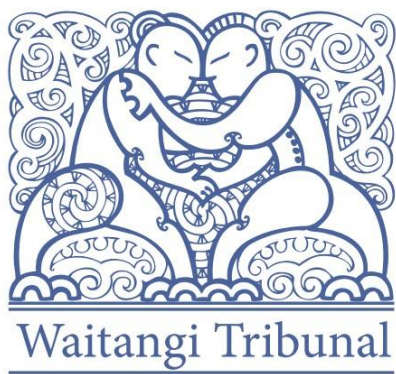




# **Waitangi Tribunal**

## **Hauwhaikaha Report:**

### **Chapter 5 – Approaches to disability**

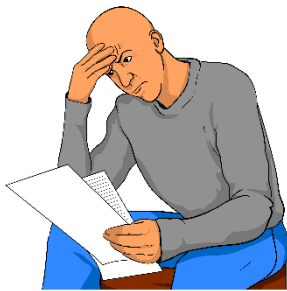


**Published: September 2026**

# Before you begin



This is a long document.



It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.

Some things you can do to make it easier are:



- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.



# What you will find in here

Page number:



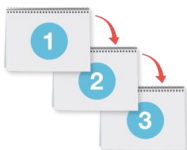
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# About this Easy Read



This Easy Read is from the **Waitangi Tribunal**.



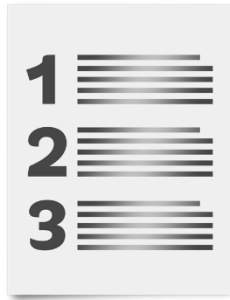
More information about the **Waitangi Tribunal** is on **pages 13 to 14**.



Where it says **we / us** this means the Waitangi Tribunal.

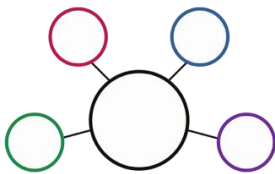


This Easy Read is a **summary** of **Chapter 5: Approaches to disability** in the **Hauwhaikaha Report**.



### A **summary**:

- is shorter than the main document
- tells you the important ideas.



**Approach** means the ways something is done.



### The **Hauwhaikaha Report** is:

- from the **Health Services and Outcomes Inquiry** by the Waitangi Tribunal
- about **claims** that have to do with the disability system.





The **Health Services and Outcomes Inquiry** is about claims made about Aotearoa New Zealand health:

- services
- **outcomes.**



**Outcomes** means how things turn out for people in their lives.

For example getting good healthcare can mean being healthier for longer.

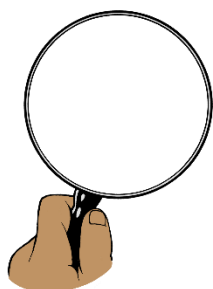


In this document the **Health Services and Outcomes Inquiry** will be called **the inquiry**.



Here a **claim** means someone:

- has told the Waitangi Tribunal that the Government has done something against **Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi**



- wants the Waitangi Tribunal to look into it.



In this document the word **claimants** means people who have made claims to the Waitangi Tribunal about the disability system.



More information about **Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi** is on **pages 11 to 12**.



In this document where you see the words **taangata whaikaha Māori** this means Māori disabled people.



Te reo Maaori / the Maaori language usually uses **macrons**.

**ā ē ī ō ū**



**Macrons** are lines above letters that show you how to say that word.

In te reo Maaori / the Maaori language a macron means to say that letter longer.

**Aa ee ii oo uu**

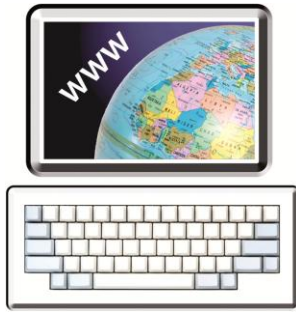
The Hauwhaikaha Report uses double letters instead of macrons.

**Maaori / Māori**

For example Maaori is the same as Māori.

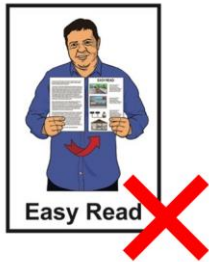


This is so some people can read the words more easily.

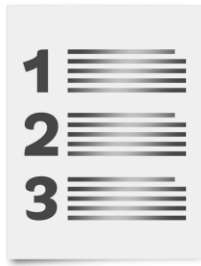


You can read the full Hauwhaikaha Report at this website:

**[www.bit.ly/Hauwhaikaha](http://www.bit.ly/Hauwhaikaha)**



The full report is **not** in Easy Read.

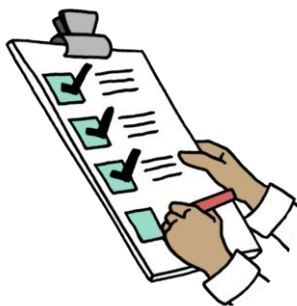


There are summaries of each chapter if you do not want to read the full Hauwhaikaha report.



The summaries of each chapter are available in Easy Read at this website:

**[www.bit.ly/Hauwhaikaha-easy](http://www.bit.ly/Hauwhaikaha-easy)**



The summaries of each chapter give an outline of:

- important issues
- things that were found out.



The summaries do not include all the:

- **analysis**
- **evidence.**



Here **analysis** means discussion / thinking about what was found out.

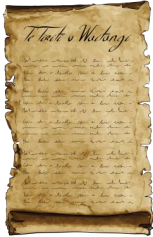


Here **evidence** is information about something like:

- what people said
- what happened to people
- records / files.



# What is Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi?



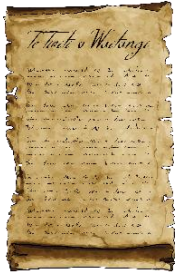
Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi:

- is an agreement signed between:
  - the Crown
  - and
  - Maaori
- was signed in 1840
- is about the:
  - promises made
  - **obligations** for everyone.





**Obligations** are important things that have to be done.



In this document Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi will be called **Te Tiriti / The Treaty**.



Where it says the **Crown** in this document this means the **government**.

# What is the Waitangi Tribunal?



The Waitangi Tribunal:

- is a **commission of inquiry**
- listens to claims
- decides if the Government broke a promise made in Te Tiriti / The Treaty
- makes **recommendations** about claims Maaori have made about the Crown.

A **commission of inquiry** is a group of people put together by the Government who learn about things that happened.



Here **recommendations** are advice that would:

- fix a problem
- make things better.

## Why are there claims?

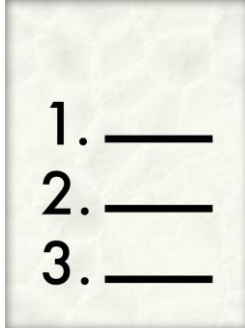


Governments of Aotearoa New Zealand have not always kept to the promises made in Te Tiriti / The Treaty.



Maaori can go to the Waitangi Tribunal to talk about the Government not keeping the promises made in Te Tiriti / The Treaty.

# The 3 approaches to disability



Chapter 5 talks about 3 approaches to disability used in Aotearoa New Zealand.

They are the:

- medical approach
- social approach
- Maaori approach.



## The medical approach

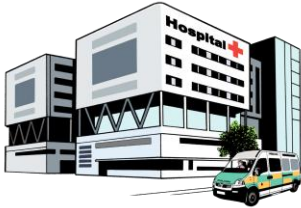
The medical approach says disability is a health problem to be treated using **medical intervention**.





**Medical intervention** means treating something to do with your health using things like:

- medicine
- going to hospital
- surgery.



The medical approach can mean:

- getting a diagnosis / figuring out what the disability is
- sometimes **institutionalisation**.



**Institutionalisation** means ways a disabled person might be looked after in another place like a hospital.



The State / Government is often a big part of the lives of disabled people in the medical approach.



**Medical professionals** are a very important part of the lives of disabled people in the medical approach.



Here **medical professionals** include:

- doctors
- nurses
- support workers.



In the medical approach medical professionals are usually:

- the people who have a lot of the information about disability
- where disabled people get most of their care from.



## The social approach

The social approach to disability is about moving away from using:

- the medical approach
- institutionalisation.

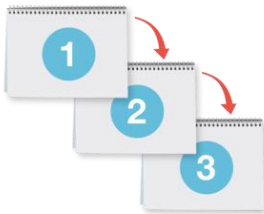


The social approach has been a big part of how the Government has made decisions about disability in Aotearoa New Zealand since about 30 years ago.



## The **2001 New Zealand Disability Strategy**:

- started using the social approach
- saw disability as being caused by **barriers**.



Here the **2001 New Zealand Disability Strategy** is a set of long term plans that were made to make lives of disabled people better.



Here a **barrier** is made when a group of people create ways to live that do not think about what people with disabilities need.



A barrier is something that can make it harder or impossible for you to do something.



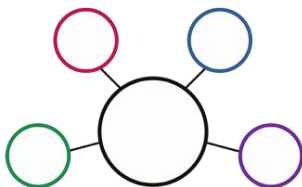
## The Maaori approach

Maaori health experts shared different approaches for disability in the 1980s.

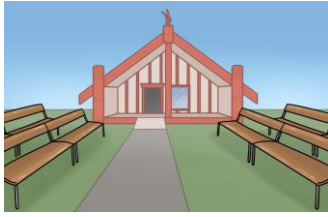


These approaches came from te ao Maaori / Maaori ways of looking at the world.

Maaori health expert Sir Mason Durie presented the **health model** Te Whare Tapa Whaa in 1982.



A **health model** is a kind of plan that shows how to use different ideas to give people healthcare.



Te Whare Tapa Whaa uses the parts of the whare / meeting house to show how the 5 parts of wellbeing connect.

The 5 parts are:

- physical / the body
- whaanau / family
- spiritual
- mental / the mind
- whenua / the place where someone comes from.

## Disability services



The Crown told the inquiry they were moving away from using the medical approach by changing the disability system.



Claimants said the disability system still uses a lot of things in the medical approach.

A graphic of a green application form. The top section has a green header with the word 'Application' in white. Below the header, there are several horizontal lines and rectangular boxes, representing input fields for text and data.

For example the medical approach is a big part of the **eligibility process** to get Disability Support Services / DSS.



Here **eligibility process** means what people have to do to get disability support like:

- filling out forms
- getting their doctor to prove / show their disability
- taking health tests.

Claimants said the eligibility process:



- looks at the **impairment** of a disabled person
- needs formal / proper **diagnosis** by health professionals / doctors.



An **impairment** is when most people can do something but you:

- cannot do
- find it hard to do.

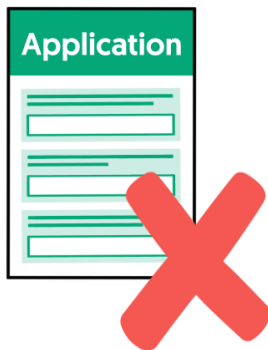


A **diagnosis** means working out why someone is disabled by using:

- tests
- what doctors know about bodies.



The medical approach in the eligibility process limits who can access disability support.



We did not see much evidence that the Crown had changed the eligibility process.

# Seclusion and restraint



The medical approach is connected to the use of:

- **seclusion**
- **restraint.**



**Seclusion** is when a person:

- is put on their own in a room
- and
- cannot leave the room.



**Restraint** is when a health service provider stops someone from moving as much as they want to.



Maaori are more likely to be put in seclusion than people who are not Maaori.

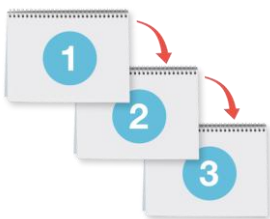


The Crown said they are using less:

- seclusion
- restraint.



This is being done using the Zero seclusion: Safety and dignity for all **initiative** which started in 2019.



An **initiative** is a set of plans to change how something works.



The Crown making changes like this shows good progress in moving away from the medical approach.

## Is the social approach good for taangata whaikaha Maaori?



The Crown showed they had done things to use the social approach in the disability system like:

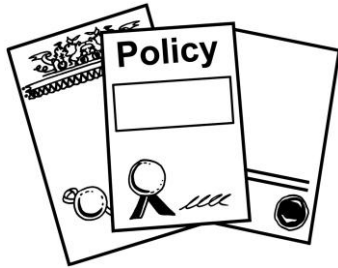
- taking people out of institutions
- having disability care done using supports in the community.



Claimants said that not much has been done to use the social approach in the disability system.



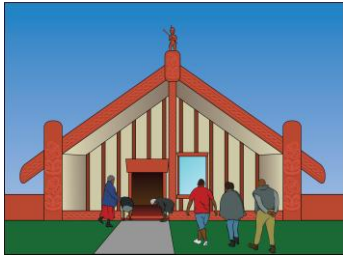
Claimants also said the social model does not fix the problems experienced by taangata whaikaha Maaori.



We found that changes will not meet the needs of taangata whaikaha Maaori unless the Maaori model is used as part of making:

- policy / rules
- systems.

# Does the disability system use Maaori approaches to disability?



Disability in the Maaori worldview:

- is part of who someone is
- effects:
  - a person
  - their whaanau / family
  - iwi / tribe
  - communities
- has something to do with everything that goes on in the life of a person.



Claimants say that Maaori approaches must be used in the disability system.



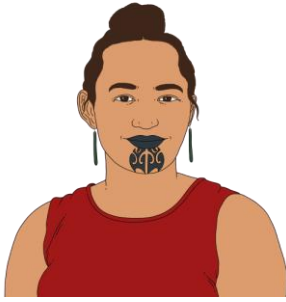
This is so their approaches to wellbeing are:

- collective / a group effort
- part of Maaori **culture**.



**Culture** is a way of:

- thinking that a group shares
- doing things as a group.

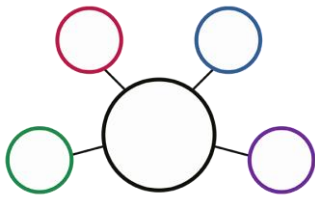


For example the whaanau hauaa model thinks about the lived experiences of:

- a person

**and**

- whaanau / family.



The whaanau hauaa model sees disability as just 1 part of the life of a person.



The Crown says it understands:

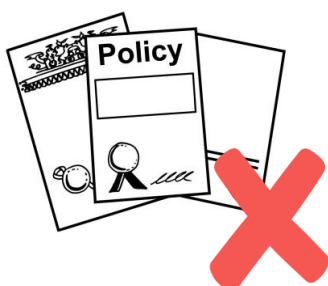
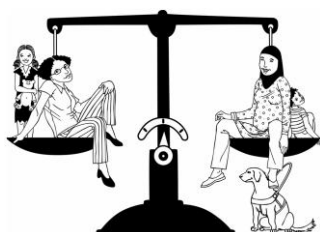
- Maaori have unique / different ideas about disability
- it does not know how to use Maaori ideas about disability well.





Claimants say the use of the medical approach to disability by the Crown:

- has created problems that last for a long time
- means not all people get the same health outcomes.



We found that Maaori approaches to disability have not been used in:

- policy / rules
- how disability services have been done.



## Tribunal findings



The **principle** of partnership says the Crown needs to work with taangata whaikaha Maaori when creating services like healthcare.



Here **principles** are ideas / beliefs that tell people:

- about what Te Tiriti / The Treaty means to people now
- the obligations the government has to Maaori.



The principles come from the words of Te Tiriti / The Treaty.



Evidence from claimants shows there is demand for services that use Maaori approaches to disability.



The Crown must work with taangata whaikaha Maaori to use Maaori approaches to disability.



This is so the Crown is compliant with / follows the principles of Te Tiriti / The Treaty.



Te Tiriti / The Treaty protects Maaori:

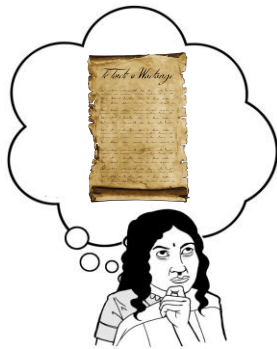
- **tino rangatiratanga**
- and
- **mana motuhake.**



**Tino rangatiratanga** means Maaori getting to make their own decisions.



**Mana motuhake** means Maaori have the authority / power to do what is best for themselves.



The Crown needs to remember Te Tiriti / The Treaty when creating Maaori healthcare.



The Crown must support Maaori to make health services that fix the gaps in health outcomes.



We found that the Crown does not use the Maaori approach in the disability system.



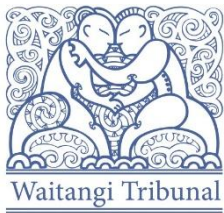
This is **in breach** of the principles of:

- partnership
- tino rangatiratanga.



Here **in breach** means:

- rules have not been followed
- things have not been done like they were promised.



This information has been written by the Waitangi Tribunal.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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