



Disabled Persons Assembly (New Zealand) Inc

Our Vision

TO MATOU TIROHANGA WHAKAMUA
2009 - 2012

**The collective voice of
disabled New Zealanders**

OUR VISION 2009-2012

DPA (NZ) INC
KI TE IWI HAUA O AOTEAROA
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We are DPA, the national assembly of people with disabilities and the collective voice of disabled New Zealanders. This document sets out how we see our vision being put into action.

Introduction

Disabled people are a big part of the New Zealand community. The *2006 Disability Survey*, conducted by Statistics New Zealand, found that an estimated 660,300 New Zealanders reported being disabled, representing 17 per cent of the total population. Because the issues of disability also impact on families/whānau, many more people are affected. The survey highlighted the following issues:

- almost all disabled people live in households;
- the percentage of disabled people increases with age;
- the most common support required for disabled children is for their educational needs;
- the most common impairments for adults are physical and sensory;
- impairments at birth and illness are the most common causes of disability for children, while illness and injuries are the most common causes of disability for adults;
- the most common type of injury causing disability occurs at work.

In 2001, the Government released *Whakanui Oranga: Making a World of Difference*, the New Zealand Disability Strategy. Its aim is to create a fully inclusive society, so that people with impairments can say: “We live in a society that highly values our lives and continually enhances our full participation.” While much remains to be done to achieve this aim, there has been considerable progress. Highlights since 2005 include:

- adoption of New Zealand Sign Language as New Zealand’s third official language;
- all large residential institutions for people with learning disabilities have now been closed, as our society heads toward the goal of people being supported and living in the community;
- the 2007 repeal of the mis-named *Disabled Persons Employment Promotion Act*.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy guided New Zealand's involvement in the development of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

New Zealand played a leading role in this and was one of the first of 80 nations to sign the Convention.

In May 2008, the Convention came into force, signalling a global commitment to improve the opportunities for disabled people to live their lives on the same basis as others.

New Zealand has ratified the Convention and is bound by the Convention's articles.

Both the Convention and Strategy need disabled peoples' active involvement to ensure that they produce meaningful outcomes.

Our experiences with the Convention and Strategy have informed the priorities contained within *Our Vision 2009-2012*.

We have also learnt that real progress can be made when the Government works in partnership with us in any decision making processes, hence our catch-cry, "nothing about us, without us".

Our Vision 2009-2012 will be useful for:

- *disabled people – to lobby electoral candidates, with the aim of bringing about real change and to compare the values and promises of different political parties;*
- *politicians – to inform their parties' disability policies;*
- *the media and people in general – to increase their understanding of disability issues.*

Key elements of *Our Vision 2009-2012* and recommended actions

***Our Vision 2009-2012* aims to help create a society that provides both equity and maximum opportunity to participate for all people. For disabled people, this means that our lives are highly valued and our full participation is continually enhanced.**

The following is a summary of the key elements of our vision, together with recommendations for action by Government:

HUMAN RIGHTS

We believe that the life of a person with a disability has equal value to, and should have the rights, dignity and respect of, a non-disabled person. We support the rights of people with disabilities to make informed choices, without coercion, about their lives and future.

Government action required:

- *establish a Disability Commission, with a strong advocacy role, to complement the work of the Human Rights and related Commissions;*
- *include us on bioethical and technological decision making bodies.*

Having the same rights as other New Zealanders includes the right to take part in all aspects of economic, social, cultural, civic and political life.

Government action required:

- *implement the priorities of the disability section in Mana ki te Tangata/The New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights, by 2012;*
- *work in partnership with us to ensure that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is implemented, with meaningful outcomes, particularly in the areas of disability support services, employment, education and income.*

LEGISLATION, POLICY MAKING AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Government has a continuing obligation to provide appropriate, enforceable legislation to advance our rights, opportunities and participation. We must be actively involved in all decisions that affect us – “nothing about us, without us”.

Government action required:

- *engage with us in the development of legislation, policy, services, guidelines and standards;*
- *amend the Local Government Act so that local bodies must comply with the New Zealand Disability Strategy;*
- *provide New Zealand Sign Language interpreters within the Legislature and at all public meetings;*
- *resource Braille as a means of communication for people who use it.*

TREATY OF WAITANGI

We recognise the Treaty of Waitangi as New Zealand’s founding document.

Government action required:

- *guarantee there is choice for everyone in accessing disability services provided by both Treaty partners;*
- *recognise the Treaty when developing and providing disability services for Māori.*

COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The attitudes of other people are the most common barriers that disable us. We should be able to control our own lives. The Government has an important role to play in bringing about a change in attitudes and getting rid of negative stereotyping.

Available, accessible, relevant and timely information is the basis for informed consent and decision making.

Government action required:

- *fund a nationally coordinated public education campaign on disability;*
- *provide all public information in disability-friendly formats at no extra cost;*
- *continue the Census disability question and follow-up survey at five-yearly intervals.*

EDUCATION

Every person with a disability has the right to receive a quality education at every level of the education system.

Government action required:

- *guarantee we have access to the same educational opportunities and facilities as all other students, at all levels of the education system;*
- *incorporate reporting on inclusiveness and accessibility of facilities in all Education Review Office and Tertiary Education Commission reviews.*

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

It is our right to have the opportunity to be engaged in productive and meaningful employment that provides flexibility, equal opportunity and career path development.

Government action required:

- *extend equal opportunity legislation to private sector employment;*
- *optimally manage our school-to-work transition.*

All people have the right to income, adequate for them to live and participate in the community with dignity and respect.

Government action required:

- *ensure that Government-funded benefits are set at levels that recognise both the cost of living and the true cost of impairment;*
- *ensure that Government-funded benefits are fair, equitable and adequate, are based on need not cause of disability, are paid directly to the individual and that benefit abatement does not act as a barrier to open employment.*

DISABILITY SERVICES

We should be entitled to receive whatever services or other support or assistance is required to reduce the disabling effects of impairment. Services should be designed so we are able to have a full, meaningful and constructive life of our choosing.

Government action required:

- *implement the Social Services Select Committee recommendations on the quality of care and service provision for people with disabilities;*
- *work with us to create a single funder of support services governed by us;*
- *put the person with the disability at the centre of the service.*

ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING

Accommodation and housing policies must actively support our rights to human dignity and to choose our own lifestyle and accommodation options.

Government action required:

- *provide a range of supported living options;*
- *change building and related laws to ensure consistency with the New Zealand Disability Strategy;*
- *make all new public housing accessible, with at least 20 per cent of new private houses adhering to lifetime design principles;*
- *ensure we are the majority on the boards of all Government-funded residential services;*
- *ensure all buildings except non-rental private dwellings are fully accessible by 2020.*

ACCESSIBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Everyone benefits from our human right to participate with dignity in the normal life and activities of the community.

Government action required:

- *make all public toilets, new public gardens, parks, cemeteries and walkways accessible.*

Transport is one of the basic rights of all people. All forms of transport and its infrastructure, from local communities to the national level, must be accessible to us.

Government action required:

- *implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Commission’s report, The Accessible Journey.*

HEALTH

We have the right to receive a range of quality and appropriate health services. Health care services must maximise our ability to exercise choice, to have personal input, to make informed consent, and also take full account of our particular needs.

We may have health needs specific to our impairment. We also have the same health needs as non-disabled people, and these need to be addressed in an appropriate way.

Government action required:

- *ensure Disability Support Advisory Committees have members who identify with having disability, or who have lived experience of disability;*
- *guarantee our health treatment is not prejudiced by the existence or nature of a disability;*
- *continually upskill health professionals and members of the 'helping professions' in disability awareness.*

ADVOCACY AND SELF-ADVOCACY

DPA supports efforts by disabled people to promote assertiveness and self-confidence.

Government action required:

- *provide access for us to an advocate of our choice and/or to self-advocacy training and leadership development.*

ARTS, CULTURE, SPORTS, RECREATION, LEISURE

All people have the right to seek and gain fulfilment in life through participation in arts, recreation, leisure and sporting activities in their community.

Government action required:

- *include us in all community social activities and in tourism and other promotional campaigns;*
- *give all sportspeople with disabilities the same status and training opportunities as their non-disabled peers.*

SPECIFIC GROUPS

Our years as children and young people should be fun, give us a positive self-identity, allow us the dignity of risk and provide what is necessary for our future as adults.

Government action required:

- *ensure that children and youth services cater for disabled children and their families/whānau.*

The specific needs of Māori and Pasifika people with disabilities, as individuals and also within their family/whānau, communities, hapū and iwi, must be considered whenever policy that may affect them is being considered. Policy must recognise that families/whānau, hapū and iwi may also be disadvantaged by an individual's impairment.

Government action required:

- *develop more services by, with and for Māori people with disabilities;*
- *train Pasifika people as providers of disability information and services to their local communities.*

There are issues concerning disabled people from ethnic minorities that often inhibit or prevent them choosing a lifestyle appropriate to their cultural heritage.

Government action required:

- *make similar provisions for members of ethnic minority groups with disabilities to those made for Māori and Pasifika people with disabilities.*

There are issues relating specifically to disabled women that prevent them from exercising choice and attaining social and economic independence in the home, the workplace and the community.

Government action required:

- *include the perspectives of disabled women in all relevant Government programmes and delegations and involve disabled women in their planning and implementation.*

Families, whānau and carers nurture us during our childhood and youth and support us afterwards.

Government action required:

- *offer our families/whānau and carers free, independent advocacy services.*

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

As a member of the international community, the New Zealand Government has a responsibility to ensure our participation in the international disability community and to promote our rights and aspirations in New Zealand as well as globally.

Government action required:

- *ratify International Labour Organisation Convention 159;*
- *continue to support disability work in the Pacific;*
- *do not prohibit migrants and refugees from entering New Zealand on the grounds of disability.*

