

8 July 2024

**Independent Review into the Disability Support System Panel – by email**

Sir Maarten Wevers

Leanne Spice

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**Re: Invitation to meet EGL WRLG**

Tēnā koutou katoa

The Enabling Good Lives (EGL) Waitaha Regional Leadership Group (WRLG) wishes to acknowledge and congratulate you on your crucial appointment to the panel reviewing the disability support system. Your role is of immense significance as it directly impacts the lives of disabled people, tangata whaikaha Māori, their whānau, families, āiga, carers, the providers who support them, and the broader disabled community. We believe your expertise and commitment will be invaluable in this regard.

The WRLG is a dedicated body of elected representatives from diverse parts of the disabled community, ensuring inclusive and comprehensive representation in the Waitaha Takiwa | Canterbury District. The group comprises six (6) disabled people, three (3) tāngata whaikaha Māori, one (1) Pacific disabled person, three (3) whānau, āiga, or family members, and three (3) provider representatives.

The WRLG is committed to engaging the broader community and fostering genuine partnerships to ensure that System Transformation, the Government's response to EGL, incorporates the EGL principles and approach. The EGL principles and approach is a social movement about System Transformation and EGL. In 2013 Tariana Turia wrote "As we head down the path of change, it is important that disabled people, whānau/family, disabled people's organisations and the wider disability community are involved in the design and

development of these initiatives, and that the work stays closely aligned to the Enabling Good Lives approach.” (please see attached letter from Minister Turia).

To this end, we organise monthly core groups encompassing various sectors within the disabled community. These core groups include specific gatherings for disabled people, whānau and family members, and providers. This approach allows us to gather valuable insights and perspectives from all corners of the community, ensuring our initiatives and advocacy are informed by the lived experiences and needs of those we represent.

At the core of our work, the EGL principles are based on the belief that disabled people should have the same opportunities as non-disabled people to live a good life. These principles include but are not limited to self-determination, mana-enhancing, and the importance of genuine partnerships with disabled people and their families. You can find more information about System Transformation, EGL, and its principles here: [System Transformation and Enabling Good Lives | Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People](#).

We note Minister Upston's comment on 30 May 2024 when announcing your appointment to the panel, "It's important we provide disabled Kiwis with ongoing support that meets their needs and helps them lead a good life." Your decisions and recommendations will profoundly enable disabled people to make choices that best suit their needs and 'good life' goals, which are integral to the EGL principles, especially those of self-determination and mana-enhancing. To achieve this means working in genuine partnership with disabled people and whānau to transform the system in alignment with the EGL principles the government has already committed to.

It is with a sense of urgency that we express our disappointment in the current treatment of disabled people, tangata whaikaha Māori, and their whānau | families and āiga. They are often treated as passive recipients rather than partners in decision-making processes, which need immediate attention and change.

We also note that your terms of reference are limited in scope. However, we urge you to engage in genuine partnerships with disabled people and to uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The panel could start doing this by prioritising and seeking the voices and agency of disabled people, tāngata whaikaha Māori, their whānau, families and āiga so that you could add their voices to your report and recommendations.

Therefore, we would like to invite you to an online meeting with some of our leadership group members to hear the voices and perspectives of our disabled community. Through our representation, we believe that meeting with us would benefit you, and we also welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can work together to help transform the disability system.

We await your response regarding a suitable meeting time.

Ngā mihi nui,

Enabling Good Lives (EGL) Waitaha Regional Leadership Group  
EGL Waitaha Disabled Core Group  
EGL Waitaha Family and Whānau Core Group  
EGL Waitaha Providers Core Group

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