

Hon. Nicola Willis  
Minister – Social Investment  
E: N.Willis@ministers.govt.nz

Cc: Hon. Louise Upston  
Minister – Disability Issues  
E: L.Upston@ministers.govt.nz

9 July 2024

Tēnā korua

The Enabling Good Lives (EGL) Waitaha Regional Leadership Group (WRLG) extends its warmest congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Social Investment. Your role holds significant importance as it directly affects the lives of disabled people, tangata whaikaha Māori, their whānau, families, āiga, carers, the providers who support them, and the broader disabled community.

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. 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." (See attached letter from Minister Turia.)

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 welcome your announcement of 9 May 2024 regarding the new standalone central Social Investment Agency that will focus on driving positive change for the most vulnerable New Zealanders. We look forward to the positive change this will bring those in the disability community, many of whom are highly vulnerable.

Before you announced the new agency, Social Investment focused on 'improving the lives of New Zealanders by applying rigorous and evidence-based investment practices to social services' (source: [Social investment | The Treasury New Zealand](#)). The decisions and recommendations of the Social Investment Agency must align with the transformation of the disability support system, guided by the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) principles.

We are keen to understand what evidence-based information the Social Investment Agency has on the impact of flexible funding and how this was used to inform the changes made to the funding guidelines announced by Whaikaha | The Ministry of Disabled People on 16 March 2024. Additionally, EGL Waitaha Regional Leadership Group would like to understand how the effectiveness of these changes is being systematically measured so that what works well and what doesn't is known.

If this information is not currently being collected or there are no evidence-based approaches, we urge the Social Investment Agency to start this work immediately to avoid leaving the disability community behind on another government initiative.

Finally, we would like to understand what information the Social Investment agency holds on the social investment impact of the system transformation that is Enabling Good Lives and how the Government will use this information to invest further in disabled people and the disability system transformation.

Ngā mihi

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