

## Meeting with Office for Disability Issues and the Disabled Peoples Organisations Coalition about the Tertiary Education Strategy

### **When:**

- 3:00 PM on 31/05/2019

### **Where:**

- Comfort Hotel conference room

### **Attendees:**

- **ODI** – Jacinda Keith (Senior Advisor)
- **DPO coalition** (4 members)  
Rose Wilkinson (Chief Executive at Blind Citizens NZ),  
Gaylene Te Rauna (President of Kāpō Māori Aotearoa NZ),  
Joanne Dacombe (Disabled Persons Assembly NZ),  
9(2)(a) [did not hear what organisation she represents - check]
- **MoE** – Ewan Delaney (Manager, TES representative) and Lauren Bell (APA, A&P policy team)

**Ewan** outlined the basics of the TES – it is a requirement and it provides direction to the Tec. In its current draft form, the TES has three priorities. Key priority of interest was one relating to 'Equity for all learners'

He asked for feedback from the DPOs coalition and ODI regarding: '*what are the shifts we need to see in the tertiary system?*', and '*how would we invest differently?*'.

He also asked for specific feedback on the proposed priorities: '*Do the priorities work?*', '*Is something missing or do we need a new priority?*', and '*If these priorities are right, then what needs to change in the system?*'

**DPO coalition** wanted clarification around what 'Equity for all learners' meant and encompassed.

**Ewan** indicated that we are speaking in terms of equitable outcomes.

**DPO coalition** (in particular, Joanna) asked how we will work towards these outcomes and how will we address the actual needs (i.e. in response to the diversity of disabilities).

**Ewan** asked **DPO coalition** to indicate where there are weaknesses in the current system – i.e. support services. He gave examples regarding inadequate funding of te reo (action will be to review this funding)<sup>1</sup> and the need for better career advice (action will be to create qualifications for career advisors (?)).

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<sup>1</sup> Near the closing of the meeting one of the **DPO coalition** members (Rose) brought up this point in relation to NZSL. It is also one of our national languages and many people want to learn it. Could the review extend to NZSL?

**DPO coalition** responded to Ewan's point by highlighted that the improved careers advice and services will also greatly help disabled people (as they currently experience poor transitions into tertiary education and employment).

**ODI** (Jacinda) drew focus to the Government's *New Zealand Disability Strategy* (NZDS). Outcome 1 of the strategy is about education (see Annex 1). The NZDS should be consulted and considered when thinking about tertiary education for disabled people.

**DPO coalition** highlighted that changes for disabled people should not just consider students. It needs to be wider than that – needs to consider everyone in, and who is influenced by, the system (i.e. staff and family members too). For instance, the system needs to consider how we support teachers and staff with disabilities, and also ensure that teachers and staff are responsive to, inclusive of, and competent in the needs of, disabled learners. Also need to support family (i.e. information access).

**DPO coalition** also highlighted that transitions are a real issue for disabled learners. This includes transitions from secondary to tertiary, and from tertiary into employment.

One **DPO coalition** member (9(2)(a) ) discussed how disabled women are often worse off than disabled men (this is the case in NZ, and around the globe). As such, disabled women experience a 'double-bias' – they are discriminated against for being a woman AND disabled.

One **DPO coalition** member (Rose) indicated that disabled people want to know about other disabled people who have been successful (both in education and employment). Maybe this could be linked into improved careers advice and services (mentioned earlier by **Ewan**).

**ODI** (Jacinda) and the **DPO coalition** then went on to talk about the importance of *reasonable accommodations*<sup>2</sup>. There is a guide on reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities (see Annex 2), which was published in 2015 by NZ's Independent Monitoring Mechanism (comprising the Office of the Ombudsman, the Human Rights Commission and the Convention Coalition Monitoring Group).

**ODI** (Jacinda) and the **DPO coalition** suggest that the reasonable accommodations guide is a good place for education providers to start. Could be that providers incorporate guide into BAU.

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<sup>2</sup> The term reasonable accommodation refers to an adjustment made in a system and based on a proven need to accommodate an individual with a disability.

Went on to highlight that currently disabled learners are not getting the support that they need, during their whole experience through tertiary education.

One **DPO coalition** member (Gaylene) indicated that some of her members did not receive the right *level* of support – specifically, they were babied (tutors/helpers were too involved, removing key opportunities for independent learning) or they did not have reasonable accommodations of support. Suggested that in some circumstances staff are not competent to work with disabled learners.

**Ewan** highlighted that there is an equity based approach for Māori and Pacific learners put forward by Universities New Zealand. He asked whether there is a similar initiative or approach for disability.

**DPO coalition** suggested that a good approach would be:

- **Reasonable accommodations** – all educational providers should provide reasonable accommodations for their disabled learners
- **Awareness raising** – specifically around the notion that many disabled people are highly capable and independent (i.e. address and break down long-standing stereotypes regarding disabled learners),
- **Accessibility Accreditation** – it is expected that all government agencies will sign the Accessibility Charter<sup>3</sup> (launched by ODI in 2018). Agencies and organisations that sign the Charter must work towards ensuring that all their information intended for the public is accessible to everyone (i.e. available in a range of accessible formats). More information on the Charter is in Annex 3.
  - The **DPO coalition** suggest that this expectation to sign the Charter be extended to all education providers. This would be the ideal 'first-step' approach.
  - Related to accessibility, the online interface for tertiary education needs to be easier to navigate. Joanne highlighted that some disabled learners find it hard to navigate through the complexities of some online interfaces (this can include provider websites and student support websites – like StudyLink).
- **Disability Action Plans** – we spoke about the work TEC has done around good practice in other countries, which includes a requirement for Australian tertiary education providers to issue Disability Action Plans as a requirement for funding [may need to check details with **9(2)(a)** at TEC]. DPO coalition and ODI (Jacinda) had talked to TEC about this idea. They agree that it would be a good direction to take, but would like to see some examples first.

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<sup>3</sup> Note that MoE has signed this Charter

**Ewan** detailed how he and his team have heard so far that education providers need to '*meet learners where they are*'. This means being able to accommodate for learners when they enter into tertiary education.

In terms of what to do next, we discussed possible people/providers to get in touch with as well as specific next steps.

Possible people/providers to get in touch with:

- Anne Hawker – Principal Disability Advisor (MSD)
- Victoria University of Wellington - Disability services, including the disability and inclusion advisors [Jacinda and Rose said they would track down her name?]
- AUT – DPO coalition and ODI (Jacinda) suggest that best practice regarding disability services are provided here.
- Canterbury also has some good contacts.

Next steps:

- We will come back with a draft TES, and will have a two month period for consultation (during July and August).
- Work on getting the consultation documents accessible – Sort with Sally Jackson (MoE). Need roughly a two month lead in.

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**Annex 1:** New Zealand Disability Strategy, Outcome 1 – Education (link and copy)

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Access via: [odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/education/#accordion-71-heading](https://odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/education/#accordion-71-heading)

Outcome 1 – Education: “We get an excellent education and achieve our potential throughout our lives.”

**What our future looks like:**

Our learning pathway supports us to develop friendships and social skills, as well as resilience, determination and confidence. It gives us a sense of belonging, builds our identity and language skills and prepares us for life beyond compulsory education.

All local schools and education services (including early childhood, primary secondary, tertiary, kohanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori) are welcoming and provide a great inclusive education for us. We have trained teachers and educators who support and believe in our progress and achievement, and value our contribution to the learning environment.

Education is provided in a way that supports our personal, academic and social development, both in and out of the formal schooling system. This includes making sure that those of us who use different languages (in particular New Zealand Sign Language), and other modes or means of communication, have ready access to them to achieve and progress.

Information will be made available at the right time to those who support us, both when we are young or for those of us who need on-going support. This will help us succeed – whatever our individual education pathway may look like.

We are treated with respect and dignity by those around us in the education system, including our peers and those who teach and support us. The love and expertise of our families and whānau and their wish to see us succeed in education will be honoured without question. As we move on to tertiary and life-long learning, the transition periods are smooth, with the right information and supports available at the right time – particularly when our needs or situation changes.

**What this means:**

- Disabled people are consulted on and actively involved in the development and implementation of legislation and policies concerning education, including early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education.

- Access to mainstream education is inclusive (including policy, practice and pedagogy).
- Services that are specific to disabled people are high quality, available and accessible.
- Inclusive education is a core competency for all teachers and educators.
- Decision-making on issues regarding education of disabled people is informed by robust data and evidence.

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**Annex 2: Reasonable Accommodations guide (HRC and Ombudsman)**

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Access via:

Human Rights Commission - [hrc.co.nz/news/reasonable-accommodation-guide-focussing-persons-disabilities-released/](https://www.hrc.co.nz/news/reasonable-accommodation-guide-focussing-persons-disabilities-released/)

Ombudsman - [ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources-and-publications/guides/disability-rights-guides](https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources-and-publications/guides/disability-rights-guides)

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**Annex 3:** The Accessibility Charter (ODI) template for organisations (link and copy)

Access via: [odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/the-accessibility-charter/](http://odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/the-accessibility-charter/)

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# Accessibility Charter

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Our organisation is committed to working progressively over the next five years towards ensuring that all information intended for the public is accessible to everyone and that everyone can interact with our services in a way that meets their individual needs and promotes their independence and dignity.

Accessibility is a high priority for all our work.

This means:

- meeting the New Zealand Government Web Accessibility Standard and the Web Usability Standard, as already agreed, by 1 July 2017
- ensuring that our forms, correspondence, pamphlets, brochures and other means of interacting with the public are available in a range of accessible formats including electronic, New Zealand Sign Language, Easy Read, braille, large print, audio, captioned and audio described videos, transcripts, and tools such as the Telephone Information Service
- having compliance with accessibility standards and requirements as a high priority deliverable from vendors we deal with
- responding positively when our customers draw our attention to instances of inaccessibility in our information and processes and working to resolve the situation
- adopting a flexible approach to interacting with the public where an individual may not otherwise be able to carry out their business with full independence and dignity.

Our organisation will continue to actively champion accessibility within our leadership teams so that providing accessible information to the public is considered business as usual.

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Chief Executive

Manager Communications

Manager IT

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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New Zealand Government