July 2021

To the Department of Housing and Urban Development

Please find below DPA’s submission on the Housing and Urban Development Discussion Paper on the Government Policy Statement

## Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

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# Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

The 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
* celebrating innovation and good practice

# The submission

DPA is supportive of Government issuing a General Purpose Statement (GPS) on Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in order to try and ensure that all the players in the areas of housing and urban development are working in a mutually beneficial way to ensure better houses, urban spaces and infrastructure for all New Zealanders.

However, DPA does not see the needs of disabled people reflected in the consultation document: disabled people, and in particular our needs for accessible housing, urban spaces and infrastructure are largely absent and this needs to be fixed.

# The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

Many of the articles and principles contained in the UNCRPD are relevant to the GPS on HUD. We highlight those most relevant below:

**Article 3 – General Principles:**

1. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence of persons;
2. Non-discrimination;
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
4. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
5. Equality of opportunity;
6. Accessibility;
7. Equality between men and women;
8. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

**Article 4.3 – Actively engage with organisations of disabled people**

**Article 9 – Accessibility**

**Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community**

**Article 28 – Adequate standard of living and social protection**

Whilst these are the key UNCRPD Articles relevant to a GPS on HUD, it is important to note the impact of adequate / inadequate housing on areas such as education (Article 23), employment (Article 24), health (Article 25), habilitation and rehabilitation (Article 26), participation in political and public life (Article 29) and participation in cultural life, recreation and sport (Article 30).

# The New Zealand Disability Strategy (2016-2026)

The New Zealand Disability Strategy, which is the Government’s primary vehicle for implementing the UNCRPD, has the following Outcomes relevant to a HUD GPS:

**Outcome 1 – Education**

**Outcome 2 – Employment and economic security**

**Outcome 3 – Health and wellbeing**

**Outcome 5 – Accessibility**

**Outcome 6 – Choice and control**

These Outcomes are all extremely relevant and highlight the centrality of housing, urban development, community involvement, participation in education or employment towards quality of life outcomes of disabled people.

Given the housing crisis for disabled people, the HUD GPS must explicitly make mention of disabled people and reference the key documents that enshrine New Zealand’s obligations in respect of the rights of disabled people.

# Focus Areas

In addition to the six focus areas listed in the HUD GPS, we suggest the addition of a seventh focus area on disabled people. This focus area would cover:

* Engagement with disabled people and our organisations
* Universal design
* Individual adaptations and modifications
* Accessible transport
* Making the urban environment and environmental infrastructure accessible
* Kainga Ora and disability/accessibility
* Incentivising planners, architects, developers and builders to create accessible housing

As well as adding a specific focus area for disabled people, there is also a need for disability issues to be more clearly highlighted in each of the current six focus areas.

# Vision

We agree with the vision but would like to see the outcomes specifically highlight key disability issues such as those listed in our suggested seventh focus area (i.e. accessibility, universal design, modifications /adaptations) and clearly show that they meet the needs of disabled people. Without this explicit focus, there is a real risk that the needs of disabled people will continue to be overlooked or ignored and disabled people will end up being locked out of access to housing, urban spaces and infrastructure for the next thirty to fifty years.

# Conclusion

The HUD GPS barely mentions disabled people and nowhere does it mention New Zealand’s obligations under the UNCRPD nor the Government’s under the NZ Disability Strategy.

DPA just doesn’t see disabled people and our issues reflected in this HUD GPS consultation document and considers this to be a major omission. We urge the inclusion of a specific focus area on disabled people including access to housing, infrastrructure and urban spaces, and for disability issues to be integrated into the outcomes in order to ensure that our needs are planned for in this policy response statement.