

OUR VISION (2000-2002)

DPA (NZ) INC
The national assembly of people with disabilities

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BACKGROUND

The past 10 years in New Zealand have seen a greater participation by us in the community. However, there is much more to be done if we are to be fully included in society and have equal opportunities.

The disability community, the Government and non-Government agencies must together develop a strategic vision and plan for the future support and independence of people with disabilities.

Our rights to citizenship must be protected and advanced. Our rights and opportunities must be protected and promoted in all areas of life relating to, human rights, legislation, income, transport, education, disability services, advocacy and awareness, personal health, accommodation, the Treaty partnership, employment and information.

This document outlines our vision for the future in New Zealand, and the necessary steps to achieve that. It will take a combined effort by diverse individuals, political parties, government agencies, and non-government organisations, and we must set aside narrow differences, and move forward. DPA, as our national voice, offers this map.

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document represents the views and aspirations of all people with disabilities and their networks.

It outlines the strategies we want introduced by Government during the next three years.

Recent census figures show that one in five New Zealanders have disabilities, making us a significant constituency. When families and whanau are included, it represents a much higher percentage of people who are directly affected by the structural and attitudinal barriers of a disabling society. One of the key barriers is society's devaluing of people because they have disabilities.

Significant developments have been achieved in recent years. They include:

- Amending the Human Rights Act to include disability. For the first time it was recognised that we had citizenship rights on equal footing with other New Zealanders.
- Having questions on disability included in the 1996 Census and, later, a follow up survey meant that at last we have some statistical evidence of our existence.

Sufficient resources must be made available to ensure that present inequities can be addressed, and to ensure that full citizenship for people with disabilities becomes a reality. Our views and values must be included in government decision-making processes.

1.1 DPA (NEW ZEALAND) INC

DPA is our national umbrella organisation and the national voice of people with disabilities. It is our advocate towards our mission to achieve a fully inclusive society by the removal of all barriers.

This can only be achieved and made real by Government when it works in partnership with us.

2. OVERARCHING ISSUES:

2.1 VALUE OF LIFE

We believe that:

The life of a person with a disability has equal value to, and shall be accorded the same rights, dignity and respect as that of a person without a disability. DPA acknowledges and supports our rights to make informed choice without coercion.

In order to put this into action, we will work with Government to:

- Establish a Commissioner of Disability as an officer of Parliament, with appropriate resourcing, so that the Commissioner can advocate for the value of our lives, and act as a values advocate in such debates.

Actioned by 2001

- Develop guidelines for the provision of medical treatment to ensure that decisions to withhold treatment are not made, either solely or predominantly on the grounds of disability

The Guidelines Committee will report directly to the Minister of Health.

The Committee will comprise a majority of people with disabilities. It will also include representatives of families and professionals from the Centre of Bioethics.

Guidelines will be adequately funded.

Guidelines will apply to all services using public funding.

**Begin development by 2000
Implementation 2001-2002**

2.2 HUMAN RIGHTS

We believe that:

We have equal rights to all other New Zealanders, including the right to participate in all aspects of economic, social and political life. These rights must be protected by the Human Rights Act (1993).

In order to achieve this, Government must:

Retain the Human Rights Act 1993 in its present form, particularly sections 73 and 74 which are our advancement to achieve an equal place.

- This would ensure the Government continues to meet its international obligations.

Immediately

- Activate the sunset clause as scheduled and develop a work plan, which ensures government's compliance with the Human Rights is put into practice.

By 2002.

We will work with Government to ensure:

- Wider coverage of protection from discrimination, harassment and disharmony ie Sections 61-63 are enlarged to include disability.

By 2001

- Ensure that the Human Rights Commission is adequately resourced to meet all its obligations under the Act.
 - ❖ Fund education and training.

Immediately

- Establish guidelines to outline ways to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Act 1993. Guidelines will focus on the key areas of:
 - Accommodation
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Victimisation.

By 2002

2.3 TREATY PARTNERSHIP

We believe that:

The specific needs of Maori with disabilities, both individually and in the context of their whanau, hapu, iwi, must be considered whenever policy is being formulated which may affect them. Further, policy must be flexible enough to take into account that whanau, hapu, and iwi may also be disadvantaged by an individual's disability.

We will work with Government on the basis of the principles that:

- Support networks are catered for when allocating resources for support services.
- Service provision is appropriate, flexible, adaptable, and applicable to the individual, whanau, hapu, and iwi rather than recipients having to fit the service.
- All people with disabilities have the choice of accessing services being offered by both Treaty of Waitangi partners.
- The debilitating effects of disability on whanau are acknowledged and provided for in rehabilitation support programmes.
- Te Puni Kokiri must be directed to report on outputs of itself and all other government departments with regards to Maori with disabilities.

2.4 LEGISLATION

We believe that:

There is a strong and continuing obligation on Government to provide appropriate and enforceable legislation to advance the rights, opportunities and participation of us in our New Zealand society.

The Government should have a “Nothing about us, without us” policy in regards to policy making, legislation, practices and service development.

Government will ensure:

- Our contribution to policymaking, legislation practices and service development is on a fee for service basis, as for other recognised expertise.
Immediately
- No extra cost or time is involved when making draft legislation and all official public information available in alternative formats (eg braille, audio, electronic).
Immediately
- New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) is recognised as an official language and Braille as an official means of communication in New Zealand.
By 2001
- Sign language interpreters are provided for within the Legislature and at all public meetings.
By 2000
- The following question is included in the cabinet checklist:
 - ❖ What is the implication for people with disabilities (who make up 20 percent of the population) of the proposed legislation guidelines or standard.
By 2000

3. SPECIFIC PRIORITISED AREAS:

3.1 EDUCATION

We believe that:

Every person with a disability regardless of type or degree, has the right to quality education at every level of the education system. We support the availability of a range of education services to meet the needs of individuals including access to second-chance education, learning and vocational training. Education must begin with early intervention and provide for life-long learning especially where educational opportunities have been delayed or disrupted.

Government will ensure:

- That we are legally guaranteed the same right of choice in educational settings as for non-disabled peers

By 2000

- A Disability Education Commission is established consisting of a majority of people with disabilities with a range of educational experiences. The Commission will:

- ❖ Develop material to assist us and our families to make informed decisions regarding educational options.
- ❖ Ensure all educational institutions are inclusive in their practice, through reports on each institution for ERO (compulsory) and MOE (post compulsory.)
- ❖ Develop a plan for the Implementation of the Human Rights Act in teacher recruitment and develop materials to assist with creating competencies in the area of disability.
- ❖ Report annually to Parliament report on how ERO and Ministry of Education are progressing in relation to disability.

By 2000

- Increased individualised funding such as via ORS must be available for:
 - ❖ Early intervention programmes
 - ❖ Transition to work
 - ❖ Retrofitting existing learning/education centres.

By 2000

- For tertiary education:
 - ❖ Maintain the funding level and ring-fence for the Special Supplementary Grants.
 - ❖ Establish individualised funding for high support needs tertiary students so as to effect contestability.

By 2001

3.2 EMPLOYMENT

We believe that:

It is our right to have the opportunity to be engaged in productive and meaningful employment, which provides flexibility, equal opportunity and career path development.

We encourage Government to recognise its responsibility to lead by example by:

- Repealing all legislative barriers to our participation in employment, especially the Disabled Persons Employment Promotion Act 1960.
Immediately
- Requiring that all labour market policy demonstrate the use of information about disability, contained in the 1996 census and follow-up household survey.
Immediately

We will work with Government:

- To ensure compliance with the State Sector Act in relation to EEO.
By 2000
- To establish a Working Party on disability in employment made up of a majority of us to:
 - ❖ Develop a clear understanding of what work means for people with disabilities
 - ❖ Establish a funding level to support people in work
 - ❖ Coordinate within the employment support and placement system
 - ❖ Develop nationally applied standards
 - ❖ Develop a programme for funding for Individualised accommodations based on need.
By 2000
- To ensure any Government contracts with sheltered workshops:
 - ❖ state minimum service and employment standards in full compliance with current and future legislation
By 2000
 - ❖ progressively move from sheltered workshops to supported employment in the open labour market.
**Move completed
By 2003**

3.3 INCOME

We believe that:

All people have the right to an income adequate for them to live and participate in their community with dignity and respect.

We recognise that government-funded income maintenance will be the sole source of income for some people with disability, and that income maintenance must be set at a rate which recognises both the true cost of disability and the cost of living. So we will work with Government to:

- Establish a system of income maintenance which is:
 - fair and equitable
 - simple in its administration
 - targeted directly at people it is intended to assist
 - based on universal individual entitlement but recognises the living situation and disability costs of family whanau and us.
 - recognises that part-time work is a very appropriate option for us.

By 2002

- Remove benefits and allowances that have degrading titles to benefits and allowances.

Immediately

- Introduce annual adjustments to benefit levels, which take account of changes in individual need.

Immediately

- Overhaul the abatement system

By 2001

- Abolish the need to repetitively prove you are disabled.

Immediately

- Abandon work capacity tests because people's right to income support should not be determined by "ability to work" on a particular day or a particular time in their life.

Immediately

3.4 DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

We believe that:

We, who are disabled, and our families should receive whatever services and other support or assistance which may be needed to reduce the disabling effects of impairment and the disadvantaging effects of disability. Services should be designed to make possible for us a full, meaningful and constructive life of our choosing.

We ask Government to:

- Complete the process of deinstitutionalisation by providing:
 - hump funding for establishing community based support
 - adequately resourced and supported in their communities
 - guaranteed independent assessment and monitoring of service decisions affecting people in longer-term institutional care

Immediately
- Review the Compulsory Care legislation after two years by a team with a majority of people with intellectual disabilities and/or their representatives.

By 2000

We will work with Government to:

- Develop a set of principles which underlie and describe what are “good” DSS services and that we be funded to undertake this work.

Immediately
- Develop a prioritisation process which is transparent, based on outcomes which are meaningful to us and appropriately funded to be achieved.

Immediately
- Implement the DSS Framework as originally envisaged which allows for coordinated service delivery.

By 2000
- Use census data as a basis of purchasing and planning decisions particularly in relation to unmet need.

By 2000
- Convene a working party which develops a home support policy and standards and guidelines for service provision based around the principles of “good DSS services”

By 2000

3.5 ACCOMMODATION

We believe that:

Accommodation support and housing policies must actively promote the right to human dignity and the right of the individual to choose their own lifestyle and accommodation options.

We will work with Government to:

- Develop a housing policy in which the outcome is a range of accommodation options from which we can choose. The policy development will be lead by us and will involve other stakeholders.
- Allocate funding to appropriate training programmes so that we are able to successfully bridge the transition from institutional living.

**Immediately
and ongoing**

- Sponsor a project to:

1. Assess models of provision of different accommodation options
2. Identify gaps in the provision and purchase of disability accommodation options.
3. Generate options for action to address the gaps in accommodation
4. Set up programmes to help us to become homeowners in our own right.

2001/2002

- Implement a housing policy developed in consultation with Ministry of Housing, Housing New Zealand, HFA, Ministry of Justice, consumers, community agencies, territorial authorities and other interested parties. This will ensure people with disabilities have choices in a range of accommodation options.

By 2001

3.6 TRANSPORT

We believe that:

Transport is the basic right of all people. Recognising this, Government must ensure that all forms of transport and its infrastructure, in local communities and nationally, must be accessible to people with disabilities.

We will work with Government to:

- Compel Regional Councils, through the funding agreement, to demonstrate that they have included in their short, medium and long-term plans the transport needs of all the ratepayers, including people with disabilities. A report indicating progress with implementation is to be presented to parliament annually.

Immediately

- Review costs shifted on to Total Mobility by other government agencies. Increase funding of Total Mobility to take account of cost shifts and demographic changes.

By 2000

- Ensure responses to demographic changes affecting demand by us for transport are an integral part of the National Land Transport Strategy.

By 2001

- Ensure recognition of the accessible journey is demonstrated in the purchase and delivery of public transport by responsible government and territorial authorities.

By 2002

- Increase the parking provisions for those of us with mobility impairments, to reflect the 1996 and subsequent census figures.

2000-2003

3.7 PERSONAL HEALTH

We believe that:

We have the right to receive a range of quality and appropriate health services. Health care must, with informed consent, provide a maximum of choice and personal input and take full account of the particular needs of us.

DPA seeks to work with Government to:

- Increase the funding for health and disability advocacy services, so that we are able to access and use it.

2001

- Appoint a Disability Commissioner, with the same status as the Health Commissioner. The appointee will oversee complaints by us to Health and Disability services.

2002

- Include disability representatives on Hospital & Health Service boards. We will be the representatives unless a case for an exception is made to the Disability Commissioner.

Immediately

- Ensure Ministry of Health guidelines to Health Funding Authority for service purchasing do not contravene the human Rights Act or other international covenants and treaties to which NZ is a signatory.

Completed by 2001

- Ensure the funding agreement requires clarification between personal health and disability support service.

Immediately

- Establish a joint working party to determine the extent to which the concepts of “managed care” are relevant to the provision of disability support services.

By 2000

3.8 ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

We believe that:

Self-Advocacy is the strongest and most effective form of advocacy and therefore DPA supports efforts by people with disabilities to promote assertiveness and self-confidence.

As people need advocates at some point we will work with Government to:

- These should be provided as of rights and independent of service provision.

Immediately

- Fund the training of people with us by people with disabilities in self-advocacy in order for us to make informed decisions.

From 2000

- Fund initiatives, which have self-advocacy as their primary outcome.

From 2000

3.9 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

We believe that:

As far as possible people with disabilities should control their own lives. Available, accurate, relevant and timely information is the basis for informed consent and decision making.

Government will:

- Produce all official public information by making it available in alternative formats, at the same cost as print versions.
Immediately
- Fund the disability question in the 2001 census and the follow Up survey
Immediately
- Increase the funding so that information is available, in appropriate formats for us to use.
Immediately
- Ensure telecommunications providers fulfil human rights obligations and provide a relay service so that everyone's telecommunications needs are met.
Immediately
- Review the DIAS contracting system to introduce more certainty of funding to contractors and to increase the value of contracts to acknowledge the expertise that contractors have in providing information and advice.
Immediately

3.10 ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

We believe that:

Everyone benefits from our human right to participate with dignity in the normal activities and processes of life in the community. To achieve this end we must have access to the physical environment.

Government will:

- Force compliance with the Resource Management Act, and its provisions for our access to the physical environment, by local authorities in their district plans.

Immediately

- Maintain special legislative backing accorded to N.Z. Standard 4121 in the Building Act.
- Fulfil the Building Act Provision that there be a person appointed to the Building Industry Authority “with knowledge and expertise in the provision of facilities for people with disabilities”.
- Enforce Section 44-(5)(e) of the Building Act 1991, which states the requirement regarding signage.

4. WHAT WILL HELP ACHIEVE THESE GOALS?

The disability sector believes the Government must appoint an advocate in Cabinet - a Minister of Disability with Associate Ministerial responsibilities, for us.

Government and ourselves will develop a strategic plan to assist in achieving the goals outlined in this document. This strategic plan would ensure the delivery of integrated and forward-looking policies and services. It would facilitate effective resource allocation and planning decisions.

To assist with the development of the plan we are asking government to fund us to develop an effective consultation process.

The strategic plan would be founded upon consensus across the political spectrum, be dynamic, and continually monitored to ensure it reflected the aspirations of people with disabilities. The Commissioner of Disability would have a crucial role in its formulation, monitoring and implementation in collaboration with us.

With the implementation of OUR VISION, the vision of people with disabilities, we will be significantly closer to a society which provides both equity and maximum opportunity for all people to participate.