

Accessible and Inclusive Spaces and Places

Sport New Zealand Ihi Aotearoa's [Strategic Plan](#) (2020-2024) states that "Every New Zealander has the right to participate in Play, Active Recreation and Sport within an inclusive environment, and to be treated with respect, empathy and positive regard". Diversity, equity and inclusion form a key component of both Sport New Zealand and Sport Waikato's strategic directions, with the aim to embed principles of inclusion across the play, active recreation and sport sector, and the spaces and places landscape.

Over the last twenty years, the application of Universal Design to enable access to and inclusion in spaces and places has increased internationally to ensure that products, services and environments meet the needs of people regardless of gender, ethnicity, ability, age and stage, without the need for adaptation, and that continue to be usable by everyone over time.

Accessibility

Accessibility is a state where everyone is welcomed, everyone is valued and everyone can thrive. We know that 25% of New Zealanders identify with having a disability, while in the Waikato region this includes 53% of adults and 36% of young people.



86% of disabled adults in the Waikato region believed being physically active is very important for their mental or emotional wellbeing, therefore improved accessibility enables people with access needs, such as older people, pregnant people and parents with young children, neurodiverse people, people with temporary injury or chronic conditions, English as a second language and their friends, family and caregivers, to access opportunities to participate.

In an access report completed by [Be.Lab](#) in 2020, 52% of access citizens in Aotearoa New Zealand reported that they are unable to participate in all

the activities and events of public life they'd like to due to inaccessibility. This includes activities such as shopping, going to restaurants and cafes, museums, galleries, attending the theatre, sports events and more.

Inclusive environments

Where accessibility speaks to the practical elements of being in a space or place, inclusion ensures that a range of individuals (e.g. disabled people, older people, women and girls, Māori and Pasifika people, the rainbow community, ethnic minorities, and so on) are able to authentically and meaningfully engage in physical activity in quality locations. By ensuring DEI principles are central to our sector planning, we enhance the play, active recreation and sport system that is equitable and accessible for everyone.

Be.Lab's research identified that the key enablers for accessible and inclusive participation are welcoming helpful customer service and accessible online information. Sport Waikato's Voices of Waahine Survey (in partnership with This is ME® and the University of Waikato) revealed 261 facility related mentions, with 57% of respondents noting the desire for spaces designed for women and 26% commenting on instances where they had felt unsafe or unwelcome.

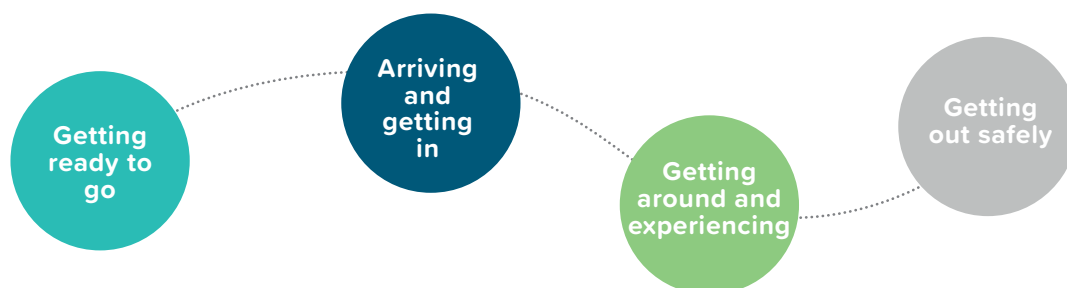
The increasing use of bilingual signage is similarly seen as a step towards inclusion to create welcoming environments for Māori, while a 2021 survey by This Girl Can and UK Active revealed that 83% of respondents looked for information before visiting a facility, and 45% stated that information about a facility would encourage them to attend and subsequently participate.

Along these lines, Be.Lab have developed four phases along the Customer Journey that are critical to look at when creating an accessible and inclusive experience. If one of the phases along the Customer Journey isn't accessible, then it could contribute to individuals choosing not to or being unable to participate.

Key principles

Active Spaces Customer Journey

1. Getting ready to go – planning, registering, online information, maps, contact details.
 2. Arriving and getting in – car parking, drop off zones, wayfinding, accessible route to the space from all transport options including bus stops.
 3. Getting around and experiencing – accessible route, seating, viewing, participating in the activity, wayfinding signage, lighting and sensory aspects, customer service, documentation, food & beverage areas, toilets and changing rooms, parent facilities.
 4. Getting out safely – emergency information and egress plans for access citizens.
- It is critical that facility and spatial planning moves beyond isolated programmes and plans to have a more strategic approach that is integrated across core strategies, systems and structures.



Links to relevant research

- Be.Lab | [Access 2020 Report: Accessibility in New Zealand today](#)
- Sport New Zealand - Ihi Aotearoa | [Co-design](#)
- Sport New Zealand - Ihi Aotearoa | [Co-designing Spaces and Places Catalogue of Practices – Promoting Women’s Involvement in Physical Activity in Urban Spaces](#)
- [Guidelines - Promoting Women’s Involvement in Physical Activity in Urban Spaces](#)
- Sport New Zealand - Ihi Aotearoa | [Guiding Principles for the Inclusion of Transgender People in Community Sport](#)
- Sport England | [This Girl Can: helping to make leisure sector spaces safer and more inclusive for women](#)
- Sport England | [This Girl Can: Improve services and make spaces safer for women](#)
- [What makes a park feel safe or unsafe?](#)
- Sport and Recreation Victoria | [Fair access for women and girls in sport](#)
- NSW Government | [Inclusive Facility Design and Innovation Forums](#)

Links to relevant tools

- Be.Lab | [The Whys and Hows of digital accessibility](#)
- Be.Lab | [Design Planning](#)
- Standards NZ | [NZS 4121:2001 Design for access and mobility: Buildings and associated facilities](#)
- Universal Design | [The 7 Principles](#)
- [Make Space Safe for Girls - Uk](#)
- [Barrier Free - championing a more liveable world](#)
- [Auckland Design Manual | Design advice for your next project](#)
- Building Performance | [Designing for access and usability](#)
- Activity & Nutrition Aotearoa | [Development of an Evaluation Tool to Measure Accessibility and Usability of Parks and Playgrounds](#)
- NZ Rugby | [Best practice changing rooms guide](#)
- Sport and Recreation Victoria | [Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines](#)
- Sport New Zealand - Ihi Aotearoa | [Accessibility Design Guide and Checklist](#)
- Sport New Zealand - Ihi Aotearoa | [Gender Neutral Design Principals](#)
- Merri-bek City Council | [Allocation and use of sporting facilities, grounds and pavilions](#)

Links to case study

- Be.Lab | [Improving Park Accessibility in Auckland](#)
- Be.Lab | [The Auckland Botanic Gardens: Partnering to make accessibility business-as-usual](#)
- Be.Lab | [Auckland Council Update and the power of online accessibility information](#)
- [Magical Bridge Playground – Hamilton](#)