November 2024

**To Dunedin City Council**

Please find attached our submission on the Draft Dunedin Local Alcohol Policy

For any further inquiries, please contact:

Chris Ford

Policy Advisor – Southern and Central

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/%24file/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:**

**Rangatiratanga / Leadership**: reflecting the collective voice of disabled people, locally, nationally and internationally.

**Pārongo me te tohutohu / Information and advice**: informing and advising on policies impacting on the lives of disabled people.

**Kōkiri / Advocacy**: supporting disabled people to have a voice, including a collective voice, in society.

**Aroturuki / Monitoring**: monitoring and giving feedback on existing laws, policies and practices about and relevant to disabled people.

# The Submission

DPA welcomes this opportunity to give feedback to the Dunedin City Council (DCC) on its Draft Local Alcohol Policy.

**DPA supports the DCC adopting the Draft Local Alcohol Policy.**

**These changes will underpin the building of a safer, healthier Ōtepoti Dunedin for everyone, including disabled people.**

In this brief submission, we expand on our reasons for our support from a disability perspective. Firstly, disabled people are disproportionately at higher risk of violence than non-disabled people and this includes violence stemming from alcohol use. For example, statistics show that disabled people are at greater risk of physical partner violence than non-disabled people with 40% of disabled women and 47% of disabled men experiencing this.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Interrelated to this is the disproportionately high level of crime and harassment experienced by disabled people. According to the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey disabled adults experience greater victimisation compared to non-disabled adults (40% versus 31%).[[2]](#footnote-3)

Significantly, disabled adults also report low perceptions of individual safety (0 to 6 out of 10) if they experience personal offending compared to non-disabled adults (34% versus 23%).[[3]](#footnote-4)

Secondly, this manifests in the experiences of disabled people locally and nationally when around alcohol intoxicated people.

Dunedin members have reported experiences which include drunk people being more micro-aggressive towards disabled people if they happen to be travelling up, for example, George Street or the Octagon on a Friday or Saturday night.

Members who are wheelchair or mobility aid users have reported feeling frightened or anxious around groups of drunk people, particularly if they are asked, for example, ‘if they could ride on your wheelchair.’

In some instances, ableist slurs/language have been used by drunk people which can also cause anxiety and offence to a disabled person on the receiving end of such behaviour.

Another specific example was reported by one of our members, a wheelchair user, who reported being harassed in broad daylight by a drunken man who insisted on helping them to load their car after a shopping trip despite the member’s insistence that they did not need any support to do so.

Thirdly, there are the issues of property damage caused by excessive alcohol use, in this case, the smashing of liquor bottles on streets and footpaths which is unfortunately can be a common occurrence.

Disabled people, including people who use mobility devices including wheelchairs or mobility scooters, are at greater risk of having tyres punctured by broken glass rendering their device temporarily unusable which can be a significant inconvience and even dangerous for anyone in this situation.

One of our DPA members told a DCC public hearing some years ago about how their mobility scooter had sustained many punctures because of treading over so many broken liquor bottles on our city streets.

In stating this, we acknowledge the efforts that the DCC and individual members of the community have made around cleaning up broken bottles around the city.

However, having a stricter alcohol sales regime in place in Dunedin will hopefully contribute to lowering the incidence of broken glass on our streets.

We are aware that disabled people are also at disproportionately higher risk of developing alcohol and drug related addictions compared to non-disabled people.

Overseas research indicates that while there are a considerable number of disabled people who do not drink alcohol, amongst those who do, there is a higher risk of developing alcohol addiction due to the stresses created by living in a disabling society.[[4]](#footnote-5) It is reported that disabled people who succumb to alcoholism often experience greater difficulties than non-disabled people in accessing treatment for this.

Collectively, all the above impacts are experienced by disabled people because of excessive alcohol consumption in our society. For all these reasons DPA strongly supports the proposed policy.

1. <https://whiteribbon.org.nz/home/disabilities-and-violence-in-new-zealand/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/news/news/data-on-disabled-people-from-the-latest-nz-crime-and-victims-survey> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.whaikaha.govt.nz/news/news/data-on-disabled-people-from-the-latest-nz-crime-and-victims-survey> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://oxfordre.com/publichealth/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190632366.001.0001/acrefore-9780190632366-e-491?p=emailAwgZulxIiiwHs&d=/10.1093/acrefore/9780190632366.001.0001/acrefore-9780190632366-e-491> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)