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To Auckland Council (Ōrākei Local Board)

Please find attached DPA’s submission on the Meadowbank Community Centre

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

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# Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly

**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.

Since our formation in 1983, DPA has brought disabled people together and shaped our collective input in a way that drives system level change.

**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/) and [Whāia Te Ao Mārama: Māori Disability Action Plan](https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/whaia-te-ao-marama-2018-2022-maori-disability-action-plan) as avenues to disabled people gaining greater choice and control over their lives and supports.

**We drive systemic change through:**

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

* modelling disabled leadership;
* as a member of the [Disabled People’s Organisations (DPO) Coalition](https://www.odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/disabled-peoples-organisations/);
* as a member of [Disabled Peoples International](http://www.dpi.org/);
* as a member of the [Pacific Disability Forum](https://pacificdisability.org/), a member of the [International Disability Alliance](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/); and
* creating and supporting disabled-led initiatives such as [Mahi Tika – Equity in Employment](https://www.dpa.org.nz/mahitika/mahi-tika-equity-in-employment).

**Information and advice:** informing and advising on policies impacting on the lives of disabled people

* providing a channel for information between disabled people and government;
* providing advice, commentary, and submissions to Parliament, government agencies, and local authorities;
* providing advice to businesses and non-government organisations; and
* research.

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

* listening to disabled people and identifying barriers to equity;
* engaging both nationally and regionally with our members and the wider community - disabled people, whānau, allies and organisations;
* building the capacity and capability of disabled people;
* partnering with other organisations on projects and campaigns; and
* engaging with the media.

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

* monitoring existing and proposed laws, policies and practices relevant to disabled people and whānau; and
* supporting government, organisations, businesses and the public to recognise, understand and address barriers to equity.

# The submission

DPA is providing this submission for the benefit of Auckland Council’s Ōrākei Local Board which is overseeing this project for the Meadowbank community. Notably, the renewal of the Meadowbank Community Centre affords the opportunity to provide a purpose-built, modern, accessible facility for the whole community.

DPA commends many of the ideas contained in the design plans that will help to meet these expectations.

In this submission, we provide some key recommendations regarding the questions around what further furniture, fittings and technology need to be provided in the centre.

All our recommendations are informed by the Universal Design (UD) principles which Auckland Council has agreed to as part of its design guidelines[[1]](#footnote-2). DPA hopes that the new facility will meet and, indeed, exceed these standards.

Below, we make recommendations around features that will make the venue genuinely accessible for everyone including around mobility parking, sizeable entrance ways and doorways, signage, electronic fire alarms, kitchen/food preparation spaces and other amenities within the facility.

Finally we ask that DPA and other Auckland-area Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) be involved as co-design partners in the design of the new Meadowbank Community Centre. These DPO partners should include ourselves, People First, Balance New Zealand, Blind Citizens, Muscular Dystrophy Association and Deaf Aotearoa**.**

# DPA’s recommendations

The Disabled Person’s Assembly recommends:

**Recommendation 1:** That there are sufficient mobility car parking spaces to accommodate the growing population in the Ōrākei Local Board area which encompasses disabled and older people living there.

**Recommendation 2:** That there be an accessible entrance for everyone including mobility wheelchairs/scooters and that doorways throughout the facility are also fully accessible and wide enough to admit all users.

**Recommendation 3:** That there are clear visible signs for blind/vision impaired people with Braille signage included within the new centre.

**Recommendation 4:** That visual fire alarms be fitted that will ensure that Deaf and hard of hearing people will be alerted when it activates.

**Recommendation 5:** That the kitchen/food preparation areas be made accessible for disabled people, including people with physical impairments including those who use wheelchairs or mobility aids and blind and low vision people, etc, so that they can independently and autonomously engage in food/kai preparation within this space alongside others.

**Recommendation 6:** DPA recommends that play and activity equipment in the centre’s rooms, especially the parent's room, be inclusive and accessible to all users, including disabled children and adults.

**Recommendation 7:** That the proposed meeting and study areas include accessibility features such as suitable lighting which can be easily adjusted to ensure that settings are appropriate for all users, including neurodiverse people and blind and low vision people. Also, that any furniture be ergonomic and accessible for all users. For example, height adjustable chairs and tables should be incorporated into these rooms so that everyone, including disabled people who may need to fit wheelchairs in can be included, especially in the study/homework rooms.

**Recommendation 8:** That features as accessible counters, hearing loops for Deaf and hard of hearing users, appropriate lighting, and appropriate signage including in Braille be installed and that information is made available about the Meadowbank Community Centre in accessible formats including NZ Sign Language, Easy Read for people with learning disabilities, Braille and large print as well as audio.

**Recommendation 9:** That a quiet room be created within the centre for people to retreat to where they can rest and reflect. This would be beneficial for everyone, including neurodiverse people, children (especially autistic children) and those who have psychosocial impairment and mental distress to reset themselves as naturally excessive noise can be generated and can overstimulate some people and/or create anxiety, especially in busy areas including community centres.

**Recommendation 10:** That DPA and other Auckland-area Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) be involved as co-design partners in the design of the new Meadowbank Community Centre. These DPO partners should include ourselves, People First, Balance New Zealand, Blind Citizens, Muscular Dystrophy Association and Deaf Aotearoa.

1. Auckland Council. (n.d.) *Auckland Design Manual.* Retrieved from <https://www.aucklanddesignmanual.co.nz/design-subjects/universal_design> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)