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To Christchurch City Council

Please find attached DPA’s submission on Chartwell Reserve Playground

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**Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly NZ**

**We work on systemic change for the equity of disabled people.**

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ (DPA) is a not-for-profit pan-impairment Disabled People’s Organisation run by and for disabled people.

**We recognise:**

* Māori as Tangata Whenua and [Te Tiriti o Waitangi](https://www.archives.govt.nz/discover-our-stories/the-treaty-of-waitangi) as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand;
* disabled people as experts on their own lives;
* the [Social Model of Disability](https://www.odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/guidance-for-policy-makes/) as the guiding principle for interpreting disability and impairment;
* the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html) as the basis for disabled people’s relationship with the State;
* the [New Zealand Disability Strategy](https://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/) as Government agencies’ guide on disability issues; and
* the [Enabling Good Lives Principles](https://www.enablinggoodlives.co.nz/about-egl/egl-approach/principles/), [Whāia Te Ao Mārama: Māori Disability Action Plan](https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/whaia-te-ao-marama-2018-2022-maori-disability-action-plan), and [Faiva Ora: National Pasifika Disability Disability Plan](https://www.moh.govt.nz/notebook/nbbooks.nsf/0/5E544A3A23BEAECDCC2580FE007F7518/$file/faiva-ora-2016-2021-national-pasifika-disability-plan-feb17.pdf) as avenues to disabled people gaining greater choice and control over their lives and supports.

**We drive systemic change through:**

* **Leadership:** reflecting the collective voice of disabled people, locally, nationally and internationally.
* **Information and advice:** informing and advising on policies impacting on the lives of disabled people.
* **Advocacy:** supporting disabled people to have a voice, including a collective voice, in society.
* **Monitoring:** monitoring and giving feedback on existing laws, policies and practices about and relevant to disabled people.

# The Submission

DPA welcomes this development and sees it as a positive step as part of the Council’s programme to make playgrounds more inclusive, accessible and user friendly for all children and their families/whanau in Christchurch.

We particularly welcome the inclusion of an accessible picnic table in the playground with seating to enable a wheelchair or mobility aid user to easily seat themselves alongside people sitting on the bench. This will enable disabled parents, whanau and caregivers of any children to be included in the children’s play area.  We have several recommendations to ensure that the new playground development is made more accessible and inclusive, especially for disabled children.

Firstly, DPA recommends that more inclusive play equipment be installed in the new Chartwell Reserve Playground, to give every child the opportunity to participate in play. This should be achieved through installing equipment, which is universally designed, inclusive and usable with features including sufficient width, space and elevation, enabling the parents/caregivers/support people of disabled children the ability to navigate and play with equipment easily.

In fact, we would like to see all Christchurch playgrounds transition towards being built on universal design principles and with all equipment being fully accessible and inclusive to everyone, including disabled children and young people.

Secondly, DPA recommends that seating be placed around the playground at varying heights (either higher or lower) and include armrests so that people with mobility impairments, children and older people can easily get in or out of the seats.

Thirdly, DPA recommends that the proposed new path from the street to the playground provide for universal accessibility, and this includes for people using wheelchairs, mobility aids, children’s pushchairs, as well as blind and low vision people. Tactile strips should also be added for blind and low vision people to navigate their way safely around the playground, especially along the pathway.

DPA also recommends that:

* the Playful edging is not placed in front of the accessible ramp as this can present a potential hazard/barrier for disabled children and adults.
* the safety surface on the playground should not be comprised of bark as this can be difficult for wheelchair and mobility aid users to navigate around. A more suitable alternative should be put in place.
* more trees be grown and that a shade tarpaulin be installed so that there will be more shaded play areas, especially during Summer.
* a wheelchair user friendly drinking water fountain be placed on the playground, and preferably at a medium height where both wheelchair and mobility aid using adults and children can access it.

Finally, DPA would like to be involved in any further discussions on the playground alongside other local disability organisations/stakeholders.

# DPA’s Recommendations Summary

**Recommendation 1:** that the new Chartwell Reserve Playground have more inclusive play equipment installed.

**Recommendation 2:** that seating be placed around the playground of varying heights (either higher or lower) and include armrests

**Recommendation 3:** that the proposed new path from the street to the playground provide for universal accessibility. Tactile strips should also be added for blind and low vision people to navigate their way safely around the playground, especially along the pathway.

**Recommendation 4:** that the Playful edging is not placed in front of the accessible ramp as this can present a potential hazard/barrier for disabled children and adults.

**Recommendation 5:** that the safety surface on the playground should not be comprised of bark as this can be difficult for wheelchair and mobility aid users to navigate around. A more suitable alternative should be put in place.

**Recommendation 6:** that more trees be grown and that a shade tarpaulin be installed so that there will be more shaded play areas, especially during Summer.

**Recommendation 7:** that a wheelchair user friendly drinking water fountain be placed on the playground, and preferably at a medium height where both wheelchair and mobility aid using adults and children can access it.

**Recommendation 8:** DPA would like to be involved in any further discussions on the playground alongside other disability organisations/stakeholders.