



About the NDSA

The National Disabled Students' Association represents tertiary learners from across the motu. We aim to be inclusive, and we cover students from many different backgrounds, including those who experience or identify as having (but not limited to) –

- Physical disability
- Invisible disability
- Mental health and psychological conditions
- Learning and sensory differences
- Neurodivergence
- Chronic illness
- Blind or low vision
- Deaf or hard of hearing

We advocate for and represent learners in a number of ways, including expressing the needs and interests of disabled learners by communicating with the government and offering meetings with all political parties to ensure they better understand issues and changes affecting our learners.

Our submission

We **oppose** this Bill in its entirety. We express significant concerns for the ways in which this Bill may impact future legislation affecting disabled learners, particularly with the need for legislation to measure benefits against costs. Legislation made for public good should **not** be impacted by the cost of legislation (*8 Principles of responsible regulation, k*), and the ways in which benefits are measured is unclear in this Bill.

We believe the requirements under *8k* impact disabled ākonga, where costs may be used to claim new legislation benefitting disabled ākonga are unjustified, particularly where it may be difficult to measure benefit.

Additionally, we aspire as an organisation to uphold Te Tiriti, and we do not feel this Bill itself upholds Te Tiriti or acts in the best interests of tangata whenua. We recognise tangata whaikaha as an underserved group which has been increasingly



left behind by recent decision-making, and we are concerned for how this Bill may impact decisions affecting tangata whaikaha.

Another concern held by the NDSA is the lack of clarity around consultation (27 *Guidance*), with guidance left to the regulatory standards Minister and Attorney-General. We believe this risks biasing the kinds of guidance provided according to who is in power at any given time, and affects whether legislation will require consultation in relation to Te Tiriti, tangata whenua, disabled people, and other underserved groups.

We have concerns around the lack of unbiased plain language information provided both within the Bill and in supplementary communications provided, leaving many disabled people struggling to understand how this Bill may affect them.

We are uncertain as to whether this Bill is in the best interests of wāhine, disabled wāhine, and learners overall, where significant power imbalances resulting from the Bill may further undermine and erode the rights of these groups who already often experience inequities.

We believe this Bill increases barriers to providing legislation that acts in the benefit of the public, and risks putting corporate wishes above individuals. We stand in **opposition** to this Bill, and our recommendation is that it is **not enacted**.

Ngā mihi nui,

Eloise Fleming and Nikita Van Dijk, Co-Presidents of the National Disabled Students' Association 2025