April 2024

**Tēnā koutou ki te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Council**

Please find attached DPA’s submission on the Belle Verde Reserve playground renewal

## 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.

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/$file/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

**Introduction**

DPA welcomes the opportunity to engage with Auckland Council on the Belle Verde Reserve playground renewal.

We last engaged with the Auckland Council over the Auckland Council Long Term Plan 2024-2034. DPA urges Auckland Council to focus on providing equity of service for disabled people across all services. This means that core services must be maintained and are accessible for disabled people.

**Accessibility for our children**

DPA is concerned that accessibility appears to be largely invisible within Option 1 or Option 2. This large-scale absence of a disability lens is disappointing given the existence of the Auckland Disability Action Plan, Auckland Council Disability Reference Panel and Auckland Design Manual.

DPA’s submission focuses on running a disability/accessibility lens both for disabled parents taking their non-disabled children out and for disabled children spending time with their non-disabled parent/s or older family members taking out their grandchildren.

We also see the value of provide more challenging and collaborative equipment for our disabled children that are one to nine-year-olds including include natural play elements that suit them.

**Disability demographics**

According to Statistics New Zealand’s 2013 Disability Survey, Auckland had a disability population rate of 19 percent.[[1]](#footnote-2)

If the 2013 disability population numbers are overlain with the estimated 2023 total Auckland population of 1,739,300, then there at least 330,467 disabled people currently residing within the city’s boundaries.[[2]](#footnote-3)

This number is set to increase even further as the population ages as there is a strong correlation between ageing and disability.

According to Auckland Council’s own figures (originating from Statistics New Zealand’s 2018 Census), 189,177 residents were aged 65 years, comprising 12.0 percent of the total population.[[3]](#footnote-4)

This number is set to rise exponentially as Statistics New Zealand is forecasting that there will be 1,000,000 plus people aged 65 years and over living in Aotearoa by 2028.[[4]](#footnote-5)

The increasing number of disabled and older people is why all councils - including Auckland Council - should plan and invest in the development of fully accessible, inclusive communities for older people, disabled adults and disabled children.

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| **Recommendation 1:** thatAuckland Council plan and invest in the development of inclusive accessible playgrounds for disabled children that are also accessible for disabled parents, caregivers and older people. |

**Equity for disabled people must be provided for**

Currently there is not equity of access for disabled people to Council services and projects. Whichever option is chosen, there must be more investment in the following priorities which are important to Auckland’s disabled community:

* building and sustaining accessible, connected communities where everyone can live without barriers to their participation in terms of parks and their pathways.
* ensuring that the voices of disabled people can be heard in all decisions, especially those that impact on our disabled communities across Tāmaki Makaurau.

We request that Council ensure that pathways have clear pedestrian access as Council seating, bin locations and bollards can cause blockages for disabled using wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, walking frames and mobility scooters.

We would also seek sufficient mobility parking permit spaces close to the walkways and playgrounds.

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| **Recommendation 2:** thatAuckland Council ensures that the landscape designers are reminded of Council’s commitment to universal design. |
| **Recommendation 3:** thatAuckland Council ensures that there is clear pedestrian access for disabled people using mobility equipment and sufficient mobility parking near playgrounds. |

**Flooding**

The impact on the disabled community during last year's extreme weather events highlights the importance of climate resilience being an integral part of the Council plan. Creating climate resilience for disabled community is high priority as in times of a weather crisis, the disabled community are often an afterthought. DPA would ask that any new builds of playgrounds consider the placement to improve drainage to ensure a safer and better play environment.

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| **Recommendation 4:** that Council consider the possible impact of flooding on a playground and ensuring that were possible the impacts can be mitigated. |

1. Statistics NZ Disability survey: 2013. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/disability-survey-2013> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Statistics NZ Subnational population estimates (RC, SA2), by age and sex, at 30 June 1996-2023 (2023 Boundaries). <https://nzdotstat.stats.govt.nz/wbos/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLECODE7979> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Auckland Council. (2018). *2018 Census Results.* <https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1180/auckland-2018-census-info-sheet.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Statistics NZ Subnational population projections, by age and sex, 2018(base)-2048 (2028 boundaries). [https://nzdotstat.stats.govt.nz/wbos/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLECODE7979#](https://nzdotstat.stats.govt.nz/wbos/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLECODE7979) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)