

November 2023

To Dunedin City Council

Please find attached DPA’s submission on Destination Playgrounds

For any further inquiries, please contact:

Chris Ford

Policy Advisor

policy@dpa.org.nz

# 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 opportunity to feedback on the Dunedin City Council’s proposals to upgrade destination playgrounds at Marlow Park, Woodhaugh and Mosgiel.

DPA fully supports Council’s intention to make the parks accessible and inclusive play areas for everyone, including disabled tamariki/children and adults.

We highly commend the Council for this.

Some of our local members have been present at recent meetings to provide feedback.

We would like to make this submission as a collation of our member’s views on these proposals.

Our submission will cover the specific proposals for each playground with recommendations on how to enhance accessibility for everyone, including disabled people.

## General comments

While there is much to commend in terms of the destination play developments, we would like to stress that not all accessible equipment marketed by play equipment manufacturers is genuinely accessible.

There are also concerns around the wheelchair swing in Mosgiel is always locked, making people have to jump through hoops to get a key, and this also isolates children who use wheelchairs by not including them in the general play area and it takes up a huge amount of space.

There are many great alternatives that exist such as:

* inclusive carousels
* basket swings
* hoists being placed next to basket swings
* adaptive see-saws
* sensory play panels.

DPA also asks that toilets in all playgrounds be clean and accessible and there be more full changing places type rooms available in every playground.

**Marlow Park**

The removal of the tunnels within the park is a positive move from an accident prevention perspective. Some children have sustained head injuries from these tunnels.

We would like to make the following specific recommendations around changes to Marlow Park.

**Recommendation 1:** that Council erect wind shields and other weather protection on Marlow Park.

**Recommendation 2:** that a ramp be constructed up to the dinosaur slide with more space at the top for adults to assist children.

**Recommendation 3:** that the dinosaur slide surface be covered by an acceptable, safe surface material that provides protection for children and does not trigger any allergies.

**Recommendation 4:** we support the addition of a wheelchair-user friendly trampoline, provided that it is safe and user-friendly.

**Recommendation 5:** that the Noah’s Ark feature is the best place to put a quiet space for both children and adults to retreat to.

**Recommendation 6:** that pass bays are installed around the skateboarding area so that skateboarders do not collide or interfere with pedestrians.

## Woodhaugh

DPA acknowledges that the Woodhaugh Gardens Playground provides a significant, expansive natural bush inspired play space.

While there are some positive aspects to this from an accessibility perspective, there are other areas in this playground which still need attention.

DPA is concerned about plans to remove the only free outdoor toddler pool in the whole of Dunedin at this site.

The suggested alternative of having a sensory water mist spray play area may be suitable for non-disabled children but **not** for disabled children who have greater sensory needs.

We make the following specific recommendations around changes to the Woodhaugh Destination Playground:

**Recommendation 7:** that further engagement is undertaken with the disabled community over creating accessible, suitable alternatives to the water mist play feature.

**Recommendation 8:** that all pathways around the park are fully accessible to everyone.

**Mosgiel**

DPA is disappointed that the Mosgiel Playground missed out on new investment with many existing features being retained.

We hope that the Mosgiel Playground can be more substantially upgraded as part of the next round of improvements.

We make the following specific recommendations around changes to the Mosgiel Destination Playground:

**Recommendation 9:** that fencing is erected along the road as this will prevent children running away from the park.

**Recommendation 10:** that gate latches be reachable for disabled people, especially those using wheelchairs or mobility aids.

**Recommendation 11:** that an accessible paddling pool be added at the playground.

**Recommendation 12:** that mud control is essential in this area as this contributes to a lack of access in the winter months.