May 2024

**Ki te Kaipara Te Oranganui Kaipara District Council**

Please find attached DPA’s submission on the Mangawhai Community Master Plan

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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 Kaipara Te Oranganui Kaipara District Council on the Mangawhai Community Master Plan.

We have engaged with Kaipara District Council over the Long Term Plan 2024–2037 and Mangawhai Community Park is a prime opportunity to engage with the disabled community from the local museum, historic village, the Daring restoration project, walking tracks, activity zone, information centre to the bowls club.

**Accessibility for our children**

DPA is concerned that accessibility appears to be largely invisible within this plan and there is an absence of a disability lens, which is disappointing given the existence of the commitment to the guidelines of Making Te Tai Tokerau Accessible.[[1]](#footnote-2)

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 have several recommendations to ensure that any new playground development is made more accessible and inclusive, especially for disabled children.

The first recommendation is that the playground should have more inclusive play equipment installed, thereby giving every child the opportunity to participate in play. This means that if any child is not able to access any specific piece of equipment, then they can play on another piece (or part thereof) that is accessible. There are examples of inclusive play equipment which should be considered for placement in the playground either now or in the future and that are available from New Zealand-based suppliers.[[2]](#footnote-3)

The second recommendation is that seating be placed around the playground of varying heights (either higher or lower) and should include armrests so that people with mobility impairments, children and older people can easily get in or out of the seats. Also, tables with seating to enable a wheelchair or mobility aid to be easily inserted alongside people sitting on benches should be incorporated into the designs too. This will enable the disabled parents/whānau of any children to be included in the children’s play area.

The third recommendation is that any pathways or walkways from the street to the playground should provide for universal accessibility, and this includes for people using wheelchairs, mobility aids, children’s pushchairs, as well as blind and low vision people. Tactile strips should also be added for blind and low vision people to navigate their way safely around the playground, especially along the pathway.

The fourth recommendation is that fully accessible public toilets (with changing facilities) should be established on the park so that both children and adults can use such facilities if they are at the playground. This would enable any adults supervising children on the playground to have ready access to a toilet and changing facilities if needed.

The fifth recommendation is that a wheelchair user-friendly drinking water fountain should be placed on the playground, and preferably at a medium height where both wheelchair and mobility aid using adults and children can access it.

The sixth recommendation is that a shade tarpaulin be installed so that there will be more shaded play areas during Summer.

The seventh recommendation is that disabled people and disability organisations are involved in further discussions on the skatepark, picnic and barbeque areas, pump tracks, basketball court and multi-sports court alongside other disability organisations/stakeholders.

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| **Recommendation 1:** that the playground should have more inclusive play equipment installed, thereby giving every child the opportunity to participate in play. |
| **Recommendation 2:** that seating be placed around the playground of varying heights (either higher or lower) and should include armrests so that people with mobility impairments, children and older people can easily get in or out of the seats. Also, tables with seating to enable a wheelchair or mobility aid to be easily inserted alongside people sitting on benches should be incorporated into the designs too. |
| **Recommendation 3:** that any pathways or walkways from the street to the playground should provide for universal accessibility, and this includes for people using wheelchairs, mobility aids, children’s pushchairs, as well as blind and low vision people. |
| **Recommendation 4:** that fully accessible public toilets (with changing facilities) should be established on the park so that both children and adults can use such facilities if they are at the playground. |
| **Recommendation 5:** that a wheelchair user-friendly drinking water fountain should be placed on the playground, and preferably at a medium height where both wheelchair and mobility aid using adults and children can access it. |
| **Recommendation 6:** that a shade tarpaulin be installed so that there will be more shaded play areas during Summer. |
| **Recommendation 7:** that disabled people and disability organisations are involved in further discussions on the skatepark, picnic and barbeque areas, pump tracks, basketball court and multi-sports court alongside other disability organisations/stakeholders. |

**Disability demographics**

According to Kaipara District Council’s reports,[[3]](#footnote-4) Mangawhai is one of the fastest growing areas of Northland due to its proximity to Auckland and high recreational and scenic value.

With 1 in 4 New Zealanders have a physical, sensory, learning, mental health or other disability and 35% of disabled people being over 65 years old.[[4]](#footnote-5) The increasing number of disabled and older people is why all councils – including Kaipara District Council – should plan and invest in the development of fully accessible, inclusive communities for older people, disabled adults and disabled children, with a view to having a park that is based on universal design principles.

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| **Recommendation 8:** that KDC plan and invest in the development of inclusive accessible areas for disabled children that are also accessible for disabled parents, caregivers and older people based on universal design. |

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

Currently there is not equity of access for disabled people to Council services and projects. There must be more investment in the following priorities that are important to Northland’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 Te Tai Tokerau.

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 9:** thatKDC ensures that the landscape designers are reminded of Council’s commitment to universal design. |
| **Recommendation 10:** thatKDC 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 11:** that KDC consider the possible impact of flooding on a playground and ensuring that were possible the impacts can be mitigated. |

1. Kaipara District Council. (2022). *Making Te Taitokerau Accessible Guidance Booklet 2022.* <https://www.kaipara.govt.nz/uploads/community-planning/Community%20Events/2022%20Making%20Te%20Tai%20Tokerau%20accessible%20-%20Guidance%20Booklet.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Playground Centre. <https://www.playgroundcentre.com/categories/all-inclusive-and-accessible/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Kaipara District Council. (2022). *Kaipara, Place, People and Key Trends.* <https://kaipara.govt.nz/uploads/policy/Kaipara%20Environmental%20Scan%202023%20.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Office of Disability Issues. (n.d). *Key facts about disability in New Zealand.* <https://www.odi.govt.nz/home/about-disability/key-facts-about-disability-in-new-zealand/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)