

Accessibility for New Zealanders Act

Valuing the Access to Work

Summary

The Access Alliance

February 2017

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Introduction

As a group of active organisations in the disability sector we think it's time we looked at the opportunities of increased participation in the community and economy instead of the costs of managing disability issues in the traditional way.

To this end, we have undertaken a thorough review of existing regulations and also the economic benefits of increasing participation through increased accessibility. We have looked at the upside opportunities and measured these against the costs, with some promising results.

These reviews have led us to form The Access Alliance for the Accessibility for New Zealanders Act (Access Alliance). This Alliance brings our organisations together with the purpose of promoting the development and implementation of legislation that provides the framework for the gains we have identified to be delivered. This legislation will reinforce existing legislation and activity, delivering increased returns.

Document Summary: Valuing Access to Work

This report was commissioned from the NZIER. It quantifies the 'size of the prize' increased accessibility could mean in relation to increasing employment of disabled New Zealanders.

Findings of this report (embargoed until 10am, 27 February 2017) include:

- \$300million a year reduction in Jobseeker Health Condition or Disability benefit costs.
- Increased tax revenues of \$387 million.
- Increased incomes and productivity from disabled workers through better education outcomes. The net productivity gain impact alone is a rise in real GDP of \$862million.
- Increased tourism revenues through greater domestic spend and increased international visitors in the accessible tourism market.

Document Summary: It's Time for the Accessibility for New Zealanders Act

This paper outlines the basis for our position and campaign.

Key points for consideration from this are:

- Accessibility has been identified as one of the major barriers to participation by disabled New Zealanders themselves.
- Our responsibilities under the UNCRPD compel us to address issues of participation and to remove barriers affecting this.
- New Zealand is facing a growing number of disabled citizens as our population ages. Addressing access to enable ongoing active participation makes sense.
- The implementation of accessibility legislation will reinforce the benefits from current disability focused legislation and activity, increasing the social and economic returns these activities already provide.

- Accessibility legislation makes economic sense, with the returns outweighing indicative costs of implementation.
- International precedence exists for such legislation which we can learn from.
- The best results come from developing this legislation in close consultation with government, business and disabled people.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this important issue with you. Shifting the paradigm by which we view the challenge of increasing participation of disabled New Zealanders is something we are very excited about, and something we believe can deliver strong social and economic benefit for all New Zealanders.

The Access Alliance members are:

- Auckland Disability Law.
- Blind Foundation.
- CCS Disability Action.
- Deaf Aotearoa.
- Disabled Person's Assembly.
- Parents of Vision Impaired New Zealanders.
- Inclusive New Zealand.