



**AUT CENTRE FOR
PERSON CENTRED RESEARCH**

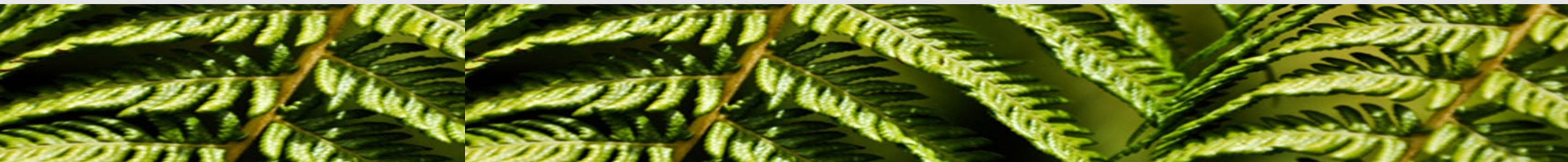
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Conceptualising accessibility: Moving beyond physical access to creating an accessible experience

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Why accessibility?

1. A key research theme for our centre
2. Partnership with Be.Accessible

The screenshot displays the Be.Accessible website. At the top right, there is a yellow search bar and social media icons for A+, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. The main header features a large yellow circle with the 'Be. accessible' logo. Below this, the heading 'Join the Movement' is prominently displayed. Underneath the heading, five circular icons represent different aspects of the movement: 'The Movement' (yellow), 'Find Accessible Places' (dark grey), 'Be. Welcome' (teal), 'Be. Leadership' (orange), and 'Be. Employed' (blue). On the left side, a yellow tab labeled 'The Movement' is active, revealing a list of links: 'What is Accessibility?', 'About Be. Accessible', and 'Be. Team'. The main content area under 'The Movement' contains the text: 'Imagine a world where every person, building and community is truly accessible. That world is what Be. Accessible has set out to create.' followed by a paragraph: 'Be. Accessible is a social change initiative and a holistic framework for accessibility with a mission to create a truly accessible country for us all.'

search

A+ Twitter f YouTube

Be. accessible

Join the Movement

The Movement Find Accessible Places Be. Welcome Be. Leadership Be. Employed

The Movement

What is Accessibility?
About Be. Accessible
Be. Team

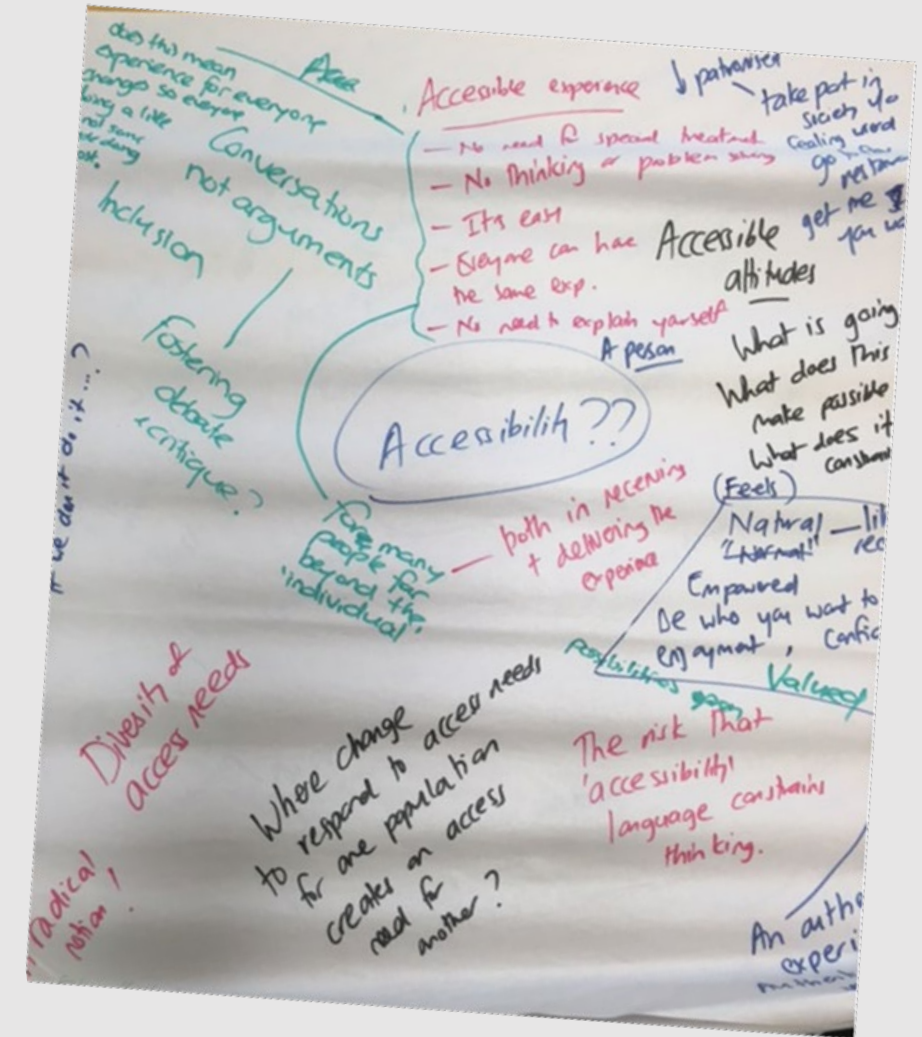
Imagine a world where every person, building and community is truly accessible. That world is what Be. Accessible has set out to create.

Be. Accessible is a social change initiative and a holistic framework for accessibility with a mission to create a truly accessible country for us all.



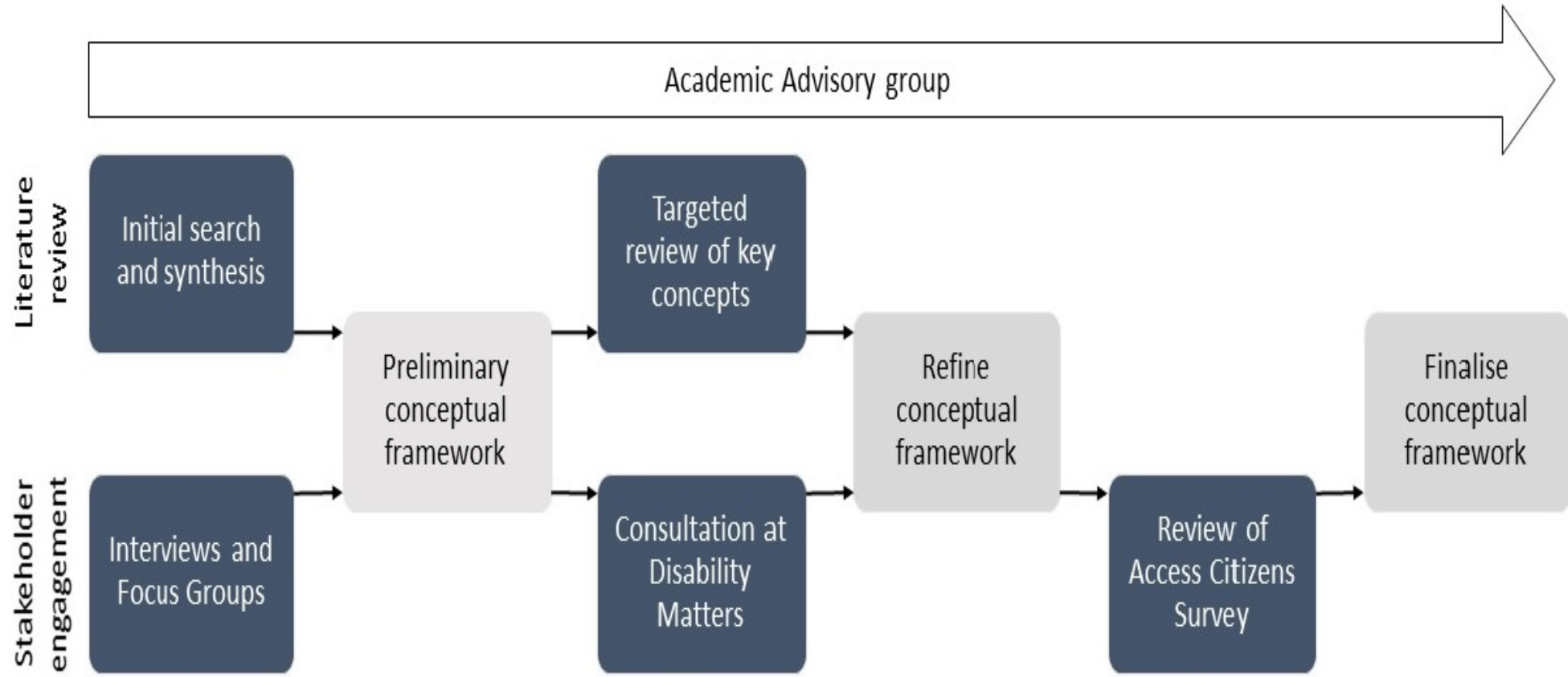
But, it's complex!

- Understood variably across settings, contexts and disciplines
- A subjective experience with physical, emotional, social, and cognitive aspects
- The subject of much critical debate already
- Both risks and opportunities?





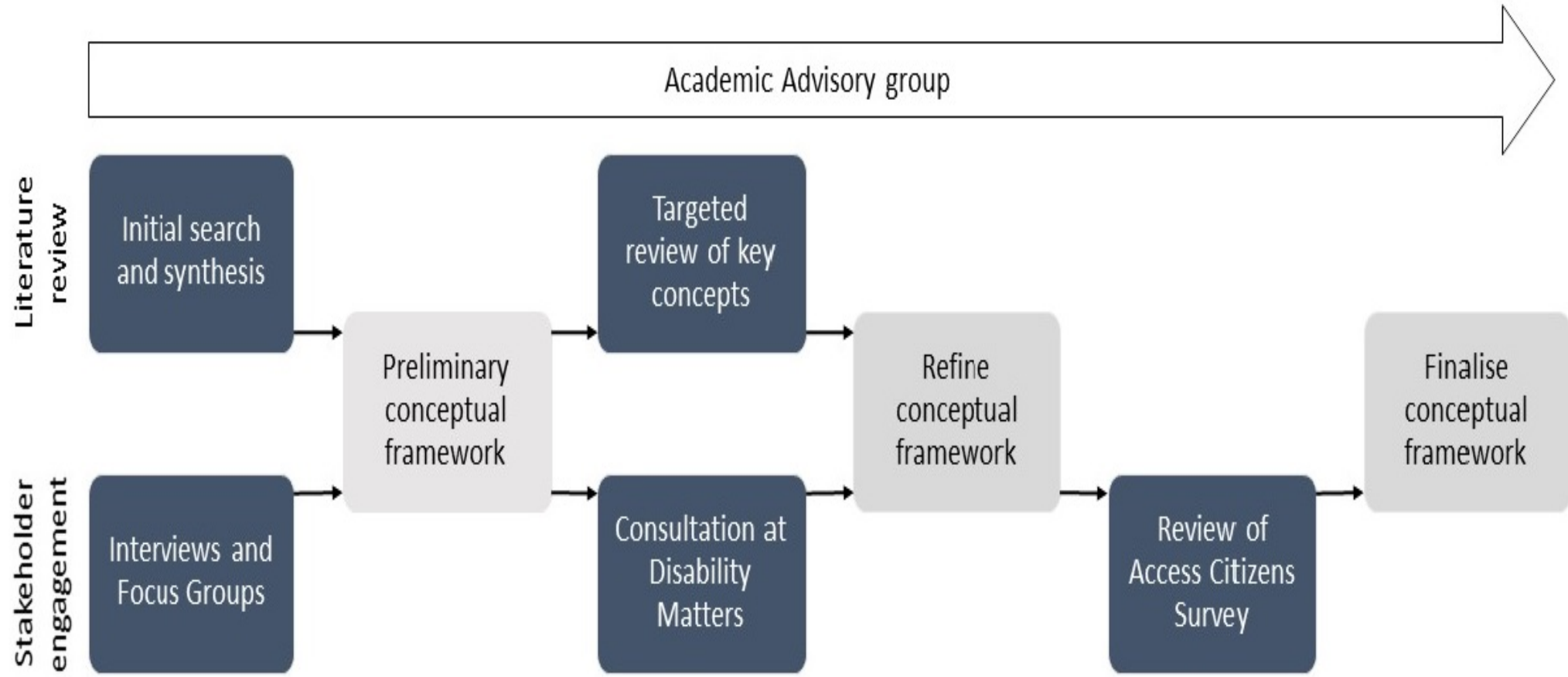
What did we do?







What did we do?





Defining accessibility

- A variably understood concept
- Not only physical, but also an emotional, social, and cognitive experience
- Some tensions...
 - Some argued the term 'accessibility' had been “hijacked” by others e.g. user-friendly roadways
 - Concern the International Symbol of Access shapes people's shared understandings of what constitutes disability





An accessible...

...Experience

...Choice

...Community

...Everyday



...Journey

...Opportunity

...Future



An accessible experience



- Participating in pleasant and fulfilling experiences
- Narratives of ableist and exclusionary understandings of what can and cannot be experienced and by whom

“That says, for me, you are a second class citizen, we would prefer you to go around the back. So I don’t feel included. I don’t feel like its inclusive design. I actually feel excluded.”



An accessible journey

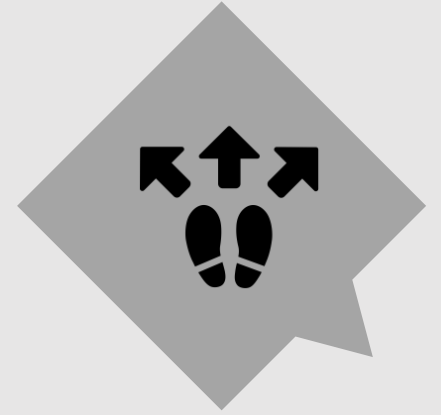


- The journey is as important as the destination
- Time and cognitive burden of advance planning
- Access to information about accessibility

“If we are planning on going to another city and staying somewhere, that accessibility information is never up front. You have just got to keep on going, keep on delving.”



An accessible choice



- Informed decisions is an important element of exercising fundamental freedoms and human rights
- Frequently undermined through partial information

“Why are people not attending their appointment, for instance? Well actually, they couldn’t read what you sent them so they didn’t know they had an appointment.”



An accessible opportunity



- Opportunities for participating socially, economically, and politically require equitable societal arrangements
- Low expectations limit capacity for achievement

“One guy [with a particular access need] was asked at his interview [by a prospective employer], ‘you know, well, how are you going to get here on time to the right place?’ [The interviewee responded] ‘what, like I did for my interview?’”



An accessible community



- Community participation and social inclusion rely on elements of social and built environments coming together to make access possible

Participant one: “[Some people have argued that] social inclusion sort of trumps physical inclusion and I don’t agree with that personally”

Participant two: “No, because you have to be there to be included.”



An accessible future



- Fragility of opportunities that rely on individual people
- A need to move towards accessibility being part of the social fabric of society

“The manager was totally committed. They employ[ed] deaf waiters, they have a menu that’s got sign language and what have you, which makes it a fun thing. But the manager’s gone. Are they [the restaurant] going to continue to actually be that committed?”



An accessible everyday

- The necessity of mundane, taken for granted activities e.g. visiting family and friends, purchasing everyday items, secure income, etc.



“There’s macro and there’s micro where accessibility is concerned going right down to ‘can you turn your tap on’ or ‘can you open that door’, right down to ‘can you get to the building and into it in the first place.’”



A need to expand how we conceptualise accessibility?

- A tendency focus on...
 - Spatial geography and physical access
 - Ability to navigate an environment, access and use facilities
 - Adherence to minimum standards e.g. building codes, urban planning
 - Broad categories
- Less focus on...
 - How a space is used and experienced
 - Experiences of social inclusion and enjoyment
 - Temporality e.g. the link between accessibility, opportunity.... and possibility
 - Unique and specific experiences



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