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To Greater Wellington Regional Council [Metlink]

Please find attached DPA’s submission on Future Fares

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

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Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ (DPA) is a pan-impairment disabled person’s organisation that works to realise an equitable society, where all disabled people of all impairment types and including women, Māori, Pasifika, young people are able to direct their own lives. DPA works to improve social indicators for disabled people and for disabled people be recognised as valued members of society. DPA and its members work with the wider disability community, other DPOs, government agencies, service providers, international disability organisations, and the public by:

* telling our stories and identifying systemic barriers
* developing and advocating for solutions
* innovation and good practice

## 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.”

**Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community**

“States parties to the present Convention recognise the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disabilities of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community ... “

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 Greater Wellington Regional Council’s Metlink team to assist in the development of future fares.

We welcome the opportunity to be involved in this discussion as public transport, and accessibility to it, is a significant ongoing issue for the disability community in Greater Wellington as well as around Aotearoa.

As we have pointed out in past submissions to the Council on this subject, the affordability of public transport is a major factor which impacts on the poor level of transport accessibility for disabled people, given that many of us are on low incomes.

Public transport is, in fact, a lifeline for many disabled people to the wider community around us. Having access to affordable (and even free) public transport would be vitally important in enabling our full participation in the everyday life of our communities in terms of being able to access employment, housing, shopping, health care, educational/training, recreational as well as cultural, sporting and leisure opportunities and the ability to interact with families/whanau, friends and neighbours.

Currently, we are aware that the Government’s public transport fare concession schemes will only apply through to August 31, 2022 (after being extended by a further two months) but will permanently apply to all Community Services Card (CSC) holders after that date.

While these moves on the part of central government are welcomed by DPA and other community organisations, there is still more work to be done on public transport accessibility and affordability, especially given that climate change will make uptake of public transport more essential as time passes.

DPA is one of the NGO's supporting the Pōneke Collective for Public Transport Equity. We support some of their key asks, albeit with a few differences, such as that we support free fares for all disabled people and removing individualised fare caps. Pōneke Collective for Public Transport Equity also support our call that the Total Mobility scheme become fare free, as was the case during the Level 2, 3 and 4 lockdowns in mid-2020.

Ultimately, though, DPA wants to see both central and local government go even further and ensure there is sufficient funding provided by both to make all public transport (including Total Mobility) universally fare free across the country. This would be for all New Zealanders, irrespective of age, income or other status.

However, our recommendations in this submission, as well as those by the Pōneke Collective for Public Transport are a good starting point in this direction.

# DPA’s recommendations

The Disabled Person’s Assembly recommends:

* **Recommendation 1:** That Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) make public transport free for all under-25-year-olds, Community Card Services card holders, disabled people and tertiary students; and make all total mobility services free for Total Mobility card holders.
* **Recommendation 2:** That GWRC support free public transport for school age children.
* **Recommendation 3:** That GWRC support moves towards making public transport universally fare free (including for Total Mobility) across the country for all New Zealanders with funding for this coming from both central and local government.
* **Recommendation 4:** That GWRC support disability justice and climate justice trainings for all councillors, to ensure that their transport decisions are informed and just.

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)