



Summary of Hauwhaikaha – the Disability System Report: Phase One, Stage Two of the Health Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry

About the Hauwhaikaha report

The Waitangi Tribunal is a permanent commission of inquiry. It makes recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to legislation, policies, actions or omissions of the government (Crown) that are alleged to breach the promises made in the Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi.

The Health Services and Outcomes Inquiry (Wai 2575) (health inquiry) concerns claims relating to health services and outcomes that are important to Aotearoa New Zealand. In December 2017, the health inquiry was organised into three stages. This inquiry is the first part of the second stage and concerns claims relating to the State disability system.

The inquiry has revealed long-standing inequities in the way the disability system serves tāngata whaikaha Māori. The Tribunal heard evidence from tāngata whaikaha Māori, whānau, experts, service providers and Crown agencies across eleven hearings held between 2022 and 2024. This report highlights systemic barriers, inconsistent access to support and failures to uphold Tiriti/Treaty obligations in the State disability system.

The Hauwhaikaha report summarises what we heard during the disability inquiry and outlines our findings and recommendations.

Summaries of each chapter of the Hauwhaikaha report

People who want to read the full report can find it here:

www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/en/publications/tribunal-reports/by-wai-number/wai2575hauwhaikaha or www.bit.ly/Hauwhaikaha.

We have also produced summaries of each chapter in the report, for people who do not want to read the whole report. The summaries can be found here:

www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/en/publications/tribunal-reports/by-wai-number/wai2575hauwhaikaha or www.bit.ly/Hauwhaikaha .

The summaries provide an overview of substantial issues and findings. They do not include all evidence or analysis contained in the full report. For complete information, including references, readers should consult the full report.

The report and associated summaries use double vowels instead of macrons to aid accessibility, for example, to improve compatibility with screen readers.

Who wrote the report?

The report was written by the Health Services and Outcomes (Wai 2575) Tribunal Panel: Presiding Officer Judge Damian Stone, Professor Susy Frankel (resigned as Tribunal Panel Member, 15 September 2025), Professor Tom Roa, Tania Simpson and Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith.

Key findings and recommendations

In this report, we found that the current disability system fails to perform for taangata whaikaha Maaori. While the Crown has been aware of health inequities for taangata whaikaha Maaori, it has not sufficiently addressed them to improve health outcomes, in breach of the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi.

Throughout the inquiry, taangata whaikaha Maaori shared personal evidence of their experiences of navigating a disability system that was not designed with them in mind, and the resulting prejudice they experienced. Moreover, the inequity suffered by taangata whaikaha Maaori is clearly evident.

We found that taangata whaikaha Maaori are suffering prejudice due to the Crown's Tiriti/Treaty breaches. Our recommendations address this prejudice. We also make several recommendations to support the Crown and taangata whaikaha Maaori to build a Tiriti/Treaty-compliant disability system.

The disability inquiry signifies a critical opportunity for the Crown to honour te Tiriti/the Treaty and develop a system in partnership with taangata whaikaha Maaori.