1 April 2016

Transport and Industrial Relations Committee’s Inquiry into the future of New Zealand’s mobility

To Whom It May Concern

Please find attached a submission on the proposed Accident Compensation Appeal Tribunal.

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ Inc.

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**Introducing DPA New Zealand Inc.**

The Disabled Persons Assembly NZ Inc. (DPA) is the national assembly and collective voice of disabled New Zealanders.

DPA is a Disabled Person’s Organisation (DPO) meaning it is a national Organisation governed by disabled people, and the organisation’s main purpose is to articulate the aspirations of its members who are mostly disabled people.

DPA has some 430 individual members who have disabilities themselves or are the parent, or guardian of a disabled person, and 37 corporate members who represent or deliver services to disabled people. [DPA members](http://www.dpa.org.nz/our-organisation/our-members) form a network of regional assemblies to debate local and national issues.

DPA’s functions include:

* to promote the interests and wellbeing of all disabled people regardless of age, for our whole lives
* to engage with disabled people, DPOs and our valued allies
* to progress the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Government accountability

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) provides the mandate for disabled people to hold the Government to account on ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by disabled people.

CRPD is the minimum standard

DPA recognise the CRPD as the minimum standard for disabled people’s participation in society.

Partnership with DPOs

The implementation of the CRPD depends on a partnership between DPOs and the Government. This is highlighted in Article 4.3 which says governments shall consult closely with and actively involve disabled people, including disabled children, through their representative organisations.[[1]](#footnote-1) This partnership goes beyond just consulting with disabled people.

Context for the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee’s Inquiry into the future of New Zealand’s mobility

New Zealand is part of a globalised world, with its instantaneous movement of ideas, information and commerce, which our understanding of mobility needs to keep pace with. The mobility of disabled people inside and across New Zealand borders needs to be addressed and discrimination eliminated.

New Zealand also has an aging population which has implications for the increase in the number of disabled people in our population – between the 2006 and 2013 Census the rate of disabled people rose from 20 – 24% of the population.

The low income of disabled people in New Zealand also has implication for our mobility - from the 2013 New Zealand Disability Survey, 247000 of the 925000 (or 27%) of disabled New Zealanders earned $15000 or less per year.[[2]](#footnote-2)

New Zealand Government commitments and obligations

New Zealand Government introduced the New Zealand Disability Strategy (NZDS) in 2001 and took a lead in the development the United Nations Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which it ratified in 2008.

The NZDS lays out objectives for making New Zealand less disabling, including commitments to:

* Provide opportunities in employment and economic development for disabled people
* Support quality living in the community for disabled people
* Support lifestyle choices, recreation and culture for disabled people

The Disability Action Plan 2014-2018, was developed by the government in consultation with DPOs, to implement the UN CRPD and the New Zealand Disability Strategy. Two of the four shared result areas of the Plan are to ***Increase employment and economic opportunities*** and ***Promote access to the community*** through ‘accessible buildings and spaces, transport, urban design’, ‘accessible information, communications’, ‘access to health services, justice services’ and ‘political and civic participation’.

DPA believes that transport and mobility are crucial for disabled people to be able to access employment, economic and educational opportunities, as well as facilitating health, social participation and inclusion.[[3]](#footnote-3)

DPA’s recommendations to the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee’s Inquiry into the future of New Zealand’s mobility

Enhance productivity:

* Enable disabled people to safely, easily, reliably and affordably move around their community and country to enable them to participate in paid and unpaid community work, education, family relationships, as well as social and civic activities.
* Eliminate discrimination against disabled people and their families from the immigration process, to enable disabled people and their families to live, work and contribute to the New Zealand economy.

Reduce transport and related costs:

* Make public transport accessible, safe and reliable so that disabled people are able to use it, thereby increasing volumes of passengers and decreasing costs.
* Incorporate the built environment into transport planning, particularly the accessibility of pedestrian and vehicle areas– so that when disabled people are in the community, they are able to move around. For example more and safer mobility car parks, kerb cuts, adequate lighting and appropriate accessible signage.

Optimise infrastructure:

* Transport infrastructure that incorporates universal design principles in built environment.
* Develop specific transport plans for disabled people in rural areas that account for the low levels of public transport.
* Responsive training on including disabled people in emergencies
* Bringing the built environment up to agreed accessibility standards and investing in maintenance

Increase accessibility and social connectedness

* Appropriate and ongoing training of transport workers, including training on safety and emergency procedures.
* A public transport system that works for all disabled people across their life course, including children, young and older disabled people.
* Investment in training and placement of assistance animals and better regulation and training on public transport.
* Sufficient funding for the purchase and modifications of vehicles for disabled people.

DPA would appreciate an opportunity to make an oral submission to the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee on this Inquiry.

1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 4.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\_for\_stats/health/disabilities/disability-survey-2013-additional-tables.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Woodbury, E. Z. (2013). Auto-mobile: Disabled Drivers in New Zealand (Thesis, Doctor of Philosophy). University of Otago. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)