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To Auckland Council

Please find attached our submission on the Ray Fausett Reserve – Belmont, Pukekohe Play Space Development

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.

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DPA was influential in creating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), a foundational document for disabled people which New Zealand has signed and ratified, confirming that disabled people must have the same human rights as everyone else [[1]](#footnote-2). All state bodies in New Zealand, including local and regional government, have a responsibility to uphold the principles and articles of this convention. There are a number of UNCRPD articles pertinent to this submission, including:

### Article 9 – Accessibility

“States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications.”

New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026

Since ratifying the UNCRPD, the New Zealand Government has established a Disability Strategy to guide the work of government agencies on disability issues. The vision is that New Zealand be a non-disabling society, where disabled people have equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and that all of New Zealand works together to make this happen [[2]](#footnote-3). It identifies eight outcome areas contributing to achieving this vision, including:

### Outcome 5 – Accessibility

“We access all places, services and information with ease and dignity.”

# The submission

DPA is providing this submission for the benefit of the Franklin Local Board in its considerations regarding the proposed playground on the Ray Fausett Reserve at Belmont, Pukekohe.

DPA is concerned to hear that the proposed play space appears to have very little to no inclusive equipment and play spaces within the playground. Therefore, we strongly call for the new play space to be fully inclusive through meeting universal design standards. This will ensure that all tamariki/children, their wider whanau and communities will be able to access the playground.

Ensuring that every child has access to play ensures their health, wellbeing and community connectedness. Disabled children, who are sometimes excluded on all these accounts, are no different in terms of their desire to play and be a part of their communities.

Our recommendations focus on ways to improve the play space area to make it accessible for disabled children and any adults supporting them. These include the installation of, accessible play equipment, tables and chairs, wide pathways with tactile strips which will enable everyone including disabled children and adults (including people with mobility impairments and blind and vision impaired people) to navigate safely, as well as the placement of mobility parks for disabled drivers and ready access to accessible bus stops.

DPA wishes to be involved in any further discussions on the playground alongside other disability organisations/stakeholders.

Ultimately, the Local Board should look at other accessible playground developments which already exist in the region and throughout the country for both inspiration and guidance.

# DPA’s recommendations

The Disabled Person’s Assembly recommends:

**Recommendation 1**: That any design should incorporate sufficient width, space and elevation of playground equipment, thereby enabling the parents/caregivers/support people of disabled children, especially those using wheelchairs and other mobility devices, the ability to get around easily.

**Recommendation 2:** That the needs of disabled parents, caregivers/support people, families/whanau and community is fully considered in playground design and development. This includes the installation of accessible benches and picnic tables and barbeque facilities (if any are planned) to enable this. Additional mobility parking spaces for disabled drivers around the perimeter of the playground should be accommodated for and the play space should be within easy reach of accessible bus stops and services too.

**Recommendation 3:** That similar activities should be grouped together to enable inclusive play, especially for wheelchair using and mobility impaired children. This can come about through, for example, the installation of equipment which encourages fine motor movement, and the development of critical thinking skills. Indeed, such equipment would be beneficial for all children, irrespective of whether they live with impairment or not.

**Recommendation 4:** That any play equipment is placed together in a way which promotes play amongst children of similar ages and capabilities as, for example, play equipment designed for children who can climb should be placed in the same area but activity panels should be placed in these areas as well to ensure that children who cannot climb due to, for example, being mobility impaired might have an alternative activity to participate in, thereby enabling everyone to feel included in the same space.

**Recommendation 5:** That any information and signage on the playground site be available in a range of accessible formats including signage displaying New Zealand Sign Language, Easy Read information for children and people with learning disabilities and Braille/large print signage for blind and vision impaired users.

**Recommendation 6:** That the Board look at other accessible playground developments which already exist in the region and throughout the country for both inspiration and guidance.

1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 13, 2006. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Office for Disability Issues. (2016). *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016 – 2026*. Retrieved from https://www.odi.govt.nz/assets/New-Zealand-Disability-Strategy-files/pdf-nz-disability-strategy-2016.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)