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To Wellington City Council

Please find attached DPA’s submission on the Wellington City Council Open Spaces and Recreation Policy 2022

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 welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Wellington City Council Open Space Plan.

DPA is pleased to see that the WCC is undertaking a broader review of the open spaces that it has responsibility for. Our submission highlights the use of Universal Design principles in the design of public buildings, spaces and places and this includes outdoor playgrounds and parks. Across all local authorities in Aotearoa, Auckland Council is leading the way in this respect and has published useful guidelines on this subject. [[1]](#endnote-1)

The other intertwined element is around recreation. We would like to emphasise in this submission that all disabled people have a right under Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) to participate in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport. Therefore, we would like to see Wellington Council promote the principle of full inclusion in all recreational and sporting activities that it sponsors, supports and hosts on its grounds, including disability sport. [[2]](#endnote-2)

We elaborate within this submission about what these objectives mean to disabled people and some initial suggestions on how these can be actioned.

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

The UNCRPD Articles most relevant to our submission are:

* Article 4.3 Involving disabled people and our organisations in decisions that affect us
* Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination
* Article 7: Children with disabilities
* Article 9: Accessibility
* Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community
* Article 20: Personal mobility
* Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

The New Zealand Government policies and strategies which are relevant to this submission are as follows:

 New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026:

* Outcome 5: Accessibility

**DPA’s recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** DPA recommends that a major objective of the new recreation and open space strategy should be that more Wellingtonians are encouraged to participate in recreational and sporting activities in the city’s open spaces and recreational areas with a specific focus on increasing the participation of recreationally disadvantaged groups such as Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people, older people, and low-income earners amongst others.

**Recommendation 2:** DPA recommends that all open spaces, including those being newly created or updated, fully incorporate universal design features so that accessibility can be easily achieved for everyone. Universal design features will vary depending on the place and space being planned for. This means that any created and/or modified public spaces for recreational purposes can be constructed on the basis that they can be flexibly used and changed, for example, to accommodate events and to ensure that all people, including disabled people, have inclusive access to them as either participants or spectators.

**Recommendation 3:** DPA recommends that all recreational and sporting programmes which are funded and/or supported or hosted on WCC grounds and venues encourage the full and inclusive participation of disabled people of all ages and backgrounds, whether as participants or spectators, and this includes in disability sport.

**Recommendation 4:** DPA recommends that data be gathered on the participation and involvement of Wellingtonians in recreational and leisure activities with the aim of encouraging and measuring the increased uptake of recreational, leisure and sporting activities in open spaces and at other leisure facilities owned by Council. These surveys should include disability related questions with the aim of collating data on the involvement of disabled people in recreational and sporting activities and as to whether they are encountering barriers in doing so, asking as to how these can be removed.

**Recommendation 5:** DPA recommends that, in line with Article 4.3 of the UNCRPD [see above], how Wellington City Council makes decisions around open space accessibility and recreation should be based on a full co-design process involving disabled people and our representative organisations known as disabled persons organisations (DPOs) and the Council’s Accessibility Advisory Group [AAG].

**Conclusion**

DPA welcomes the intended vision for this plan and hopes that it will lead to the creation of fully universally designed, inclusive and accessible open spaces and recreational programmes within Wellington. If this is done, then everyone, including disabled people who are currently excluded from fully accessing many places and recreational programmes, will be able to freely access the city’s many beautiful open spaces and recreational opportunities.

1. Auckland Council. (n.d.) *Auckland Design Manual.* Retrieved from <https://www.aucklanddesignmanual.co.nz/design-subjects/universal_design> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York, 13 December 2006, [A/RES/61/106,](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/general-assembly/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-ares61106.html) available from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)