

ACCESSIBILITY IN EVENT SPACES

EDUCATING AND INFORMING ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS
IN EVENT SPACES, APPLYING AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS ON
TĀNGATA WHAIKAHA MĀORI



FERNZ



IGNITE
CONSULTANTS

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INTRODUCTION

In Aotearoa New Zealand, creating inclusive environments for all members of the community is not just a matter of compliance, it's a reflection of our values of respect, dignity, and collective well-being. For Tāngata Whaikaha Māori, who experience disability at significantly higher rates, accessibility in public spaces is critical to ensuring full participation in social, cultural, and community events. This information pack, in collaboration with FERNZ, is designed to help event organizers create spaces that honor and support the rights of all individuals, especially those within Tāngata Whaikaha Māori communities.



IHC advocates for the rights, inclusion, and welfare of all people with intellectual disabilities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Their mission is to support individuals in living fulfilling, meaningful lives within their communities.



FERNZ was established in 2018 as a Kaupapa Māori-governed charity dedicated to fostering a better life and a fairer society for all. By prioritizing the needs and rights of Māori communities, FERNZ upholds cultural values that promote inclusion and respect for every individual, regardless of ability.

PURPOSE

This information pack has been created to inform and educate about the accessibility needs of the disability community, focusing particularly on Tāngata Whaikaha Māori, within event spaces. This research outlines the barriers and discrimination disabled communities face with the aim of emphasising the need for more inclusive, accessible and culturally responsive event venues. The information pack examines the disability community's needs within event spaces and provides a universal guide on how to meet these needs. Furthermore, this document illustrates the cultural needs of Tāngata Whaikaha Māori within event spaces with the aim of developing cultural competency. This information pack is intended for those working in or managing event spaces, but is not limited to them.

In the context of event planning, a “one-size-fits-all” approach is often assumed to meet specific accessibility needs along with the broader population. However, this approach is rarely sufficient. Truly effective solutions arise from meaningful engagement with disabled communities, understanding their unique needs, and involving them in the planning process.

Recognising the overrepresentation of Māori in major impairment categories, event spaces must confront the barriers of ableism and collaborate with FERNZ and local iwi to create truly inclusive environments. By engaging with the mātauranga (knowledge) that informs the lived experiences of tāngata whaikaha, this guide aims to help New Zealand progress towards the vision of a non-disabling society as outlined in the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026.

Tāngata Whaikaha “Means people who are determined to do well, or is certainly a goal that they reach for. It fits nicely with the goals and aims of people with disabilities who are determined in some way to do well and create opportunities for themselves as opposed to being labelled, as in the past.”

Term created by blind kaumatua Maaka Tibble, founding member of the Māori Disability Leadership Group, 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of Ignite, we acknowledge and thank FERNZ for allowing us the opportunity to collaborate and work on this project.

This information pack was created and developed by student led organisation Ignite Consultants (Wellington). Students volunteered their spare time to contribute to this project.

We'd like to acknowledge that all research was conducted with ethical consideration, and informed consent was sought from all parties involved in providing information. To respect their privacy, we do not mention any names of event centres or people who provided us with information in this report, unless approved by those individuals for contact purposes. Further precautions in the upholding of confidentiality and privacy will be taken through the limited distribution of this report to FERNZ choosing.

LIMITATIONS

We'd also like to acknowledge the limitations of this information pack.

- There is limited available research conducted on disability communities within New Zealand which hindered our ability to fully grasp the key needs of disabled individuals, especially within the entertainment sector.
- Although we have sought consultation with those from the disabled community, this info pack was created by consultants who are not members of the disabled community.
- This information pack is to act as a guide for understanding the disability community, including Tāngata Whaikaha Māori, and their needs in event spaces. While we do make some recommendations, we refer all further consulting to FERNZ and IHC.

KEYWORDS

Mātauranga Māori - Traditional and contemporary Māori knowledge, knowledge systems and knowledge bases. This includes the body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including Māori worldview and perspectives, Māori creativity, and cultural and spiritual practices. As an organic and living knowledge base, mātauranga Māori is ever growing and expanding.

Tangata whenua - The indigenous people with primary mana whakahaere (rights and responsibilities) over an area in New Zealand. Māori are indigenous people of Aotearoa.

Kaupapa Māori - An approach underpinned by Māori values; generally utilised in conducting research by those who are Māori, and who are undertaking research for, and with Māori.

Te Tiriti O Waitangi - Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a founding document and an agreement made in 1840 between representatives of the British Crown and more than 500 rangatira Māori.

Pōwhiri - Pōwhiri is a ritual of encounter; a welcoming ceremony of great importance to Māori as a traditional means for the tangata whenua (hosts) to establish if the manuhiri (guests) are friend or foe. The ceremony opens the spiritual doorway for the manuhiri to come onto the tapū (sacred) land of the marae.

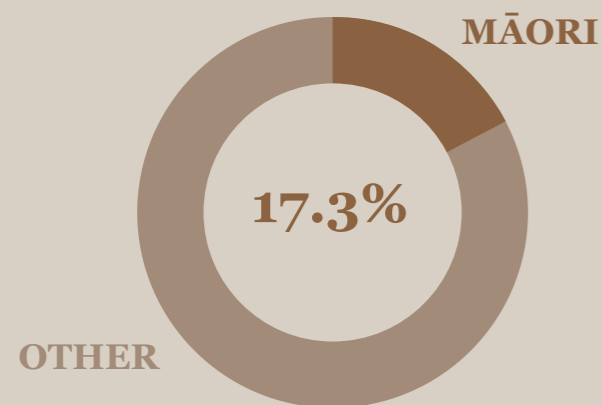
Mana whenua engagements - The process of acknowledging the indigenous Māori people who have historic and territorial rights over the land. These engagements are often called upon when a different iwi or hapu visit.

Ableism - Ableism refers to discrimination against people with disabilities, akin to racism or sexism. It can manifest in various forms, from subtle microaggressions and harmful stereotypes to systemic biases. Many ableist attitudes and beliefs are deeply embedded in society and can be subconsciously internalised.

Kōrero - The term means to converse and signifies the act of sharing thoughts between individuals. In Māori culture, kōrero represents a form of oral narrative and bears similarities to other Indigenous conversational practices. The cultural importance of kōrero is a key responsibility of leadership, acknowledging the esteemed status of those who engage in and share their stories through kōrero.

UNDERSTANDING TĀNGATA WHAIKAHA MĀORI COMMUNITIES

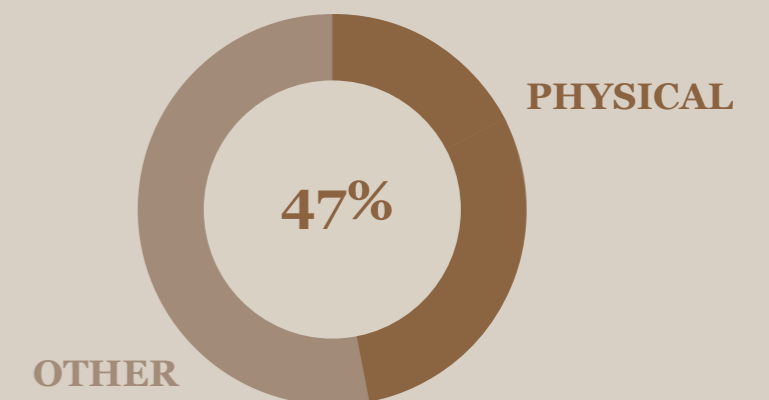
POPULATION OF
AOTEAROA



1 IN 4 MĀORI IDENTIFY AS DISABLED

THAT'S 176,000 PEOPLE, 26% OF THE MĀORI
POPULATION

TYPES OF IMPAIRMENT
AMONGST WHAIKAHA
MĀORI



MĀORI CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES



MANAAKITANGA

Manaakitanga, meaning hospitality and generosity, refers to the practice of showing kindness, respect, and support to guests and visitors. This involves providing for their needs and comfort, and demonstrating warmth and hospitality.



KAITIAKITANGA

Kaitiakitanga means guardianship and protection. Commonly meaning a way of managing the environment, it can also mean the guardianship and protection of Māori intellectual property rights, understanding the importance of being caretakers of knowledge, and cultural responsibilities. It is about safeguarding the future.



WAIRUATANGA

Wairuatanga can be translated as spirituality, expressed in many ways and connects to everything we do. Te ao wairua refers to the unseen world and encourages nurturing the spirit and spiritual resources of all living beings.



WHANAUNGATANGA

Whanaungatanga creates cohesion, a sense of unity, and a sense of togetherness among the people, the whānau collectively supports, makes decisions and takes positive actions for the betterment of everyone. What affects one, affects all; when one person benefits, we all benefit.

UNDERSTANDING TĀNGATA WHAIKAHA MĀORI COMMUNITIES

PERSONAL ACCOUNT



21 year old Female

Experience with event centres has been mainly positive, although there have been issues with stairs and having space to move.

Some changes I would suggest are more lifts and ramps to improve accessibility through movement. Although there is help given to me, I haven't always been noticed straight away and am often stuck as people don't understand that I need room to move.

Some people have negative attitudes, specifically being annoyed if I have to be at the front or that I move slowly. People are not aware of the space needed for me to move and will therefore not make space.

KEY ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS IN EVENT SPACES

From the research we have conducted and the conversations we have had with those in the disability community, it is clear that the key needs of disabled people in event spaces are:

Wheelchair access

Past experiences with multi-floored venues highlighted a lack of adequate ramps, lifts, and circulation space, creating barriers for wheelchair users. Prioritizing changes to allow free movement for disabled performers and attendees is essential for inclusivity.

Accessible toilets & changing rooms

Our research shows that venues used in past festivals had insufficient accessible changing rooms and toilets, limiting comfort for disabled participants. Well placed and sufficient facilities are crucial for creating inclusive spaces.

Accessible parking and routes

People with disabilities often rely on accessible parking close to event centers. Clear, marked routes from parking to the venue, help to ease travel concerns and reduce stress.

KEY ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS IN EVENT SPACES

Catering services

Addressing dietary requirements and offering additional resources such as straws, mugs with handles, and sufficient table space can make the event more inclusive.

Communication

Providing clear, accessible information about the event, including emergency procedures, in various formats (Braille, online, brochures) ensures full participation for people with disabilities, especially those with visual impairments.

Electronics & sensory-friendly areas

Lighting and sound systems should be modifiable to accommodate sensory sensitive individuals. In addition to that, designating areas with varying sensory levels can further enhance comfort for attendees with sensory issues.

Attitude and consideration

Training staff to be respectful and considerate towards attendees with accessibility needs fosters a welcoming environment. Guidance on accommodating diverse needs without assumptions is key.

KEY ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS IN EVENT SPACES

Wayfinding & signage

Clear, high-contrast signage, with large fonts and Braille or tactile signage in key areas aids visually impaired attendees in navigating the venue.

Assistive technology & NZSL interpreters

Incorporating assistive listening devices and hearing loops benefits attendees with auditory impairments by ensuring clear audio during events. Providing NZSL interpreters and reserved seating for them, as demonstrated by the Sydney Opera House, enhances accessibility and participation, making events more inclusive for everyone.

General understanding

While event centers value accessibility, they may lack a full understanding of the needs of disabled attendees. Training and resources from organizations like FERNZ can help bridge this gap and remove barriers.

KEY NEEDS OF TĀNGATA WHAIKAHA MĀORI IN EVENT SPACES

One key factor which undermines all three points explained below, is the lack of clear communication between event centres and Whaikaha Māori.

Historically, Māori have passed down generational knowledge through oral traditions. It is through kōrero that Māori can explain the past, develop shared understanding, remember experiences and pass on knowledge to others. This is why having clear and reciprocal kōrero, with Māori and not too them, is incredibly important in ensuring there are no misunderstandings, offensives or issues.

Our research indicates that Tāngata Whaikaha Māori require event spaces to have:

A basic understanding of Te Reo Māori

Aotearoa New Zealand has a long history with diminishing te reo Māori, and so it is important that the language is respected and uplifted in the modern day. As spaces which bring people of Aotearoa together, event centres have a responsibility to respect and uplift the history of all people who enter their venue. By understanding and speaking basic te reo Māori those working at event centres can help uplift the Māori community, creating an inclusive environment that reflects the value of Whanaungatanga. Event centres can further support whaikaha Māori by having bilingual signage, aiding them in navigating event spaces.

KEY NEEDS OF TĀNGATA WHAIKAHA MĀORI IN EVENT SPACES

Provide meaningful cultural support

While the research conducted indicated that the majority of event centres acknowledge and respect the Māori community, many whaikaha Māori expressed concern over the lack of support given to them by event centres. This lack of support can occur in both the planning stages of an event and during the event itself. Event centres can provide meaningful cultural support by listening to Tāngata Whaikaha Māori, understanding their physical and cultural needs, and planning events with accessibility in mind. By respectfully supporting and welcoming Tāngata Whaikaha Māori, event centres are upholding the value of Manaakitanga and creating an inclusive space.

Be culturally competent & responsive

Our research into the experiences of Tāngata Whaikaha Māori revealed that event centres can be lacking in Māori cultural capacity, failing to understand and work with Māori to provide culturally appropriate support for their events. Māori gatherings typically call for specific protocols and customs, such as a Pōwhiri and mana whenua engagements, which are highly valued in Māori culture. Event centres can build their cultural competency by developing their knowledge of Māori customs from tangata whenua themselves. Additionally, event centres can approach FER NZ and IHC for structure support and consultation in areas of Te Ao Māori and Tāngata Whaikaha Māori specific knowledge.

Our research indicates that there can be misunderstandings or lack of kōrero between event centres and Māori when it comes to implementing these traditional customs for an event. Sometimes event centres already have Māori customs and procedures in place, such as having contacts with mana whenua, and this should be clearly communicated to Māori organising the event. By developing cultural competency and being culturally responsive, event centres demonstrate the values of Manaakitanga and Whanaungatanga.

HOW TO ENGAGE WITH TĀNGATA WHAIKAHA MĀORI



MANAAKITANGA

Manaakitanga is a key value that emphasises a collective responsibility to provide for the needs and comforts of guests, demonstrating warmth and hospitality. All engagements with Tāngata Whaikaha Māori or the wider disability community should be conducted with respect, kindness and support. Each member of the disability community is unique, so it is important to listen to their individual voices, understand their needs, and find the best ways to support them so that they can feel included and cared for.



WAIRUATANGA

It is important to acknowledge the strength and identity of each member within the disability community. This means recognising the wairua and mana of disabled people and not overstepping their boundaries.



WHANAUNGATANGA

Providing meaningful engagement to the disability community is important in upholding the value of Whanaungatanga and developing a sense of inclusivity. This includes developing one's own cultural competency in order to respect and support Māori knowledge, traditions and ways of living.



KAITIAKITANGA

Engaging with and uplifting Tāngata Whaikaha Māori is part of our duty to cultural responsibilities, and to the guardianship and protection of some of the most vulnerable in our society.

CHECKLIST FOR EVENT CENTRES

Accessible Features

- Are their wheelchair user-friendly paths?
- Is the information in formats such as physical handouts, Braille copies, big font sizes, and/or NZSL interpreters?
- What assistive technology is provided, such as dimmed lighting, a quiet sound system if needed, etc.?
- Are the seating arrangements accessible for wheelchair users, including wide turning circles, in line with accessibility standards?

Attitude

- Is there a welcoming environment?
- Are staff aware of the difficulties that the disabled community may face within an event space?
- Are those involved aware and understanding of the disabled community?

Website/Online Information

- Does the website have accessible features, such as read aloud icons?
- Is the website up to date?
- Is it easy to access the accessibility section?
- Are the accessibility features clearly outlined and explained?
- Are the accessibility features clearly outlined and explained?

Catering Services

- Are there easy to read signs and labels?
- Are there staff able to help for those who cannot serve themselves?
- Are there caution signs for hot containers etc?

CONTACTS



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APPENDIX



Research Document

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RMml6XCGzPwYitffrIWVPGJpHX0xaVM2C2wlmPk4SdM/edit>



Resources for Events Centres

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kIWREsuegbuzAV8Y6QEuOEqmbX6F5BZe9Z0EE_NWzm4/edit

Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand

<https://teara.govt.nz/en>

Te Aka Māori Dictionary

<https://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/>

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