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November 2024

**To Hamilton City Council**

Please find attached our submission on the Neighbourhood Playground Park Refresh

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.

# The Submission

DPA welcomes this opportunity to feedback on the Hamilton City Council’s (HCC’s) Neighbourhood Playground Park Refresh.

We will answer the relevant questions contained in the online survey generically within this brief submission with reference to changes that can be undertaken to make Gower, Cullimore and Te Toetoe Reserve Playgrounds more accessible.

DPA members in Hamilton have fed back to us their ideas on how to improve access to these parks.

We have also been making submissions to other councils around the country on how to improve playground accessibility to ensure that disabled people including tamariki/children and family/whānau can equitably access these spaces alongside non-disabled people.

DPA welcomes the questions around inclusion and accessibility for disabled people to these spaces within the consultation.

**Q.1) Could you share with us some of the difficulties experienced, or may be experienced in accessing or using the park or play elements?**

DPA has received specific feedback from one of our wheelchair using members about the accessibility of Gower Park.

This member reflected that there was only one mobility park and a narrow accessible point of entry to the grounds at the club room building.

The entry point also enables access to the playground, but accessibility then deteriorates to the point where the path is lumpy and narrow while the alternative paved access from the street has a bollard right in the centre which maybe navigable for a mobility scooter user but not a wheelchair user.

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| **Recommendation 1:** that the accessibility issues identified at Gower Park are addressed through consultation with disabled people. |

**Q.2) Many modern playgrounds include spaces for different interests and ages. What type of play spaces would you like to see at Cullimore Park, Gower Park and Te Toetoe Reserve Playgrounds?**

We recognise that there will be varying opinions around what people would like to see specifically included in these parks, including from children and adults.

In terms of the options outlined below, there is accessible, inclusive play equipment available from New Zealand-based suppliers[[1]](#footnote-2) that can enable disabled people (both adults and children) the ability to enjoy all the activities mentioned in the survey:

* Climbing
* Swing
* Slide
* Jumping
* Spinning
* Rocking
* Creative play
* Natural play

**Q.3) Tell us what you think of the following for Cullimore Park, Gower Park and Te Toetoe Reserve Playgrounds?**

* Rubbish bins
* Seating
* Shade
* Park is well maintained

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| **Recommendation 2:** that there is in all playgrounds:* Sufficient rubbish/recycling bins.
* Seating at varying heights (to enable people of all heights to get on and off seating easily).
* Wheelchair/mobility device accessible seating.
* Sufficient shade for everyone.
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| **Recommendation 2:** that the ongoing maintenance of all parks and playgrounds is important for disabled people too. Ensuring that any grasses, vegetation and hedges are managed to enable accessibility for both disabled and non-disabled people within all the city’s playgrounds is important as there is nothing worse than, for example, wheelchair users trying to mobilise where there is mud or high grass. |

**Q.4) What would make all of these playgrounds more exciting places to play?**

To make playgrounds more exciting and inclusive for everyone, several features and strategies can be adopted:

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| Recommendation 3: Inclusive Design and Equipment* Incorporate universal design principles to ensure that all equipment is accessible and usable by disabled people.
* Provide features that cater to sensory needs, such as sensory walls, water play areas, and tactile surfaces.
* Use innovative play elements like unique musical instruments, swings, and multi-sensory zones to attract a wider audience.
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| Recommendation 4: Safety and Accessibility* Ensure smooth paths, accessible play surfaces, and equipment that is inclusive for wheelchair users and those with mobility aids.
* Add fenced perimeters and shade structures to enhance safety and comfort.
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| Recommendation 5: Intergenerational Play Opportunities* Design features that appeal to all ages, such as benches with movement opportunities for older adults and easy-to-access areas for caregivers.
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These enhancements can transform playgrounds into exciting, inclusive spaces that foster play, community, and well-being for all people.

1. <https://www.childrenwithdisability.co.nz/playground-equipment/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)