



Commitment to accessibility

At Meridian we believe a diverse and inclusive workplace brings out the best in our people and helps make us a stronger organisation.

Meridian is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where *all* our employees are encouraged to reach their full potential and individual differences are valued and respected. In a staff survey, one quarter of us identified as having an accessibility need. This aligns with national data that one in four New Zealanders are affected by physical, sensory, learning, mental health, or other impairments.

Focus on accessibility

Our staff-led 'Belonging' initiative is working to shift the dial for inclusion and diversity across all areas of the business. Those with visible or hidden disabilities are often under-represented and unsupported in the workforce.

Accessibility challenges, combined with lack of support, can create barriers for people to reach their full potential. By calling out accessibility as a focus area, we want to raise understanding and empathy while providing a workplace that brings out the best in all of us.

What we mean by accessibility

Accessibility is about providing workplaces, systems, and services that can be easily used by everyone. There will always be some areas on generation sites that are inaccessible to people with physical impairments, but we need to push beyond some old or 'traditional' views of disability. From our internal surveys, over 75% of those who identify as having a disability say it is hidden!

In addition to removing physical barriers from our workplaces, accessibility is also about having systems that work for people with sensory issues (vision, hearing, etc.), providing flexibility for those who may struggle with the rigidity of traditional '9am–5pm' office-based work, or who have needs because of chronic illness, neurodiversity, or age-related issues.

Some of us have accessibility challenges that we live with daily, others have people we care about who are affected. The fact is, raising accessibility lifts the game for everyone, whether they have disability or not.

Our plan to improve accessibility

Meridian has joined the **Accessibility Tick** accreditation programme. Membership in this programme gives us guidance to identify a wide range of accessibility issues and provides a framework for continuous improvement. Receiving the Accessibility Tick doesn't mark the end of our journey, it's more like showing up at the starting line!

Meridian is committed to complying with all relevant accessibility and disability legislation, removing barriers which could discriminate against people with a disability, and is committed to consulting with people who may be affected before decisions are made on matters of accessibility.

Neal Barclay

Chief Executive

November 2020