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**To Dunedin City Council**

Please find attached our submission on the Draft Otago Harbour Reserves Management Plan

For any further inquiries, please contact:

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# 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.

## 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]](#footnote-2) 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.

The following UNCRPD articles are particularly relevant to this submission:

* **Article 9 – Accessibility**

# The Submission

DPA welcomes the opportunity to feedback on the Draft DCC Otago Harbour Reserves Management Plan. DPA recognises the value that reserves have for both people and the environment.

DPA acknowledges that in the existing Reserves Management General Policy that access for disabled people to amenities such as toilets and mobility parks are recognised.

We also welcome the statement in the draft plan that the Council will look for opportunities to improve access for [people with] all levels of mobility providing for and enabling enjoyment and participation of recreational activities within the Reserve.

DPA recommends that the wording of objective 6.10 (page 49) is made much clearer in that ‘[people with] all levels of mobility’ specifically refers to disabled people.

While acknowledging that improving accessibility is an important objective, there is a need for clarity, and we provide guidance around how 6.10 can be re-worded below:

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| **Recommendation 1:** 6.10: ‘Look for opportunities to improve access for disabled people, including people with mobility impairments, blind and low vision people and older people to recreational activities within the Reserve.’ |

We also note the use of language like ‘accessibility parking’ at various points within the document. DPA recommends that this should be changed to ‘mobility parking’ to ensure that the correct term for these types of car parks is used to avoid any confusion.

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| **Recommendation 2:** that accessible parking spaces are referred to as ‘mobility parking spaces’. |

In this submission we make general comments and recommendations around how to improve accessibility across the Otago Harbour Reserves area, a location that attracts both locals and tourists alike to recreate, live, work and play in.

We recognise the cultural, economic, social and environmental significance of the area to both mana whenua and tauiwi who reside within the Otago Harbour area and outside of it who have either current or historical ties to it.

## Recreation and Access

DPA supports the principles that all reserves should be open to the public and be used for the specific purpose they were designated for, i.e., as a playground, sports field, or walkways.

Public access should be equitably available to everyone, including disabled people.

However, we recognise that there will sometimes be reasonable limitations to this given that, for example, all walking tracks on reserves may not be able to be made fully accessible, particularly for people with mobility impairments who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

In these situations that council should make every effort to ensure that reasonable accommodation is achieved by making tracks even partially accessible where full accessibility is not possible through, for example, making them accessible up to points where they are no longer deemed to be safe and/or accessible for everyone.

On these and other matters pertaining to accessibility, including around making supporting amenities like, for example, toilets and picnic tables accessible, council should involve disabled people and disability organisations as full stakeholders in any discussions around improving and maintaining accessibility both within and to public reserves.

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| **Recommendation 3:** that disabled people and disability organisations be involved by council as full stakeholders in all discussions relating to the accessibility of its reserves. |

We note several proposals in the draft reserve management plan around improving public accessibility in the following areas and these include:

* Ravensbourne Walkway and Cycleway – improved mobility parking and marked cycleway through the carpark area to connect to the path on Magnet Street.
* Wellers Park – increased parking or a rationalisation of the transport environment near this spot

As noted in the recommendation above, disabled people and disability organisations should be involved in discussions around improving accessibility in these and other locations around the reserve.

## Maintenance and asset management

Another factor that is important to bear in mind is the need to balance accessibility and environmental factors when it comes to infrastructure maintenance and upgrading.

DPA acknowledges the impact that climate change will have on the Otago Harbour Reserve area going forward.

This means that when it comes to making accessibility improvements that there is respect for the natural environment, including, for example, wildlife sanctuaries at Taiaroa Head and other areas.

If new infrastructure such as walkways or walkway extensions and footpaths are proposed then these need to be built in a way that respects the environment while enabling access for everyone, including disabled people.

For example, building raised viewing platforms and walking tracks (as is the case with the Department of Conservation’s wildlife site and walkway at Aramoana) are suitable alternatives where accessibility may otherwise be constrained for wheelchair/mobility aid users by the need to protect natural flora, fauna and wildlife.

The building of accessible toilets and changing places needs to be considered as well, especially in commonly used places such as recreational reserves.

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| **Recommendation 4:** that new infrastructure including any walkways, footpaths or walkway extensions are built with both accessibility and environmental considerations including climate in mind. |
| **Recommendation 5:** that the provision of accessible toilets and changing places needs to be considered, especially in high used spaces such as recreational reserves. |

1. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)