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To Wellington City Council

Please find attached DPA’s submission on The Botanic Garden ki Paekākā to City

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

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Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ (DPA) is a pan-impairment disabled person’s organisation that works to realise an equitable society, where all disabled people of all impairment types and including women, Māori, Pasifika, young people are able to direct their own lives. DPA works to improve social indicators for disabled people and for disabled people be recognised as valued members of society. DPA and its members work with the wider disability community, other DPOs, government agencies, service providers, international disability organisations, and the public by:

* telling our stories and identifying systemic barriers
* developing and advocating for solutions
* innovation and good practice

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DPA was influential in creating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), a foundational document for disabled people which New Zealand has signed and ratified, confirming that disabled people must have the same human rights as everyone else [[1]](#footnote-2). All state bodies in New Zealand, including local and regional government, have a responsibility to uphold the principles and articles of this convention. There are a number of UNCRPD articles pertinent to this submission, including:

### Article 9 – Accessibility

“States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications.”

New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026

Since ratifying the UNCRPD, the New Zealand Government has established a Disability Strategy to guide the work of government agencies on disability issues. The vision is that New Zealand be a non-disabling society, where disabled people have equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and that all of New Zealand works together to make this happen [[2]](#footnote-3). It identifies eight outcome areas contributing to achieving this vision, including:

### Outcome 5 – Accessibility

“We access all places, services and information with ease and dignity.”

# The submission

DPA is providing this submission for Wellington City Council in their consideration of the Botanic Garden ki Paekākā to City route, which is an important one for many Wellingtonians as it leads into and out of the CBD. We acknowledge and welcome the changes made to the existing plan from previous rounds of consultation which will both improve access and safety across the entirety of the route.

We especially welcome the adoption of new street layouts with separated bike/scooter and bus lanes where they have not been before, the creation of a safer and easier crossing at The Terrace/Bowen Street intersection and the addition of a mobility park on Bowen Street outside the Ministry of Education building.

Furthermore, DPA particularly welcomes the proposal to have e-scooter users ride on the bike lanes instead of footpaths. This will enable foot, wheelchair and mobility scooter mobilising pedestrians to enjoy safer commutes on footpaths given the propensity for e-scooters to be much faster and less stable than other micro mobility vehicles.

However, there are two issues that we wish to make comment around, and these inform our recommendations.

The first is that we share the concerns of many Wellingtonians around the fact that a considerable number of car parks are being removed, including mobility parks, to make way for the new cycle lanes. This will have an impact on many disabled people who cannot easily navigate/walk/wheel up and down the steep hills of Wellington as easily as a fit and non-disabled cyclist can.

DPA says this as while we strongly support efforts to mitigate and reverse climate change through moves including encouraging the shift to walking, cycling and other modes of public transport, this should not be done while Wellington’s public transport system is still dogged by operational inefficiency and poor service levels.

Therefore, DPA recommends that greater priority be firstly placed on further improving Wellington’s public transport system by the Regional Council and MetLink and that this includes the provision of fully accessible buses as well as Total Mobility services for disabled people in both a timely and efficient manner. Only once Wellington’s public transport system is operating in a way that meets public expectations (and this includes those of disabled people) should the further gradual extension of cycleways then be undertaken. We ask that the Wellington City Council continues to further push the Regional Council and Met Link on this issue.

Furthermore, DPA recommends that for every mobility park removed that they be substituted with the creation of new mobility parks, especially in areas closer to the city and within it.

Second, we note that the proposed bus platform on the shared bus/bike lane on Tinakori Road will need to be assessed for safety before being put into use. Some of our members recently attended a practical demonstration of the proposed bus platform system to be rolled out throughout the city and attended a Zoom call hosted by Council and the platform’s manufacturers. We still have questions about the platform and would appreciate some further outreach from Council to address the remaining issues of concern that we have before this is put into place.

Third, DPA recommends that given Bowen Street is on a significant gradient that accessible bench seating be placed along the street to enable disabled and other pedestrians who want to rest while walking/wheeling up the street to do so.

Also, in terms of Bowen Street, it has been pointed out that there is the lack of a footpath, particularly around 1 Bowen Street and DPA recommends the insertion of an accessible footpath there.

Fourth, DPA recommends that either a pedestrian footpath be constructed and/or better signage be erected to indicate the availability of alternative access along Mowbray and Bolton Streets.

# DPA’s recommendations

The Disabled Person’s Assembly recommends:

* **Recommendation 1:** That for every mobility park removed that they be substituted with the creation of new mobility parks, especially in areas closer to the city and within it.
* **Recommendation 2:** That greater priority be placed on further improving Wellington’s public transport system by the Greater Wellington Regional Council and MetLink and that this includes the provision of fully accessible buses as well as Total Mobility services for disabled people in both a timely and efficient manner. Only once Wellington’s public transport system is operating in a way that meets public expectations (and this includes those of disabled people) should the further gradual extension of cycleways then be undertaken. We ask that the Wellington City Council continues to further push the Regional Council and Met Link on this issue.
* **Recommendation 3:** That bus platform proposed for placement at the shared bus/bike lane on Tinakori Road be assessed for safety before being put into use.
* **Recommendation 4:** That as Bowen Street is on a significant gradient that accessible bench seating be placed along the street to enable disabled and other pedestrians who want to rest while walking/wheeling up the street to do so.
* **Recommendation 5:** That around Mowbray and Bolton Streets that a pedestrian footpath be constructed and/or better signage be erected to indicate the availability of alternative access along Mowbray and Bolton Streets
1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 13, 2006. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Office for Disability Issues. (2016). *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016 – 2026*. Retrieved from https://www.odi.govt.nz/assets/New-Zealand-Disability-Strategy-files/pdf-nz-disability-strategy-2016.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)