoa
- My Life My Voice
- National Disabled Students' Association
- New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services
- New Zealand Disability Support Network
- NZ Carers Alliance
- NZ Disability Advisory Trust Inc
- NZ Foundation for Conductive Education
- Older Disabled Persons Group
- Parents of Vision Impaired NZ
- People First NZ
- Poverty Free Aotearoa
- Project Gender
- PSA Deaf and Disabled Network Committee
- Public Housing Futures
- Public Service Association
- Rare Disorders New Zealand
- Save the Children New Zealand
- System Change Aotearoa
- Te Ao Mārama Aotearoa
- United Community Action Network (UCAN)
- VIPS – Equity in Education
- VISABLE
- Young Carers NZ



TE HUNGA HAUĀ MAURI MŌ NGĀ TĀNGATA KATOA

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ



Blind Citizens NZ



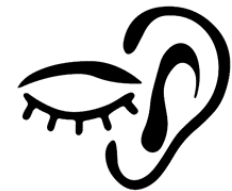
Equity in Education



Whakakaha te Oranga Taranaki



Parents of Vision Impaired (NZ) Inc. Providing a community to support parents of children with vision impairments



Deafblind Association New Zealand Taringa Turi Kāpō Rōpū





Adult Guardianship SERVICES



PROJECT+ GENDER

continence NZ



CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP



New Zealand Council Of Christian Social Services

#ENDASHNOW!



New Zealand Foundation for CONDUCTIVE EDUCATION ENABLING THE ABILITY IN DISABILITY

