

Disability Action Plan Progress Report, June 2025

Purpose of the report

This report provides an update on progress against the Disability Action Plan. It is the second progress report for 2024/2025 in line with council's commitment to provide biannual progress updates to the Disability Advisory Panel. It gives an overview of the refreshed Disability Action Plan, outlines key findings from the progress update, and outlines opportunities to enhance the plan's effectiveness and visibility.

Our approach

In March 2025, council's policy team reached out to various departments across the council group to request updates on actions in the Disability Action Plan and to contribute any new actions. This included contacting Eke Panuku Development Auckland, Tātaki Auckland Unlimited and Auckland Transport requesting an update on their actions.

These actions were captured in the Disability Action Plan tracker, a spreadsheet enabling staff to update existing actions and add new ones.

Information from the tracker was then collated and actions were categorised in alignment with the Disability Action Plan's five themes:

- Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces
- Knowledge, communications and engagement
- Events and services
- Our workplace
- Transport.

Staff undertook a refresh of the Disability Action Plan at the same time as the progress update. The refresh is discussed in further detail below.

Structure of the report

This report provides updates on actions in the Disability Action Plan, structured by the five key themes. Each section provides an update on actions, including those that are new and completed.

Relevant case studies are also included throughout the report.

Limitations

While staff made efforts to engage all council departments and relevant council controlled organisations, the information in this report is limited to what was made available within the reporting timeframes. Given the scope of the work and size of the

organisation, not all relevant activities across the council group may be reflected in this report. Moving forward, staff will continue to work to address gaps in reporting where possible.

Overview: Disability Action Plan

Auckland Council aims to create a city where everyone can access, enjoy, and fully participate in all areas of community and civic life.

As part of this commitment, Auckland Council developed the Disability Action Plan (then, the Disability Operational Action Plan) in 2015. The plan aligns with the Auckland Plan 2050 and Ngā Hapori Momoho | Thriving Communities Strategy 2022-2032 by ensuring everyone in Tāmaki Makaurau can participate and feel like they belong, especially those that may face barriers to participation.

The Disability Action Plan outlines specific actions across various council departments and Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs). These actions encompass the provision of facilities, open space, events, buildings, services, information and communication, and a region-wide transport network. The plan's actions are organised into five key themes represented in the image below:

Key themes in the Disability Action Plan:

1. **Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces.** We aim to make it easy for everyone to participate fully in community and civic life.
2. **Knowledge, communications and engagement.** We aim to reach everyone with our communications and information and make this easy for people to find and understand.
3. **Events and services.** We aim to make our events and services easy to access and for everybody to enjoy.
4. **Our workplace.** We aim to be a supportive group of organisations that are great places to work.
5. **Transport.** We aim for our transport network to keep you and Tāmaki Makaurau moving and connected.

The Disability Action Plan emphasises the importance of ongoing monitoring and reporting as actions evolve. Auckland Council is committed to providing biannual updates to the Disability Advisory Panel on the progress of these actions, in line with the Panel's strategic priorities. Regular updates not only strengthen accountability for the delivery of actions, but also increase visibility on what council is doing to support the disability community.

Disability Action Plan has been refreshed to enhance its effectiveness

The progress update of actions under the Disability Action Plan was progressed at the same time as a refresh of the action plan. This is the first refresh since the plan was developed in 2015.

The refreshed plan has been improved in the following ways:

- **The plan has been renamed:** in September 2024, staff suggested renaming the plan to better reflect its focus on accessibility and simplify its title to reduce reliance on acronyms. The plan has since been renamed the Disability Action Plan.
- **Strategic links have been strengthened:** the action plan is now nested under Ngā Hapori Momoho | Thriving Communities Strategy (Ngā Hapori Momoho). Ngā Hapori Momoho emphasises the importance of improving outcomes for communities facing barriers and disparities, with disabled communities identified as a priority group. By nesting this action plan under Ngā Hapori Momoho, we have strengthened the action plan's mandate and role in driving equity and accessibility across Tāmaki Makaurau and provided examples of what Ngā Hapori Momoho looks like and means for disabled people in Auckland.
- **A new Transport domain area has been added:** the action plan now includes a new Transport domain area to reflect the amount of activity happening in this space and better categorise the actions in the plan. It also recognises the importance of transport as a key enabler of participation and inclusion.
- **Outdated actions have been refreshed:** the actions in the refreshed plan have been updated to align with the current action tracker, ensuring the plan is up to date and fit for purpose. This included merging or recategorizing actions as 'complete' where appropriate. These actions can continue to be updated in tandem with the biannual progress reports to ensure they remain relevant.
- **A new section on business-as-usual activity has been added:** not all of the work the council group does to support disabled people fits well within the context of an action plan. Because of the role this action plan plays in highlighting and sharing disability-related mahi across the council group, we have added a new section to showcase work that we are doing that supports disabled people but is part of business-as-usual activity. This section also helps provide context to the areas of the action plan where there are fewer actions and will continue to be updated to reflect the breadth of work happening across the council group.
- **A new 'status' category has been added:** to increase clarity on how actions are progressing and better reflect the status of actions in the action plan, we have introduced a new status category – "ongoing". The "ongoing" status means the action is currently underway but has no easily definable end point. For example, the action may be taking place over a long timeframe, or it may be something that we

have started doing as part of the action plan but is now part of business-as-usual activity. In time, some of these actions may be moved into the new business-as-usual section of the action plan as appropriate. We have also added a status definition page to the action plan to improve clarity.

The disability community in Tāmaki Makaurau

The 2023 Census showed the Auckland regional disability¹ rate was 6.3 per cent, or 82,872 Aucklanders. This is an increase from the 2018 Census (5.5 per cent) and slightly lower than the national average (7.5 per cent).

The largest proportion of Aucklanders with a disability were among those aged 65 years and over, at 16.6 per cent². There are also higher average disability rates among Māori and Pacific Peoples in Auckland, compared to other ethnicities³.

An Auckland disability snapshot was created based on the finding of the 2023 Census, and is available [here](#). This snapshot was circulated to the Disability Advisory Panel via memorandum in March 2025.

Statistics New Zealand's 2023 Household Disability Survey⁴ also found that for adults (aged 15 years and over), difficulties with physical functioning were the most common. For children (aged under 15 years), the most common difficulties were related to mental health and accepting change to their routine.

Data from the disabled respondents to the 2024 Quality of Life survey⁵ was not available at the time of writing this progress report. However, the 2022 Quality of Life survey offers recent insights into the experiences of disabled people in Aotearoa⁶, shedding light on the barriers and external factors that contribute to inaccessibility:

- **Quality of life:** around two thirds (65 per cent) of disabled respondents reported a good overall quality of life. However, this was lower than the rest of the sample (86 per cent).
- **Health:** just under half (45 per cent) of disabled respondents rate their physical health as good. A further 21 per cent rated it as poor, compared to 4 per cent of the rest of the sample.
- **Housing affordability:** just over half (53 per cent) of disabled respondents disagreed that their housing costs were affordable, compared to 43 per cent of the sample.
- **Economic stability:** disabled respondents (28 per cent) were less likely than non-disabled respondents (49 per cent) to say they have enough or more than enough money to meet their everyday needs.

¹ The Census' disability indicator reports an individual's disability status as per the Washington Group short set.

² 2023 Census.

³ 2023 Census.

⁴ People were counted as disabled in The Household Disability Survey if they – or for children, their caregiver – reported having difficulty in at least one of the aspects of universal human functioning (domains) that were measured in the survey and their level of difficulty met the threshold for that domain.

⁵ This survey is a collaborative local government project undertaken every two years.

⁶ In 2022, 7518 New Zealanders aged 18 years and over completed the survey.

- **Public transport:** 56 per cent of disabled respondents who regularly use public transport agreed that public transport is easy to get to. This was lower than for non-disabled respondents (63 per cent).
- **Social connection:** disabled respondents felt connected to their communities but also often experienced feelings of isolation. Two thirds (66 per cent) of disabled respondents agreed that it was important to them to feel a sense of community with others in the neighbourhood. However, around four in ten (44 per cent) agreed that they did not feel a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood. This follows a similar trend to non-disabled respondents. Despite relatively high levels of social and community connectedness, disabled respondents to the survey were more likely to 'always' or 'most of the time' feel lonely or isolated in the 12 months prior to the survey (28 per cent) than non-disabled respondents (9 per cent).
- **Discrimination:** instances of discrimination, prejudice, and intolerance were higher among disabled respondents. For example, 4 in 10 (42 per cent) said they had personally experienced at least one form of prejudice, intolerance, or discrimination in their local area or city, in the previous three months, compared to 28 per cent of non-disabled residents.

The 2022 Quality of Life Survey statistics highlight some of the structural inequities faced by the disability community. Council has a key part to play in reducing some of these barriers and improving accessibility for disabled people in Tāmaki Makaurau using its various roles and levers. The action plan plays a part in this, by collating and setting out council's actions to improve accessibility, tracking and monitoring progress on activity; and raising awareness and accountability for the delivery of agreed actions.

Summary of key findings

This section summarises the key findings from the Disability Action Plan progress update.

The majority of actions are already underway

The Disability Operational Action Plan tracker has 91 actions across Auckland Council, Eke Panuku Development, Auckland Transport and Tātaki Auckland Unlimited. Of these, 90 per cent are in progress (34 actions), ongoing (29 actions) or complete (19 actions). Some in progress actions involve ongoing continuous improvement or long-term projects. This overall progress reflects the organisation's commitment to improving accessibility across Tāmaki Makaurau.

Notable progress continues in the first, second and fifth themes

The organisation responded strongly in providing updates on existing actions and identifying new actions. A total of 13 new actions were added to the plan since the September 2024 progress report across the domain areas (excluding the *Transport* domain, under which 28 actions were added in September 2024), and an update was received for every action.

There was also considerable progress in the *Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces*, *Knowledge, communications and engagement*, and *Transport* themes, with approximately 82 per cent of actions in this progress update falling under these themes.

Actions are becoming more evenly spread across the five themes

While most actions still fall under *Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces* and *Knowledge, communications and engagement*, there has been a reduction in the proportion of total actions in these themes: 73 per cent of actions are now in these two themes (when excluding the new *Transport* domain), compared to 76 per cent from the September 2024 progress update. This indicates a more even spread of actions across all five domain areas, even when considering the new *Transport* domain.

New initiatives account for over a quarter of the total actions

There are 13 new actions, excluding new actions within the *Transport* domain area, which makes up 21 per cent of the total actions in the plan. When actions under the new *Transport* domain area are also included, the proportion of new actions rises to 48 per cent.

New actions are spread across various departments, with Environmental Services contributing four new initiatives. This new activity is partly due to policy staff engaging a wider range of departments, beyond those already involved, and utilising existing connections across the organisation to raise awareness of the plan. Going

forward, staff will continue to leverage these relationships and communicate broadly to ensure new actions are consistently added.

A significant amount of work is happening across the council group

The actions included in this action plan vary in breadth and scope. Some relate to relatively small, discrete changes (such as installing height-adjustable self-check units for libraries) others encompass large-scale changes, sometimes with multiple streams of work involved (such as incorporating accessibility into disaster resilience strategies), and others may seem straightforward, but are resource intensive and seek to make changes across the region (for example, accessible playgrounds in Auckland).

Many of the 91 actions in this plan fall on the broader end of the spectrum, indicating that the council group is undertaking a significant amount work to improve outcomes for disabled people in Auckland. However, further work is still needed to ensure everyone can fully enjoy all that our region offers. Staff will continue to communicate about the action plan and disability issues, seek new actions to include, and work with the Disability Advisory Panel to ensure Auckland is inclusive and our disability community can thrive.

Strengthening communication to enhance visibility remains a focus

Since the previous progress report, staff have created a dedicated page on Kotahi (Auckland Council's intranet) for the Disability Action Plan and set up an internal advisory rōpū with key staff across the council whānau who are either working in or have worked in the accessibility space, have lived experience of disability, or are passionate allies in the disability community. Rōpū meetings are a great space for staff to connect, share ideas and work through key issues together and have been used to help guide the refresh of the Disability Action Plan.

The need to strengthen communication about the plan, raise visibility about disability-related mahi happening and improve coordination of activity across the council group came through strongly in engagement with staff as part of this latest progress review and refresh process.

Continuing to focus on communication and better coordination will help ensure the council group has a joined up and holistic approach to supporting the disability community in Auckland and the council group's disabled kaimahi.

Staff will promote the refreshed Disability Action Plan launch internally and will publish the refreshed Disability Action Plan and its progress reports online for the public to view.

Not all disability-related work fits within the context of an action plan

Through engagement across departments, staff learned that the full scope of work council is doing in the disability space does not necessarily fit within the context of an action plan. Some work happening across the council group may fall under business-as-usual activity or involve continued implementation of actions from previous iterations of the action plan that were marked 'complete'.

We also know that not all of council's activity is being captured and reported in this action plan.

The action plan plays an important role in raising awareness and communicating what the council group is doing as well as helping to hold council accountable for progress. Moving forward, staff will work to identify and better promote more of council's disability-related mahi, including by regularly updating the new section on business-as-usual activity.

Next steps

Next steps are based on the analysis and findings from this 2025 progress review. These are intended to guide the council group in enhancing the plan's effectiveness and visibility, ensuring it remains relevant to advancing accessibility across the organisation.

1. Continue to provide biannual progress updates to the Disability Advisory Panel.
2. Continue to improve the visibility of the action plan by focusing on improving communication and coordination.
3. Continue to focus reporting on themes that have fewer actions, including Events and Services and Our Workplace.
4. Focus on expanding the new business-as-usual activity section of the Disability Action Plan to provide a fuller picture of the work the council group are doing.
5. Work with the Disability Advisory Panel to identify any other areas for improvement in relation to the Disability Action Plan and its monitoring and reporting.

Progress against actions

This section provides an overview of the progress of actions in the Disability Action Plan.

Most actions are already in progress or complete

Of the 91 actions in the Disability Action Plan tracker, 34 are in progress, 29 are ongoing, 19 are complete, 6 are planned; and 3 are on hold.

Number and status of actions by theme

The majority of actions fall under *Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces* (21 actions), *Knowledge, communications and engagement* (23 actions), and *Transport* (31 actions). The status of the actions for each theme varies, represented below:

- *Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces*: 1 complete, 7 in progress, 12 ongoing, and 1 planned.
- *Knowledge, communications and engagement*: 7 complete, 7 in progress, 6 ongoing, and 3 actions planned.
- *Events and Services*: 2 complete, 3 in progress, 1 ongoing, and 1 on hold.
- *Our workplace*: 4 in progress, 3 ongoing, and 2 on hold.
- *Transport*: 13 in progress, 7 ongoing, 2 planned, and 9 complete.

Actions are spread across various council departments

Actions in the plan are distributed across various council departments and council-controlled organisations. Some areas had more actions than others as shown in the list below. Departments with the most actions were Auckland Transport, Communications and Marketing, Planning and Resource Consents, and Waste Solutions.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| • Auckland Emergency Management: 4 | • Environmental Services: 4 |
| • Auckland Transport: 31 | • Governance and Engagement: 1 |
| • Building Consents: 2 | • Parks and Community Facilities: 5 |
| • Communications and Marketing: 7 | • People Safety and Wellbeing: 1 |
| • Community Facilities: 1 | • People Services: 2 |
| • Community Wellbeing: 3 | • Planning and Resource Consents: 6 |
| • Corporate Support Services: 2 | • Policy: 2 |
| • Customer Experience and Digital Services: 3 | • Pools and Leisure: 4 |
| • Eke Panuku Development Auckland: 3 | • Tātaki Auckland Unlimited: 4 |
| | • Waste Solutions: 6 |

Theme 1: Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces

We aim to make it easy for everyone to move around the city and to participate fully in community and civic life.

Progress has been made across various council departments in *Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces*, as reflected by the 21 actions in this area. The status of these actions is listed in the summary section of this document. Departments with the highest number of actions in this area are Planning and Resource Consents (6 actions) and Parks and Community Facilities (4 actions).

Highlights from this reporting cycle:

- Improvements to the Universal Design Hub on the Auckland Design Manual, including a new lighting checklist and the development of a neurodivergent persona.
- Accessibility upgrades to playgrounds across Auckland, including in the Ōrākei Local Board area and in Rānui.

The two lists below provide more commentary on existing and new actions. Completed actions with no further updates are also highlighted at the end of this section.

Actions under Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces

Universal Design Hub and Best Practice Advice

- Action owner: Planning and Resource Consents
- Current update: The Universal Design Lighting Checklist has been completed and published.

A new persona for people who are neurodivergent has been published.

Further guidance in this area is in the process of being developed.

A new checklist on Designing for Emergencies is planned for 2025.

- Status: Ongoing

Auckland Design Manual promotion

- Action owner: Planning and Resource Consents
- Current update: The Auckland Design Manual is now on Adobe Experience Manager, enabling Auckland Council websites to achieve the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 standards.

Continuous improvements are being made to the Council Web Pattern Library to ensure all content can be read well through screen readers, so that a diverse range of users are able to understand and use the website.

Universal Design Tool content has been streamlined and consolidated into the Auckland Design Manual Universal Design.

- Status: Ongoing

Design Review advice

- Action owner: Planning and Resource Consents
- Current update: The Universal Design team has been engaged to review a range of Council initiated and externally initiated projects in 2025 including: Downtown Car Park, Mills and Swanson, and the Symphony Centre.

A Universal Design Walking Tour of the Auckland CBD will be undertaken with Auckland Council graduates and members of the Tamaki Makaurau Design Ope in May 2025.

- Status: Ongoing

Design Advisor Triggers

- Action owner: Planning and Resource Consents
- Current update: Lifemark was engaged as part of the Auckland Urban Design Panel (AUDP) to review Kāinga Ora Housing Delivery System typologies.

CCS Disability Action was engaged to provide universal design expertise on the AUDP for Karaka centre.

The AUDP now features [biographies of all of the panel advisors](#)

- Status: Ongoing

Review Universal Design Outputs

- Action owner: Planning and Resource Consents
- Current update: Plan Change 79 (proposed changes to transport rules in the Unitary Plan) continues to progress. The Universal Design team continues to provide input, particularly in relation to accessible parking and pedestrian access.

The first full draft of the Experience of Disabled People in Medium Density Housing report was completed at the end of January 2025 and is being edited as of April 2025.

- Status: Ongoing

Universal Design Forum

- Action owner: Planning and Resource Consents
 - Current update: The Universal Design Forum continues to flourish and work collaboratively together on the development of new universal design guidance. An external lighting expert loaned their capability prior to the publishing of the Lighting Design checklist which was appreciated. A new member has been added with experience in Emergency Egress design. A number of Auckland Council graduates and interns from planning backgrounds have also attended meetings to further their learning and development. Meetings are held approximately 6-weekly.
- Status: Ongoing

Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) Collaboration

- Action owner: Building Consents
- Current update: The MBIE Code advisory panel has been re-set and aims to resume shortly, depending on the pace of building consenting reform and Ministerial priorities. Auckland Council is also using the Building Officials of NZ (BOINZ) association to provide building code feedback to MBIE as well as our own.
- Status: Ongoing

Information evenings

- Action owner: Building Consents
- Current update: There have been industry association group presentations over the last 12 months. Not all have included accessibility topics however BRANZ advisory council has raised accessibility as a research topic which they are working on. Auckland Council continues to raise disability-related matters when possible at meetings such as code update forums.
- Status: Ongoing

Review accessibility of facilities

- Action owner: Auckland Emergency Management
- Current update: Auckland Emergency Management is working with Parks and Community Facilities as asset owners to increase resilience, including accessibility, of council facilities and potential Civil Defence Centre locations.
- Status: Ongoing

Seek to incorporate universal design principles in the housing for older persons portfolio and services review, in association with partners

- Action owner: Eke Panuku Development Auckland
- Current update: Eke Panuku, Auckland Council and Haumaru Housing continue to work on a sustainable funding model for the delivery of social housing for older people. Universal design is included in the Greenslade Cres Haumaru social housing project in Northcote being constructed by Kāinga Ora on council land. It will include the construction of 40 accessible units. This is due to be completed by the end of July 2025.
- Status: Ongoing

Apply universal design principles to all major upgrades/builds

- Action owner: Pools and Leisure
- Current update: No new builds since the last progress update.
- Status: Ongoing

Accessibility Audits

- Action owner: Pools and Leisure
- Current update: No further work has been undertaken on accessibility reviews at this stage. This will be discussed as part of the work programme conversations for the next financial year.
- Status: In progress

Accessible playgrounds in Auckland

- Action owner: Parks and Community Facilities
- Current update: Playgrounds across Auckland are being made more accessible. This can be, for example, increased use of ramps, wheelchair friendly furniture, vision boards, sensory equipment, different safety surfaces, and engagement with wider community to allow all voices to be heard when it comes to renewal of these parks and play spaces. Recent works in the Ōrākei Local Board area include:
 - removing the timber edge to the St Heliers Bay Playground when renewing the path to provide level access to the play equipment
 - Michaels Ave Reserve full renewal with collaboration from disability advocate regarding access and facilities.

The Rānui Domain playground has also recently been improved and made more accessible.

- Status: Ongoing

Commission park accessibility assessments

- Action owner: Parks and Community Facilities
- Current update: The regional parks team is collaborating with parks advisory to undertake accessibility assessments at five locations by end of May 2025. Regional parks to be assessed are Long Bay, Shakespeare, Ambury, Muriwai Gannet Colony, Waitawa. For this, the Accessibility and Inclusivity Checklist for parks and open spaces will be updated to be fit for regional park purpose. This checklist considers all aspects of a visit to a regional park, from looking for information online, to arriving and experiencing the park on site. The current focus will be on access to regional parks and accommodation.
- Status: In progress

Accessible beach initiatives

- Action owner: Parks and Community Facilities
- Current update: The design for the accessible path at Takapuna Beach is currently being reassessed due to significant concerns raised during a recent internal review. The originally proposed path—intended to improve accessibility—has been deemed impractical due to steep gradients, the need for extensive cutting and retaining, and required safety barriers. These design features have resulted in the path becoming

more of an obstruction than a solution, potentially disrupting the natural flow between the playground and beach and negatively impacting user experience.

The project team is now exploring alternative options, including a route that follows the existing ramp. A list of pros and cons for this alternative is being developed. As a result, the draft design is expected to be ready by May/June.

- Status: In progress

Internal Accessibility Assessments

- Action owner: Parks and Community Facilities
- Current update: Parks Advisory undertook 14 audits between December 2024 and January 2025 within the Papakura, Rodney and Kaipātiki Local Board areas.

Reports on accessibility recommendations for the parks have been sent to the elected members and ideas for implementation will be workshopped with the respective local boards in April - May 2025.

- Status: In progress

Capital works in Waste Solutions

- Action owner: Waste Solutions
- Current update: The most recent relevant works for this action have been at Waitākere Resource Recovery Park, where barriers to participation have been reduced/removed as much as practicable.

Stage 1 development at Waitākere Resource Recovery Park including a new re-use shop, deconstruction hub and repair workshop is complete. All areas are wheelchair accessible from the street. Design work for the Whangaparāoa Community Recycling Centre is underway and will include an accessible re-use shop.

- Status: In progress

New actions under Creating accessible buildings, places and spaces

Install height adjustable self-check units in Libraries

- Action owner: Community Wellbeing
- Current update: Height adjustable self-check units have been purchased.
- Status: In progress

Hibiscus and Bays Accessibility Assessments

- Action owner: Parks and Community Facilities
- Current update: Parks and Places Specialists team have undertaken accessibility assessments of various parks within the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board area which help inform the future renewal programme and projects by identifying improvements to enhance the overall accessibility and experience for all users.

Recommendations of each accessibility report are being reviewed and incorporated into future work programme/ renewal projects of parks and reserves.

- Status: In progress

Review accessibility of Experience Centres

- Action owner: Environmental Services
- Current update: The Environmental Services team are planning to review the accessibility of all five experience centres in Auckland.
- Status: Planned

Actions marked as complete since the last progress report

Investigate the integration of universal design into future development programmes

- Action owner: Eke Panuku Development Auckland
- Final update: Eke Panuku worked with the New Zealand Green Building Council to update the Homestar credits for inclusive design and continues to require HS6 for housing projects and HS7 for apartments. It is up to developers as to whether they seek the inclusive design credits but Eke Panuku continues to encourage this.

Case study: Rānui Domain playground accessibility upgrade

Background

The Rānui Domain playground has recently been substantially upgraded and made more accessible.

In 2019, the Henderson-Massey Local Board began work on an accessible play project. This included working with a Project Reference Group, made up from organisations with knowledge of accessibility, to gain valuable insights on play. Staff then progressed this work to look at potential sites and opportunities. This project aligned with the playground renewal programme and identified the opportunity for Rānui Domain to provide a playground with an accessible focus.

The project aligns with the Henderson-Massey Local Board Plan 2020 and 2023 outcomes, showing how targeted investment in public spaces can drive positive community outcomes.

Approach taken

Auckland Council staff worked with the Project Reference Group, Te Kawerau ā Maki, and students from Rānui Primary School to design and upgrade the Rānui Domain playground. The Project Reference Group provided valuable feedback throughout the different stages of this project and were crucial to its success.

Staff also utilised the [Parks Accessibility and Inclusivity Checklist](#) within the Auckland Design Manual throughout the design process, which promoted a review of all aspects of the site for accessibility and inclusivity.

The upgrade involved replacing the original small play module and swing set and making the play space much larger. It now includes a wide variety of inclusive play equipment, accessible seating, shade shelter, drinking fountain, paths, planting and a grassed area all set within perimeter fencing.

The playground's new design focuses on accessibility and inclusion, including ramp access to a slide, inground trampolines, a flush carousel, lounging hammocks, water play chutes and inclusive signage. Wet pour surfacing was used throughout the playground, increasing accessibility particularly for wheelchair and pushchair users. Five different swing types are provided for those with different needs and a communication board is prominently displayed. An accessible drinking fountain has been installed and park furniture is inclusive in design and well positioned.

The wider area was also considered with improved connectivity to the other areas of the park and accessible car parks located at the main playground entrance. Recently the public toilet was upgraded from a non-accessible facility to now providing four toilet pans, with two being accessible. Using a 'whole visit' approach is one of the successes of this project.

Impacts and outcomes

The playground upgrade has been met with positive support from the community, including from those with and those without access needs. We heard that:

- *“The communication board is awesome! My tamariki do not have a disability, however we have had some awesome kōrero about those with disabilities and how the communication board is one way to communicate with them. The swings are also an awesome addition”*
- *“My daughter is 4 years old and autistic. This has become the safest playground for us to take her and her younger sister who is 3 years old. My autistic daughter enjoys everything here.”*
- *“I love how inclusive this play space is for tamariki who have disabilities. I love that it is enclosed so I don’t have to worry about my kids getting out into the carpark. The equipment is challenging for my kids and helps them burn their energy. This play space has really brought the community together and is well used.”*

How this case study embodies Ngā Hapori Momoho

This case study links to the Ngā Hapori outcome of whanaungatanga, and objectives of improving health outcomes, improving access and participation, and growing community and intercultural connection.

Improving the accessibility of the playground supports disabled people and their whānau build relationships with their community and fully participate in community life. The accessible elements of the playground reduce barriers for disabled children, supporting them to feel included and that they belong. The accessibility of the new playground also supports improving health and wellbeing outcomes for disabled children and their whānau, acknowledging the important role parks and open spaces play in achieving these outcomes.

Theme 2: Knowledge, communications and engagement

We aim to reach everyone with our communications and information and make this easy for people to find and understand.

The *Knowledge, communications and engagement* theme is another strong area, with 23 actions across various teams. Most of these actions are already underway, with 7 completed, 7 in progress, 6 ongoing, and 3 planned. In this reporting cycle, the Communications and Marketing department had the most actions (6 actions) and since the last reporting update 6 new actions were identified under this theme, indicating council is making good progress in this area.

Highlights from this reporting cycle:

- A refreshed Auckland Emergency Management website has been delivered, which includes a new Alternate Formats tab that provides easy access to content in Easy Read and New Zealand Sign Language.
- The Vote Auckland website went live on 4 March 2025 on the new Adobe Experience Manager platform. This new website is 100% compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA standards.
- An accessible Auckland Council brochure/ guide for all waste services has been developed and is now available to anyone who requests it.

The lists below provide an update on existing and new actions. Completed actions with no further updates are also highlighted at the end of this section.

Actions under Knowledge, communications and engagement

Public alerting options and public communications channels

- Action owner: Auckland Emergency Management
- Current update: The refreshed Auckland Emergency Management website has been delivered and work continues to make enhancements that improve usability and accessibility. A new Alternate Formats tab gives easy access to content in Easy Read and New Zealand Sign Language (more will be added over time) and this page also points to [alternate format resources on the national getready.govt.nz website](https://www.getready.govt.nz/alternate-format-resources).
- Status: In progress

Disaster resilience strategies incorporate accessibility

- Action owner: Auckland Emergency Management
- Current update: Auckland Emergency Management (AEM) is using the recommendations from the Disability Advisory Panel's report "*Are we in your plan?*" to develop a Disability Sector Inclusion Programme, which will be presented to the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Committee in June 2025.

In March, AEM facilitated a workshop on personal and community emergency readiness at the general meeting of Blind Citizens (Auckland branch).

Taikura Trust has agreed to join the Auckland Welfare Coordination Group. Members of this group work together to ensure coordinated and effective welfare (emergency relief) responses.

The Local Board Emergency Readiness and Response Plans and summary documents were launched in February and uploaded to the [AEM website](#). A regional summary of essential information was translated into Easy Read and New Zealand Sign Language. These files are hosted under the new '[Alternate Formats](#)' tab on the AEM website. Easy Read copies were printed and shared with People First; copies are available on request.

The braille files of the *You Ready?* children's books were completed and will be made available for download by the end of June. The New Zealand Sign Language videos of these books are almost complete and will also be on the AEM website by the end of June.

- Status: Ongoing

Accessible communications training

- Action owner: Communications and Marketing
- Current update: Accessible communications and Our Voice training was given to members of Auckland Council's graduate programmes on 17 February 2025.
- Status: Ongoing

Ensure that information on our website is easy to understand and use

- Action owner: Customer Experience and Digital Services
- Current update: The Digital Services team continues to ensure accessibility best practice is being embedded into everyday work and planning.
The Vote Auckland website went live on 4 March 2025 on the new Adobe Experience Manager platform. This new website is 100% compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA standards. Council will continue to work towards this quality measure as the rest of the website content is eventually moved to the new platform.
The Digital Design Chapter will also continue to work with the Disability Advisory Panel to better serve people with access needs through various web practices.
- Status: Ongoing

Explore partnerships to improve communication and engagement with the disability community

- Action owner: Tātaki Auckland Unlimited
- Current update: 100 per cent of Front of House staff have completed an online training module in relation to the implementation of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Initiative. This initiative supports visitors and patrons to the venues with hidden disabilities that cannot be readily seen.

New Zealand Sign Language training for staff has also been supported and refresher training encouraged and built into employee work plan. Two team members working on public-facing New Zealand Sign Language tours are trained and practising via online courses.

- Status: Ongoing

Accessibility training for Digital

- Action owner: Customer Experience and Digital Services
- Current update: The Digital Team continues to work towards the global accessibility Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2AA rating in our everyday work planning, testing and delivery on SharePoint. They are also mindful of accessibility considerations as they plan for the future move to a new platform, Adobe Experience Manager.

Digital Services continues to ensure accessibility best practice is being embedded into our everyday work and planning.

- Status: Ongoing

Assisted Participation in Local Elections

- Action owner: Governance and Engagement
- Current update: The Elections Community Engagement team have connected with disability organisations to ensure elections content, programmes and events are accessible and promoted widely to all of Auckland's communities.

The Elections digital team have conducted an accessibility audit of VoteAuckland and collated resources into centralised pages for greater accessibility. The website has been moved to a new Adobe platform and passed Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) with 100 per cent score.

Assisted participation will be offered through electronic nominations available for the first time (system compatible with screen readers/accessibility software) and voting via phone dictation (available for the first time for local elections).

Key elections content is being translated into New Zealand Sign Language. E-braille is also being explored.

- Status: Ongoing

Photography to best represent disabled Aucklanders

- Action owner: Communications and Marketing
- Current update: One of the hero shots for the 2025 local elections campaign was a disabled Aucklander. A second photoshoot was completed at the new accessible playground in Takapuna.
- Status: In progress

Demographic profile of the disability community in Tāmaki Makaurau

- Action owner: Policy
- Current update: A demographic profile of the disability community in Auckland has been provided to the Disability Advisory Panel based on data from the 2023 Census. Further work to gather and share Auckland specific information from the 2023 Household Disability Survey will occur, where possible.
- Status: In progress

Disability-led climate adaptation pilot

- Action owner: Policy
- Current update: The pilot scope has been finalised and approved. Implementation is underway with a project lead and implementation partners onboard. Planning and preparation to establish an Expert Panel and deliver community workshops is underway.
- Status: In progress

New actions under Knowledge, communications and engagement

Update of Accessible Information and Communications Guidelines

- Action owner: Communications and Marketing
- Current update: In Financial Year 2026, the Brand and Studio team will be updating the Accessible Information and Communication Guidelines. The team would like to consider neurodiversity best practice, use of Word documents (as opposed to PDFs), potential for the role of AI.
- Status: Planned

Update Auckland Council branded Word document templates

- Action owner: Communications and Marketing
- Current update: This work will update the existing Auckland Council branded Word document templates used by kaimahi so that they provide more guidance on accessibility.
- Status: Planned

Disability Sector Inclusion Programme

- Action owner: Auckland Emergency Management
- Current update: Auckland Emergency Management (AEM) held a major welfare function exercise on 2 May 2025. Exercise Manaaki included testing roles and processes for activating civil defence centres. AEM arranged for a group of Yes Disability members to take part in the role play at one of the centres, to understand its accessibility (in a holistic sense - not just physical access). Feedback from participants is currently being collated.

AEM will also explore actions aligned to the [I.Lead report card on emergency management](#).

AEM has arranged for a group from People First to visit the Emergency Coordination Centre in June to talk about emergency readiness and how responses are coordinated. This will also enable AEM to learn about information solutions that work well for people in the group.

In June, the Principal Business and Partnerships and a representative from the Disability Advisory Panel will present to the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Committee on inclusive emergency readiness and response.

- Status: In progress

Website accessibility

- Action owner: Digital & Customer Experience
- Current update: The Libraries Digital Experience team are working to achieve Web Content Accessibility Guidelines compliance, and constantly applying accessibility principles in all the work they do.

This involves using plain language, using design, and writing principles that help users with vision impairments and screen readers access content easily.

All new pieces of content and design are evaluated to ensure these needs are being met.

- Status: In progress

Review accessibility and inclusion of education programmes

- Action owner: Environmental Services
- Current update: This planned work will review the accessibility and inclusion of Auckland Council's environment and sustainability education programmes delivered to schools.
- Status: Planned

Conservation website accessibility

- Action owner: Environmental Services
- Current update: The Community Conservation and Engagement team are ensuring the website [Tiaki Tāmaki Makaurau | Conservation Auckland](#) (TTM) is accessible against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

This includes reviewing the main council website to inform development of a plan to improve TTM's accessibility. It is assumed both sites have many of the same accessibility issues.

- Status: In progress

Actions marked as complete since the last progress report

Improved accessibility in communication brief forms

- Action owner: Communications and Marketing
- Final update: A mandatory field on accessibility is being maintained, which includes links to Auckland Council's accessibility guides.

Provide accessible formats for summary documents and ensure all long-form documents produced by our in-house studio are screen-readable

- Action owner: Communications and Marketing
- Final update: This work has become part of Auckland Council's business-as-usual practice.

Parks Sport and Recreation landing page

- Action owner: Parks and Community Facilities
- Final update: An internal SharePoint page for parks accessibility reports has been created, and new reports are added as they are produced.

Libby for OverDrive Accessibility Updates

- Action owner: Community Wellbeing
- Final update: Any updates to Libby for OverDrive are monitored for accessibility and built into the Library teams' business-as-usual practice.

Accessible communications brochure in Waste Solutions

- Action owner: Waste Solutions
- Final update: This brochure is now available to residents in the disability community who request the information. The team are investigating translating it into braille.

Accessible communications for campaigns around service changes and new services in Waste Solutions

- Action owner: Waste Solutions
- Final update: Food Scraps rollout ended in December 2024. All accessible communications created for this rollout have been maintained for the continued education of residents on the service.

Accessible communications for policy

- Action owner: Waste Solutions
- Final update: The Waste Minimisation and Management Plan 2025 has been approved and is being implemented. Accessible documentation is available online for Aucklanders to view.

Case study: Transport accessible improvements and tactile mapping in Homai Station redevelopment – using low technology solutions

Background

Auckland Transport is improving the accessibility of Homai Station, including by developing tactile maps.

A tactile map is a physical map designed to be read by touch. It incorporates raised lines, textures, and braille to convey spatial information to people who are blind or have low vision. Tactile maps often include high contrast graphics and enlarged text to assist users with varying degrees of visual impairment. These maps are essential tools for orientation and navigation, allowing users to understand their surroundings and plan routes effectively.

The Homai project aims to improve safety and accessibility for all users, particularly focusing on the blind and low vision community. This project involves the removal of two pedestrian level crossings and the introduction of new, accessible infrastructure to ensure safer and more convenient access to the station. The project is part of a long-term programme to remove and replace level crossings across Auckland, enhancing safety, improving network capacity, and supporting more frequent train services once the City Rail Link (CRL) opens in 2026.

Approach taken

The Homai project team has worked closely with the local community, including the Blind Low Vision Education Network NZ (BLENNZ) and other local schools, to ensure the new facilities meet their needs. Engagement was undertaken in accessible ways, including by developing tactile maps to support engagement with the community. The initiative was recognised with the [2024 NZPI Best Practice Award](#) for Inclusive Communities and Health and Wellbeing.

Homai Station will include:

1. **A new accessible ramp:** designed with a gentle slope to accommodate wheelchair and pushchair users. It features high contrast colours preferred by the low vision community: light grey for the floor and landings, dark grey for the balustrade, and yellow for the handrails.
2. **Wider footpaths:** footpaths on Browns Road and McVilly Road have been widened to 1.8 meters to improve accessibility for pedestrians.
3. **Improved lighting:** new streetlights have been installed, along with the new footpath to the park and ride bus stop.
4. **A new staircase:** a new staircase has been constructed between the park and ride and Browns Road to provide an alternative access route.
5. **Fencing:** new fencing has been installed along the railway corridor to improve safety.

Impacts and outcomes

This initiative will help ensure that people will be able to safely navigate public spaces with more independence and less pre-planning.

Low-technology solutions, such as tactile maps, play a crucial role in ensuring accessibility, especially during power cuts or other emergencies where electronic systems may fail. These solutions provide a reliable and consistent means of navigation for disabled people, ensuring they can safely and independently navigate public transport facilities even when high-tech solutions are unavailable. They enhanced independence, inclusivity, emergency preparedness, and support for unplanned journeys.

This project has received positive feedback from various stakeholders so far and, if successful in the first pilot, will be used in other facilities across the network.

How this case study embodies Ngā Hapori Momoho

This case study links to the Ngā Hapori outcomes of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, and objectives of improving access and participation and increasing local climate resilience and sustainability.

Because Auckland Transport engaged with disabled people in accessible ways for this project, the improved station will reduce barriers to access and navigation, enabling transport to be more inclusive and communities to connect and move around the region. Enabling more disabled people to access public transport supports people to make more climate friendly transport choices that can reduce carbon emissions.

Theme 3: Events and Services

We aim to make our events and services easy to access for everybody to enjoy.

There were notably fewer actions (7 actions) in the *Events and Services* area compared to other themes. Most of these actions are either in progress (3 actions) or ongoing (1 actions), with 2 actions now complete. Additionally, one new action was identified in the Environmental Services department. Staff will continue to work across the organisation to strengthen relationships and identify additional activity in this area.

Highlights from this reporting cycle:

- A sign language video has been developed for the front desk at Auckland Art Gallery to enhance accessibility for d/Deaf visitors (to be launched).
- Regular audio described tours have been added as a standard programme for major exhibitions at the Auckland Art Gallery to support blind/low vision audiences.

The lists below provide an update on existing, new, and completed actions.

Actions under Events and Services

Continue collaboration project with Blind Low Vision New Zealand

- Action owner: Community Wellbeing
- Current update: This partnership is not currently active, but there is potential for this to be re-evaluated in the future.
- Status: On hold

Monitor and review accessibility outcomes of key projects and events

- Action owner: Eke Panuku Development Auckland
- Current update: To the best of Eke Panuku's abilities, all events and activations are designed with universal access in mind, to ensure that all are welcomed into Auckland's public spaces. On the waterfront where they directly manage the spaces, they work with external event organisers to deliver best practice outcomes for their events to ensure accessibility.

Furthermore, design for accessibility and accessibility outcomes have been included in a number of capital projects – including the old Papatoetoe town centre, Panmure town centre, Avondale town centre, Pukekohe and City Centre.

Eke Panuku have approved installation of a new compliant and design sympathetic accessible ramp and lift for Silo 6. This will enable full and unencumbered access for people of all abilities and meet building compliance requirements.

The recently completed city centre "Civic Spaces Report" considered "People with Access Needs" as a key focus. This document has been created to assess how Auckland's key city centre spaces are being managed and looked after. The recommendations from this document will be taken forward to improve existing

spaces, as well as how Eke Panuku approach design of future spaces to ensure positive experiences for all people.

- Status: Ongoing

Support and improve accessibility across a range of major regional facilities

- Action owner: Tātaki Auckland Unlimited
- Current update: Recent projects include:
 - installing a wheelchair travelator into the Kiri Te Kanawa theatre to provide access to the front of the stalls providing a more equitable experience for everyone. The travelator has been purchased.
 - forming a cross-departmental group advising on facility and programme accessibility across the Auckland Art Gallery.
- Status: In progress

Increase accessibility of information, ticketing and programmes

- Action owner: Tātaki Auckland Unlimited
- Current update: A sign language video has been developed for the front desk at Auckland Art Gallery to enhance accessibility for d/Deaf visitors. Launch is scheduled for the fourth quarter of Financial Year 2025.

A major website redevelopment is underway for the Auckland Art Gallery, with a focus on accessibility standards and inclusive design.

Regular audio described tours have been added as a standard programme for major exhibitions at the Auckland Art Gallery to support blind/low vision audiences.
- Status: In progress

New actions under Events and Services

Disability sector inclusion in youth projects

- Action owner: Environmental Services
- Current update: In partnership with schools, the Sustainable Schools team are developing and implementing resilience projects with and/or for young people with disabilities.

At this stage, they are recording active projects with schools and proactively encouraging this outcome.
- Status: In progress

Actions marked as complete since the last progress report

Assisted kerbside services

- Action owner: Waste Solutions
- Final update: Auckland Council provides assistance for kerbside services (rubbish, recycling, food scraps) for people who are unable to lift or carry bins to the kerbside as part of business-as-usual activity.

Procurement of services

- Action owner: Waste Solutions
- Final update: Auckland Council continues to contract a charity that provides opportunities for people with disabilities (Abilities Group) to process e-waste received through the Auckland Council inorganic collection.

Case study: Dementia friendly film screenings

Background

To respond to the needs of our growing, and increasingly diverse, older Aucklanders, Auckland Council collaborates with aged-sector organisations to deliver the Tāmaki Makaurau Tauawhi Kaumātua | Age-friendly Auckland Action Plan. This includes through a cross-sector Age Friendly Rōpū that meets bi-monthly to discuss progress against the action plan and other news and issues in the aging sector.

To support the social participation of older adults with dementia, Te Rōpū collaborated to secure funding from the Office of Seniors age friendly fund to facilitate a Dementia Friendly film screening pilot project. The pilot featured three film screening events, following the example of organisations in Australia and the United Kingdom.

Approach

The pilot considered what was needed to meet the needs of people living with dementia and their carers. This involved:

- working with Dementia NZ to facilitate a focus group of older people with lived experience of dementia. The focus group's advice informed the way that the three pilot film screenings were planned and conducted
- Age Friendly Auckland Rōpū members and cinema staff undertaking Alzheimers NZ's "dementia-friendly" training
- working with three Auckland cinemas to plan "dementia-friendly" film screenings based on international research about what makes a "dementia-friendly" event and advice from our focus group.

The screenings were advertised through an Age Friendly Auckland newsletter, Dementia NZ, Auckland Council's Our Auckland events page, and Linked In.

The first screening, *Singin' in the Rain*, took place on 31st March 2025 at the historic Victoria Cinema in Devonport. Fifty people attended, a mixture of people with dementia and their carers/supporters.

The second screening, *Strictly Ballroom*, took place on 30th April at The Rialto Cinema in Newmarket. Fifty people attended including people with dementia and their carers.

A third screening, *Strictly Ballroom*, took place on 28th May 2025 at Reading Cinema in New Lynn. Fifty five people attended the screening.

Free popcorn, ice cream and drinks were offered to attendees prior to each of the screenings. Soft lighting was provided to assist people wanting to move around during the films, intermissions took place halfway through the films. A light morning tea at the venue was provided after each of the screenings for relaxed social connections, and souvenir polaroid photos were provided as mementos of the event.

Impacts and outcomes

Evaluation of the pilot took place in accessible ways for participants with dementia and their carers. Qualitative research was undertaken through observations at the lived

experience advisory group meeting and film screenings. Brief feedback was sought through written cards, tokens and discussion with attendees after the screenings. Several in depth interviews with film attendees were carried out in the days following the screenings.

Some of the feedback we heard included:

- *“Mum loved coming to the theatre and the hospitality of the organisers.”*
- *“The movie brought back memories of my father who tried to pretend to be the star of the show – great memories.”*
- *“It was a brilliant movie – it was fantastic for me to be able to bring Mum to something like this – it felt very safe for her. Thank you so much for doing this for the dementia community – it’s so valuable to keep her involved on the community.”*
- *“Having a big smile on staff to greet us at top of escalator - really made me feel at home”*

We also heard that marketing the film screenings as “dementia friendly” was an important aspect in making people feel as though they could attend and that they would be safe.

This information will inform an evaluation report to be completed by the end of July. Guidance for organisations wishing to hold dementia friendly events will be created and shared including with other towns and cities wanting to create dementia friendly film experiences in their area.

How this case study embodies Ngā Hapori Momoho

This case study links to the Ngā Hapori outcomes of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, and the objectives of increasing access and participation and growing community and intercultural connection.

The film screenings provided the opportunity for people with dementia to take part in an event that was accessible and worked for them. The afternoon tea that was provided at the end of each screening was a highlight for many participants and allowed them to foster relationships with others and feel like they belong.

Theme 4: Our Workplace

We aim to be a supportive group of organisations that are great places to work.

There were fewer actions under this theme (9 actions) compared to others. However, three new actions were added during this progress update. Out of the 9 total actions, four are in progress, three are ongoing, and two are on-hold. Staff will continue to focus on identifying and supporting additional mahi in this area to improve progress.

Highlights from this reporting cycle:

- Auckland Council have become members of the New Zealand Disability Employers' Network
- Auckland Council are working towards achieving the Accessibility Tick.

The two lists below provide an update on existing and new actions.

Actions under Our workplace

Actively look for opportunities to employ people with disabilities

- Action owner: Pools and Leisure
- Current update: No progress has been made on this action since the last progress report. The Pools and Leisure lead team will discuss this initiative as part of Financial Year 2026 work programme development.
- Status: On hold

Improve accessibility for the employee “journey”

- Action owner: People Safety & Wellbeing
- Current update: The previous progress update still applies with more learning offerings - some focused on training around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and more leaders having engaged with their competencies.

In addition, a new attribute was added to the engagement survey where people could self-select if they had a disability or impairment. Over 6% of kaimahi completed this and it provides rich information on blockages and insights on what we need to improve.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team are working with Project Galaxy (Human Resource Information system) implementation team to ensure the new system is accessible. They have also incorporated the ability to understand engagement for our disabled kaimahi for the first time. This will provide greater insights into their experience in the employee journey.

- Status: Ongoing

Actively look for opportunities to employ people with disabilities

- Action owner: Tātaki Auckland Unlimited
- Current update: Be.Lab have recently closed, and Tātaki Auckland Unlimited are looking for another provider to work with.
- Status: On hold

Rainbow Tick Accreditation for Pool and Leisure Centre

- Action owner: Pools and Leisure
- Current update: No progress has been made on this action since the last progress report. The Pools and Leisure lead team will discuss this initiative as part of Financial Year 2026 work programme development.
- Status: In progress

Corporate workplace

- Action owner: Corporate Support Services
- Current update: The lifts in the Manukau corporate office are currently being upgraded. This includes bringing them up to the latest disability code requirements. Working with Council's Neurodiversity Staff Network in a co-design approach, the Workplace Support Services team now have an agreed design solution for the low sensory workspaces in both Hawiti and Auckland House and will proceed to implementation. The next step is to establish a working group to determine protocols and guidelines for use. The network members have asked about an equivalent space in Manukau Civic. Once the Hawiti and Auckland House workspaces are set up, the team will work on identifying a suitable location in Manukau.
- Status: Ongoing

Corporate procurement and provision

- Action owner: Corporate Support Services
- Current update: The Corporate Support Services team is currently working on expanding our recycling partnership with Abilities Group to incorporate Tetra Pak and HDPE 2 bottle lids.
- Status: Ongoing

New actions under Our Workplace

Improve access to resources, training and communities of practice through joining the New Zealand Disability Employers' Network

- Action owner: People Services
- Current update: Auckland Council became members of the New Zealand Disability Employers' Network in March 2025. Alongside Capability, the Diversity, Equity,

Inclusion and Reward team are currently assessing their training and awareness building offerings such as "Disability Confidence for Leaders".

- Status: In progress

Work toward gaining the Accessibility Tick

- Action owner: People Services
- Current update: People Services have begun an initial Accessibility Tick audit with the New Zealand Disability Employers' Network, and this process will be completed in May. A detailed report outlining opportunities for improvement is expected in June. This will form part of the planning for Financial Year 2026.
- Status: In progress

Improving the accessibility of the Kotahi homepage

- Action owner: Communications and Marketing
- Current update: A Kotahi (Auckland Council's intranet) homepage refresh project is progressing and expected to be completed in the next two months.
The aim of this action is to improve the accessibility and user-centricity of the Kotahi homepage by 10 per cent, based on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines best practice guidelines, and internal user survey results.
- Status: In progress

Case study: Inclusion of disability demographics in our kaimahi engagement survey

Background

Creating a truly inclusive and supportive workplace means understanding the full diversity of experiences of our kaimahi (staff). In March 2025, Auckland Council introduced a new, optional demographic question in our quarterly employee engagement survey that asks whether kaimahi identify as having a disability, impairment, or long-term condition.

This change was driven by strong advocacy from our Disability & Support staff network and reflects our continued commitment to inclusion and equitable support. Until now, we've lacked meaningful data in this space. This question helps us better understand how our systems, environment, and culture impact kaimahi who may be living with different needs.

Approach taken

This mahi was a collaborative effort involving the Capability team, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team, Data Privacy team, Public Service Association delegate, and staff representatives from the Disability & Support staff network. The question was co-designed to be inclusive, respectful, and protect people's privacy:

- The question is optional and anonymous
- Responses can't be linked back to individuals
- Data access is limited to specialists, with a minimum visibility threshold applied

The question is now a permanent part of each engagement survey round, giving kaimahi the choice to opt in or out. We hope that as trust continues to grow, more kaimahi will feel comfortable sharing this information, knowing it will be used thoughtfully to inform meaningful change.

Impacts and outcomes

In the March survey round, 6.4% (about 450 kaimahi) indicated they experience a disability, impairment, or long-term condition. This gives us a clearer picture of our workforce makeup — but more importantly, it invites us to focus on improving the workplace experience for our kaimahi. The results showed that this group reported lower scores across the board, suggesting they may be having a less positive experience at work than their peers.

We've received mostly positive feedback on the addition of this question. Kaimahi appreciated the opportunity to be seen and heard in a way that reflects their

experiences. At the same time, we're committed to reviewing and evolving the question if needed — this is a journey, not a tick-box.

This question will remain a regular part of the engagement survey. The insights will help us track progress and shape future improvements. For example, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team is sharing insights with lead teams in all departments across Auckland Council as part of the process of setting their departmental diversity, equity, and inclusion actions for the coming year. This encourages leaders to set their goals based on current data about the experiences of their kaimahi. At an organisational level, these insights will be part of our mahi towards gaining and maintaining the Accessibility Tick, another important step towards a more equitable and inclusive workplace for all kaimahi.

How this case study embodies Ngā Hapori Momoho

This case study links to the Ngā Hapori outcomes of manaakitanga and kotahitanga, and the objective of increasing access and participation.

By valuing the voices of our disabled kaimahi and better understanding their views, needs, and experiences, Auckland Council can better support kaimahi to access the resources and support they need, making council a more equitable and inclusive place to work.

Theme 5: Transport

We aim for our transport network to keep you and Tāmaki Makaurau moving

This is a new domain area included in the refreshed Disability Action Plan to reflect the amount of action happening in the transport space and the importance of accessible transport to the disability community, as a key enabler of participation and inclusion.

We have included 31 actions in this domain area, carried forward from the September 2024 Progress Report. Out of these actions, 13 are in progress, 7 are ongoing, 2 are planned, and 9 are complete.

The intention is for this theme to signpost some of the key actions happening in the transport space. Further information on the full range of transport related accessibility actions can be found in Auckland Transport's *Accessibility Action Plan*. As Auckland Transport update their *Accessibility Action Plan*, the actions included in this domain may change.

Highlights from this reporting cycle:

- Significant network changes have been implemented, representing a major step forward in making Auckland's public transport system more accessible and efficient.
- The Total Mobility annual survey of Auckland users has provided valuable insights into the experiences and challenges, particularly during disruptions and emergencies.

Actions under Transport

Accessibility Action Plan (Version 4)

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Auckland Transport Accessibility Action Plan 2025-27 (Version 4) is in development. Actions will be reviewed and updated in Version 4.
- Status: Planned

Update the destination signage for buses impacted by City Rail Link in accessible formats

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: The Wayfinding project is expected to be completed once City Rail Link goes live.
- Status: In progress

Accessible mapping pilots

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: This is part of implementing new, innovative, and pilot projects that make information and spaces more accessible for disabled people.

The project is producing proof of concept maps for Waitematā station focused on blind and low vision users, but universal in design approach so can be used by all customers. If viable, then the maps could be rolled out to all stations on the network subject to acceptance and budget.

- Status: In progress

Provide training on universal design for Auckland Transport staff

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Auckland Transport are ensuring that their Design and Engineering guides and standards incorporate accessibility into the design of infrastructure.
- Status: In progress

Develop further accessibility training and awareness for Auckland Transport staff

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Auckland Transport's commitment to ongoing training and review of standards continues.

They are undertaking further planning with operators on reviewing current training packages.

They will also work with Auckland Council (Auckland Emergency Management) on practice exercises for emergencies and unplanned disruption scenarios.

- Status: Ongoing

Construct four new electric ferries

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Construction of the four new accessible ferries is well underway. The first of the fully electric ferries is nearing completion and due to be launched in June 2025 and the first of the hybrid ferries also in the final fit out stages with launching scheduled in August 2025. The portable gangways workstream is still in development/user requirements stage.
- Status: In progress

Customer Relationship Management and Artificial Intelligence (AI) reporting

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: The third generation of a generated Artificial Intelligence (AI) reporting tool is currently being developed to analyse accessibility-related data, improving visibility and responses to accessibility issues.
Further development and testing are required.
- Status: In progress

New Zealand Sign Language Pilot to better support the Deaf Community

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: This action is part of implementing new, innovative, and pilot projects that make information and spaces more accessible for disabled people.

New Zealand Sign Language recorded videos now completed or planned for:

- Waitematā Train Station
- Downtown Ferry Terminal Wharf
- Matiatia Wharf, Waiheke Island
- Manukau Bus and Rail Interchange
- 20 Fullers ferry boats
- Puhinui Bus and Rail Interchange
- the following new CRL stations:
 - Karangahape Station
 - Maungawhau Station
 - Te Waihorotiu Station.

Auckland Transport are now in evaluation for the next phase of New Zealand Sign Language development use on the live operational network.

- Status: In progress

Whaikaha Māori in New Zealand Sign Language Pilot in Waitematā train station, and other facilities

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: New Zealand Sign Language recorded videos now completed or planned and include te reo Māori for:
 - Waitematā Train Station
 - Downtown Ferry Terminal Wharf
 - Matiatia Wharf, Waiheke Island
 - Manukau Bus and Rail Interchange
 - 20 Fullers ferry boats
 - Puhinui Bus and Rail Interchange
 - The following new CRL stations:
 - Karangahape Station
 - Maungawhau Station
 - Te Waihorotiu Station.
- Status: In progress

Public Transport Accessibility Group (PTAG) provide advice and guidance

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Auckland Transport and PTAG have ongoing monthly meetings (from February to November) to discuss service delivery and operational related issues for the live transport network. Example projects for the last six months include:
 - Henderson Station & Homai Station upgrades
 - Accessibility Mapping Pilots
 - PlusOne Rail and Ferry Concession inclusion
 - Rail Projects with Auckland One Rail including: Try Before You Buy; Yellow Sunflower Project; Accessibility Audits for Ōrākei and Waitemata Stations
 - Communications for planned rail disruptions for CRL and rail rebuild
 - NZSL Screen Pilots
- Status: In progress

Capital Project Accessibility Group (CPAG) provide advice and guidance

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Auckland Transport and CPAG have ongoing monthly meetings (from February to November) to discuss accessibility design and build related issues.
Example projects for the last six months include:
 - City Rail Link
 - E-Scooter/Shared mobility parking
 - Homai Level Crossing Improvement
 - Kainga Ora project: Kupe Street Accessibility Design
 - Auckland Council: Plan Change 79 - Accessible Parking and Pedestrian Access
- Status: In progress

Regular bus fleet inspections

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Fleet inspections, including accessibility relevant aspects, have become a standard practice, resulting in improved fleet accessibility.
- Status: Ongoing

Our Inclusive Cycling project

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: A successful community event was held with Bike Auckland. The most recent project included a rewrite of the internal cycle hub strategy. More information about the community bike hubs is available [here](#).
- Status: In progress

Total Mobility Annual Survey

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: 2024 Total Mobility survey results have been shared with the Disability Advisory Panel and the Auckland Emergency Management team.
There will be further exploration of Auckland Transport Operations' ability to join the Auckland Emergency Management team's scenario and other emergency planning.
- Status: Ongoing

Total Mobility & OnDemand Project

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: The OnDemand Auckland Transport Local service in Takanini-Papakura has undergone several changes to try and improve the service acceptance likelihood for customers seeking to use this service, such as changing time parameters to allow more capacity on board.
Auckland Transport know that there are challenges with access to this service, which for some users provides a lifeline to local essential services, and are reviewing it with priority.
- Status: Ongoing

Total Mobility Monthly Newsletters

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: [Total Mobility Newsletters](#) continue to be sent out monthly.
- Status: Ongoing

New City Rail Link (CRL) stations

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Consultation with CPAG has been ongoing during the design and construction phases of this project. Construction is expected to complete in mid-2025. Testing and commissioning is ongoing.
Discussion is ongoing about how to engage Universal Access groups during emergency scenario testing.
Consultation with PTAG will commence in August 2025.
- Status: In progress

Touch screen pilot project

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Auckland Transport has successfully selected, configured, and tested (using AT Mobile content) a tactile, interactive smart kiosk for public transport facilities.

Additionally, Auckland Transport has carried out preliminary feasibility research on using generative AI, computer vision.

They will explore smart kiosks providing real-time interactive New Zealand Sign Language messaging and support.

- Status: In progress

Quay Street bidirectional cycle ramp safety improvements

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: A paint-only solution appears to have reduced hazards which may have led to injury. Reconstruction of the ramp remains an active project but has been stalled due to capacity issues and feasibility challenges in the construction location. Construction will take place this financial year (24/25) if deemed feasible.
- Status: Planned

PlusOne Concession Bus to be extended to Rail and Ferry passengers

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Auckland Transport are developing a technical solution to update the PlusOne concession to now be extended to Rail and Ferry passengers.
This will allow customers travelling on an accessibility concession (Total Mobility HOP card), to bring their companion support for free.
- Status: In progress

Support transport projects that endorse accessibility outcomes conducted by external stakeholders in Auckland and around NZ

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: This involves collaboration with external stakeholders to share best practice, improve accessibility outcomes and influence and guide policy and legislative directions.
Agency examples include New Zealand Transport Agency; Ministry of Transport; Ministry of Disabled People – Whaikaha; Maritime NZ; National Emergency Management Agency; and the Auckland Emergency Management teams. Also, the internal PTAG and CPAG advisories; Auckland Council Disability Advisory Panel; and the communities they represent.
- Status: Ongoing

Transport Design Manual training

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Current update: Work continues to ensure the Auckland Transport Design and Engineering guides and standards incorporate accessibility into the design of infrastructure. The Transport Design Manual is available [here](#).
- Status: Ongoing

Actions marked as complete since the last progress report

Audio on buses, whaikaha Māori

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Final update: Audio on buses is now part of business as usual. Updates are made for network changes and linguistic improvements.

Accessible Parking Mapping online

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Final update: The [customer facing map](#) of mobility parking spaces is now public. Mobility parking spaces are being maintained (added, removed, or updated as required).

Homai Station level crossing removal (use of the 3D Model)

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Final update: This project has been completed and is a [New Zealand Planning Institute national award winner](#).

Neighbourhood Bus Interchange- Mount Eden & Balmoral & Manukau & Greenlane

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Final update: This project has been delivered as of November 2024.

Inspections of all new electric bus shipments into Auckland

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Final update: Inspections of the newly introduced vehicles are sometimes accompanied by Accessibility Lead. These have been completed for the current shipment.

Wayfinding accessible pathways

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Final update: Updated wayfinding Transport Design Manual content is soon to be published.

“Stop for Me, Speak to Me” bus video production and Ferry accessibility training videos developed.

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Final update: Two operator video training projects were undertaken. This includes the “Stop for Me, Speak to Me” training. This training is designed for bus operators to understand how to effectively assist and communicate with our blind community members on the bus network.

Additionally, ferry accessibility videos were developed. These videos provide guidance to ferry operators on how to work with disabled community members.

[The videos](#) are also provided on the AT website.

Pets on Public Transport and assistance dogs

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Final update: This project has been successfully completed and is being utilised by customers.

[Auckland Transport website information](#) has been created to support assist dogs on the network. Further work will be prioritised in this area across all modes.

Provide accessibility training and awareness for Auckland Ferry staff

- Action owner: Auckland Transport
- Final update: Ferry Training videos are now completed.

Case study: Accessibility features on the new electric buses

Background:

In April 2025, Auckland Transport introduced a series of exciting changes to public transport, including 44 new electric buses. These buses are part of Auckland's commitment to achieving a fully zero-emission bus fleet by 2035. This case study explores how the features of these new electric buses support improved accessibility.

Approach taken:

In line with New Zealand Transport Agency - Waka Kotahi's 2024 Requirements for Urban Buses in New Zealand and Auckland Transport's 2022 Vehicle Quality Standards, all 44 new buses introduced in April have the following features:

1. **A wide front entrance with the ability to kneel the bus and extend a ramp.** Kneeling significantly improves accessibility by reducing the step height needed for getting on and off the bus. The extendable ramp makes it easy for passengers in wheelchairs to get on and off the bus, making public transport more inclusive.
2. **A completely flat floor between the front and rear doors.** Within the flat floor section, there are at least four forward-facing seats (labelled as priority seats) plus space for a wheelchair or pram (also labelled as a priority seating area). The new single-decker buses have space for two wheelchairs, with the second wheelchair space being where the double-decker buses have a staircase. All the buses can accommodate a wheelchair up to 1.2m by 0.7m, and where the chair and passenger together are up to 300kg. The priority seating area is a key concept in achieving accessibility, and these spaces may also be favoured by customers with assistance dogs.
3. **Bus stop buttons throughout the bus.** All buttons generate an audible and visual indication to the driver. Buttons in the wheelchair/pram spaces are coloured blue (in contrast to the red buttons everywhere else) and when pressed, light up a sign on the driver's dashboard indicating that a customer in the wheelchair space wants to get off the bus. This gives the driver the opportunity to take extra care lining the bus up with the kerb at the next stop so kneeling or ramps can be put into action.
4. **Slip-resistant flooring**, and high-visibility slip resistant edges around all steps.
5. **High-visibility handrails** positioned to help people move within the bus without blocking wheelchairs or prams, creating finger traps, or raising the risk that customers bump their heads.
6. **Extensive high-definition CCTV coverage** of the inside and outside of the bus. Single-decker buses have at least six cameras, and double-decker buses have at least nine.

The new electric buses also include audio that announces the name of the next stop and when to transfer to a different service. These announcements are delivered in both English and Te Reo Māori, making it easier for everyone to navigate the city on buses.

Impacts and outcomes:

The new electric buses represent a significant step forward in making Auckland's public transport system more accessible and sustainable. By incorporating features such as the blue accessible button, accessible seating areas, a kneeling function with extendable ramp, advanced driver screens, and audio announcements, these buses ensure that all passengers, including those with disabilities, can travel with greater ease and comfort.

How this case study embodies Ngā Hapori Momoho

This case study links to the Ngā Hapori outcomes of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and kaitiakitanga and objectives of improving access and participation and increasing local climate resilience and sustainability.

The new accessible electric buses will reduce barriers to access and navigate the routes they operate on, enabling transport to be more inclusive and helping communities to connect and move around the region. The buses may also support better health outcomes and an increase in climate resilience and sustainability, given their use of clean energy sources.

Appendix 1: Ngā Hapori Momoho outcomes and objectives

We have outlined how the case studies in this report relate to the outcomes and objectives of Ngā Hapori Momoho. The below tables outline what these are, what they mean for disabled people, and how the Disability Action Plan support their delivery.

Ngā Hapori Momoho outcomes

Manaakitanga

Ngā Hapori Momoho outcome:

- All Aucklanders enjoy the essentials of a good life and fulfil their potential.

What does this outcome mean for Ngā Hapori Momoho?

- Manaakitanga represents the responsibility of looking after each other's wellbeing and is often expressed through providing hospitality. For Thriving Communities, Manaakitanga looks like valuing and protecting the mana of all Aucklanders through providing a good standard of living.

What does this outcome look like for the disability community?

- Disabled people and their whānau have access to the resources and support they need to live a good life. Disabled people are treated in respectful and mana enhancing ways.

Whanaungatanga

Ngā Hapori Momoho outcome:

- Aucklanders are connected and feel as though they belong.

What does this outcome mean for Ngā Hapori Momoho?

- Whanaungatanga represents the forming and strengthening of relationships between people and communities. These relationships are the glue that bind our diverse communities together. For Thriving Communities, fostering whanaungatanga will provide the foundation for social inclusion and a sense of belonging in our communities.

What does this outcome look like for the disability community?

- Disabled people have strong relationships and connections and can fully participate in community and civic life. Barriers to participation and inclusion are minimised.

Kotahitanga

Ngā Hapori Momoho outcome

- All Aucklanders can participate and take collective action to meet common goals.

What does this outcome mean for Ngā Hapori Momoho?

- Kotahitanga represents the value of unity, and many people moving as one. For Thriving Communities, this looks like recognising the leadership role our communities take in achieving goals that have value to them. Encouraging kotahitanga will increase participation and provide a sense of togetherness.

What does this outcome look like for the disability community?

- Disabled people can take action and leadership on issues that matter to them and their communities. The voices of disabled people are heard and valued in the community.

Kaitiakitanga

Ngā Hapori Momoho outcome:

- Aucklanders are connected to and care for the environment.

What does this outcome mean for Ngā Hapori Momoho?

- Kaitiakitanga is a complex value that represents the connection Māori have to the whenua, and people have to the environment. For Thriving Communities, we see kaitiakitanga as a duty to ensure the wellbeing of our environment, and a sustainable future for all Aucklanders.

What does this outcome look like for the disability community?

- Disabled people are connected to the environment and actively involved in initiatives that support a sustainable future.

Ngā Hapori Momoho objectives

Increase whānau and community financial security. The Disability Action Plan supports delivery of this objective by:

- playing our part in creating long-term, high quality employment opportunities for disabled people.
- creating council workplaces that are inclusive of the needs of disabled kaimahi

Improve health outcomes. The Disability Action Plan supports delivery of this objective by:

- designing our urban form so that it promotes accessibility and advances health and wellbeing outcomes.
- recognising the value of parks and open spaces, sport and recreation and arts and culture to health and wellbeing and ensure equitable access for disabled people.

Enable local leadership and innovation. The Disability Action Plan supports delivery of this objective by:

- connecting, engaging, and supporting those in the disability community who are making positive contributions to their communities.
- exploring new approaches to involve disabled communities in policy and decision-making at a local level.

Increase access and participation. The Disability Action Plan supports delivery of this objective by:

- ensuring council's public buildings and spaces are inclusive and accessible for everyone.
- making information easily accessible, in a range of formats and places.
- ensuring disabled communities have access to public transport options to get where they need to easily.
- ensuring disabled people are actively involved in council decisions that impact them.
- involving disabled individuals, groups and communities in civic and democratic processes.

Grow community and intercultural connection. The Disability Action Plan supports delivery of this objective by:

- supporting events, services and local spaces that support connection and belonging for disabled communities.

Increase local climate resilience and sustainability. The Disability Action Plan supports delivery of this objective by:

- supporting disabled communities to lead on initiatives that promote climate resilience and sustainability.
- ensuring council's emergency management planning and responses consider the needs of disabled communities and information is accessible, including signage, website content and publications.