

# Access Alliance



## Access Alliance Brief - Accelerating accessibility to grow Aotearoa New Zealand's economy

[The Access Alliance](#) is a movement comprised of ten founding member organisations from the disability sector, working with a range of supporting organisations, business champions, and nearly 7000 individual supporters, representing and advocating for people with access needs. This group includes disabled people, older people, Māori, migrants, people with English as a second language, and those with temporary injuries. Our goal is to have accessibility legislation, that sets out a legislative framework for how accessibility standards across a number of domains will be developed and implemented over time to accelerate accessibility. This will cover key areas of economic activity like building policy and regulation, labour market, government procurement, small business, and tourism.

### Partnership with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) on the Government's Accelerating Accessibility Work Programme

- In December 2018, Minister Sepuloni announced the Government's '*Accelerating Progress Towards Accessibility in New Zealand*' to design an approach to achieve fully an accessible Aotearoa New Zealand. Throughout 2019 and 2020, the Access Alliance supported MSD to develop robust advice on this work programme.
- In March and April 2019, the Access Alliance hosted workshops with business, older people and carers to seek their thoughts on how to accelerate accessibility in New Zealand.
- We continue to engage with business peak bodies, and encourage businesses to see that enabling accessible goods, services and facilities is the smart thing to do.

### A cross section of the business sector is supportive of accessibility legislation, if it's coupled with awareness, education and support on how they can become accessible over time

- In March and April 2019, the Access Alliance hosted workshops with a cross section of the business sector – sole traders, partnerships, small businesses and companies - from individual owners, managers through to executives and board directors. Common themes from the workshops were that the business sector:
  - understands how accessibility legislation will benefit staff, customers, and the bottom line.
  - wants awareness and education, and practical guidance when they need it, as they progress through their accessibility journey.
  - is on the accessibility journey with pockets of innovation around the country



# Access Alliance



- The Inaugural Access Alliance People's Choice Awards for Business in February 2020 celebrated early-adopter businesses and organisations who are leading the way to open doors, remove barriers and include people with access needs in a variety of ways. Work is underway for a virtual 2021 People's Choice Awards.
  - [Early-adopter businesses](#) are already implementing accessibility improvements and are supportive of legislation. Vector, Trade Me, Genesis Energy, Ricoh NZ, Sudima Hotels and many other Kiwi businesses are proving that accessibility is a win-win. However, guidance is clunky or non-existent, so it's hard for businesses to know what to do.

## Accessibility legislation will cover key areas of economic activity like building policy and regulation, labour market, government procurement, small business, and tourism.

- The downstream economic benefit from increased labour force participation for people with access needs is that it leads to an increase in spending on retail, leisure activities, travel and other consumption. Take disabled people for example:
  - 44.3% of working age disabled people are economically inactive. This is four times higher than non-disabled people at 11.5%. Lack of job opportunities and lack of transport options are the two main reasons.<sup>1</sup>
  - The rate of unemployment for disabled people is 50% higher than the unemployment rate of the total workforce as at 2018.<sup>2</sup>
  - Decreasing the unemployment rate for disabled people (9.2%) to the national rate (6.1%) would reduce the number of people on benefits by 14,000 and the future welfare costs over 10 years would save up to \$3 billion. Equalising the unemployment rate for disabled people to the national rate would add \$1.45 billion annually to real GDP.<sup>3</sup>

## Accessibility is a profitability opportunity for every business to access an untapped market of customers.

- In 2016, the UK 'Click-Away Pound' survey found that more than 4 million people abandoned a retail website because of the barriers they found, taking with them an estimated spend of £11.75 billion. In 2019, that lost business, the 'Click-Away Pound', has grown to £17.1 billion<sup>4</sup>.
- Leading companies who recognise the needs of diverse populations through accessible and universal design outperform their competitors and new markets open to them. The estimated disposable income of the 1 billion disabled people globally is US\$8 trillion<sup>5</sup>.
- Almost a quarter (24%) of Kiwis identify as having some form of impairment. People aged over 65 are much more likely to be disabled (59%). There were approximately 11,000



serious injuries in 2017. These figures are increasing due to population growth and longer life expectancy.<sup>6</sup>

- A 2% increase in productivity through improved educational outcomes for disabled people would:
  - increase in real GDP of \$862 million
  - result in a \$608 million household spending growth
  - grow exports by an estimated \$254 million.<sup>7</sup>

## Improvements to accessibility will lower barriers to participation for New Zealanders and have flow-on benefits for visiting tourists.

- Accessible tourism is a lucrative yet highly competitive market, particularly with increasingly wealthy, ageing populations worldwide. People with access needs have a choice of destinations. The relative accessibility of accommodation, the urban environment, transport options, tours and attraction will be factors in their travel choices.
- The contribution of disabled tourists to Australia's tourism GDP ranged between 11% and 18% of total tourism GDP in 2003/04.
- Tourism is one of New Zealand's most important sectors. Tourism directly contributed \$12.8 billion to GDP in the year ending March 2016. Many accessibility improvements such as access to public buildings, transport and the urban environment will benefit tourists with disabilities and will differentiate New Zealand as a destination of choice for access tourists.<sup>8</sup>

More than 80% of Kiwis support mandatory accessibility legislation and regulations on enforceable access standards<sup>9</sup>. USA, Canada, Israel, Australia, United Kingdom, EU and Brazil have all passed legislation addressing access barriers, in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2008. New Zealand has yet to comply.

<sup>1</sup> NZIER, February 2017. *Valuing access to work*.

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/accessalliance/pages/109/attachments/original/1501493804/valuing\\_access\\_to\\_work\\_final\\_report\\_word.pdf?1501493804](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/accessalliance/pages/109/attachments/original/1501493804/valuing_access_to_work_final_report_word.pdf?1501493804)

<sup>2</sup> Stats NZ, 2018. Labour market statistics (disability): June 2018 quarter <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/labour-market-statistics-disability-june-2018-quarter>

<sup>3</sup> NZIER, 2017. *Valuing access to work*. page 17

<sup>4</sup> The report of the Click-Away Pound Survey 2019. Available for download at <http://www.clickawaypound.com/>

<sup>5</sup> 2016 Annual Report: The Global Economics of Disability (The Return on Disability Group, 2016). <https://www.rod-group.com/content/rod-research/edit-research-2016-annual-report-global-economics-disability>

<sup>6</sup> Stats NZ, 2014. Disability Survey: 2013

[http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/health/disabilities/DisabilitySurvey\\_HOTP2013.aspx#gsc.tab=0](http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/disabilities/DisabilitySurvey_HOTP2013.aspx#gsc.tab=0)

<sup>7</sup> NZIER, 2017. *Valuing access to work*. page 20

<sup>8</sup> NZIER, 2017. *Valuing access to work*. page 22

<sup>9</sup> UMR, July 2017. Full omnibus survey report available on request.