April 2023

To Dunedin City Council

Please find attached DPA’s submission on Annual Plan 2023 - 2024

For any further inquiries, please contact:

Chris Ford

Regional Policy Advisor (Local Government)

Acting Kaituitui – Wellington Region

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:**

* **Leadership:** reflecting the collective voice of disabled people, locally, nationally and internationally.
* **Information and advice:** informing and advising on policies impacting on the lives of disabled people.
* **Advocacy:** supporting disabled people to have a voice, including a collective voice, in society.
* **Monitoring:** monitoring and giving feedback on existing laws, policies and practices about and relevant to disabled people.

**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),1 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. 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 particularly relevant to this submission, including:

* **Article 4.3: General obligations – representation of disabled people and our organisations in decision making**
* **Article 8: Awareness raising**
* **Article 9: Accessibility**
* **Article 11: Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**
* **Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community**
* **Article 20: Personal mobility**
* **Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information**
* **Article 29: Participation in political and public life**
* **Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport**

**New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026**

Since ratifying the UNCRPD, the New Zealand Government has established a Disability Strategy2 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. It identifies eight outcome areas contributing to achieving this vision.

There are a number of Strategy outcomes particularly relevant to this submission, including:

* **Outcome 5 – Accessibility**

# The Submission

DPA welcomes the opportunity to submit on the Dunedin City Council’s Annual Plan 2023 - 24. We note that Council is not conducting a full annual plan review process this year given that there are no substantial changes proposed which vary from the 10 Year Plan.

However, we note that Council is asking for ideas to contribute towards the next 10-year plan which will be fully consulted on next year.

We provide some initial thoughts in this submission around housing and building, rail service to Mosgiel, funding for the Central Dunedin Therapeutic Pool and the need to create more accessible communities and streetscapes.

Also, we would like to highlight some of the key positive initiatives which have happened in the last year. These include:

* Council’s decision to proceed with the full CBD Retail Quarter Redevelopment which already stands to make the area a more accessible one – we look forward to its completion in 2024 (or even earlier!).
* The completion of the new proposed playground upgrades at Bathgate Park, South Dunedin which has made that park more accessible, and welcoming to both disabled children and adults.
* The opening of new DCC social housing units in School Street, Kaikorai, the first of many that we hope will be built to universal design standards as well as promote energy efficiency.
* The (almost) open Te Puna Whakaehu – Mosgiel/Taieri Swimming Pool which has plenty of accessibility features including a Therapeutic Pool and other facilities.
* The DCC’s ‘They Save, We Pay’ New Dunedin Hospital cuts reversal campaign which has already seen the Government backtrack on some of its earlier proposed cuts to the new hospital – let's work together to keep up the pressure!

We also wish to ask when the first of the Changing Rooms toilets we called for in our 2020-21 submission will open.

**Housing and Building**

DPA notes that there is still a great deal of pressure in the social housing space, especially with regards to the scarcity of accessible housing in Dunedin.

DPA welcomes the approval by Council of the Housing Plan during the past year and of the associated Housing Implementation Plan 2023-24.

DPA has noted the Council’s commitment in its Housing Implementation Plan to “identifying options for an incentive scheme that encourages the building and retrofitting of homes with design for everyone (Universal Design/designing for disabilities).”

DPA recommends that in the 2023-24 annual plan that Council fund an investigation of options for the creation of an incentive scheme that encourages Universal Design in housing.

One of these options could include the development of an Environmental and Accessibility Performance Fund, such as the Wellington City Council has, where the aim is to incentivise the building of accessible and environmentally friendly housing in that city.[[1]](#footnote-2)

DPA recommends that funding be included in the next 10 Year Plan for the building of more council housing built to universal design standards.

**Rail Service to Mosgiel**

DPA supports the concept of a commuter rail service between Dunedin and Mosgiel with the possibility that this might one day extend to and from Dunedin Airport.

Mosgiel has a high proportion of disabled people within its population as does Dunedin. It would make good sense to at least trial an accessible rail service given the lack of public transport choices between the two areas.

Mosgiel is a growing part of Dunedin with many people commuting to and from every day for work, study, recreational and social purposes. Establishing a commuter rail link would take more private vehicular traffic off the roads, lessen carbon emissions and enable our city to meet its carbon neutrality targets a lot faster.

Having a service with accessible rail carriages and other facilities would enable disabled people the ability to travel more easily between Mosgiel and Dunedin, as well as more affordably given the high cost of other existing transport modes, including mobility taxis.

DPA recommends that a feasibility study into an accessible, affordable commuter rail service between Dunedin and Mosgiel be funded in cooperation with the Otago Regional Council, KiwiRail, and other stakeholders and is considered for incorporation into the 10 Year Plan.

**Otago Therapeutic Pool**

The Therapeutic (Physio) Pool on Hanover Street remains closed and is scheduled to be so for the foreseeable future.

While DPA welcomes the creation of a therapeutic pool as part of Te Puna Whakaehu at Mosgiel, this complex will largely serve the people of the Taieri area, especially as any Dunedin-based pool users will have to travel long distances to access it.

DPA further believes that due to distance, the comparatively smaller size of the Mosgiel therapeutic pool and general lack of choice that another larger therapeutic pool complex is still needed in the Dunedin metropolitan area.

Currently, the Otago Therapeutic Pool Trust has engaged consultants to look at options for a new and/or renovated therapeutic pool in Dunedin.

DPA recommends that Council considers any options brought forward from the Otago Therapeutic Pool Trust on the future of a new central therapeutic pool in Dunedin.

**Accessible communities and streetscapes**

The creation of a one-way shared space in George Street leads us to look elsewhere as to where other similar types of accessible streetscapes could be created.

Accessible shared spaces are good for disabled people and for everyone in our communities given that they (like George Street) have good accessible design which encourages people to come together for events and just a general sense of wellbeing.

Studies show that shared spaces also increase retail spending and other positive business outcomes once the construction phase is over.

DPA believes that South Dunedin, Mosgiel and Northeast Valley lend themselves to being good potential candidates for shared spaces to be created within their own CBDs.

DPA recommends that Council engage with Dunedin communities on where future shared and one-way spaces can be added within the city area.

Aligned with this, DPA recommends that Council undertake an audit of the accessibility of sidewalks in the CBD, particularly in the Moray Place area given that many of these are incredibly angular and not smooth, making them unsafe and inaccessible for many.

DPA also recommends that work be undertaken with CBD retailers and hospitality premises owners to address access issues on waste and recycling collection days when bins are often left in locations which create accessibility issues for everyone, including disabled people.

# DPA’s Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** that in the 2023-24 annual plan that Council fund an investigation of options for the creation of an incentive scheme that encourages Universal Design in housing.

**Recommendation 2:** that a feasibility study into an accessible, affordable commuter rail service between Dunedin and Mosgiel be funded in cooperation with the Otago Regional Council, KiwiRail, and other stakeholders and is considered for incorporation into the 10 Year Plan.

**Recommendation 3:** that Council considers any options brought forward from the Otago Therapeutic Pool Trust on the future of a new central therapeutic pool in Dunedin.

**Recommendation 4:** that Council engage with Dunedin communities on where future shared and one-way spaces can be added within the city area.

**Recommendation 5:** that Council undertake an audit of the accessibility of sidewalks in the CBD, particularly in the Moray Place area, given that many of these are incredibly angular and not smooth, making them unsafe and inaccessible for many.

**Recommendation 6:** that work be undertaken with CBD retailers and hospitality premises owners to address access issues on waste and recycling collection days when bins are often left in locations which create accessibility issues for everyone, including disabled people.

1. Wellington City Council. (2022, March 8). ORDINARY MEETING OF PŪRORO MAHEREHERE | ANNUAL PLAN/LONG-TERM PLAN COMMITTEE. Retrieved from AGENDA. <https://wellington.govt.nz/-/media/your-council/meetings/committees/annual-plan-long-term-plan-committee/2022/2022-03-08-agenda-apltp.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)