

DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL DISABILITY STRATEGY

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dunedin City Council's (DCC) Disability Strategy presents a long-term plan for the DCC to make Dunedin a more inclusive city. It has been developed by a disability consultant in consultation with disabled people and the wider disability sector. The Strategy is linked to the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) and in particular, to developing communities where people feel included and connected. A proposed action plan will be discussed with representatives of the disability community for their feedback and endorsement as a continuing part of the consultation process. Through the Disability Strategy, the DCC can take a proactive role in working with disabled people to enable them to participate fully in the life of the city. The Strategy applies to the DCC itself and its disabled staff, as well as the wider Dunedin City that the DCC is ultimately responsible for.

2.0 CURRENT SITUATION

The Disability Strategy is a framework and a process for disabled people in Dunedin to work in partnership with the DCC to develop responsive policies and services. This strategy and action plan, to be developed in conjunction with staff and the Disability Issues Advisory Group (DIAG), acknowledges that disabled people have a valuable contribution to make to Dunedin and there are actions that can be taken to make Dunedin an inclusive city. (See Appendix Two for further information.)

3.0 WHAT ARE THE GAPS?

There is a dearth of information gathered by agencies in this sector. The Statistics New Zealand Household Disability Survey and Disability Survey of Residential Facilities (2001) provides some information. It is now, however, some six years old.

There are a number of issues facing the DCC and the disabled community, some of which are highlighted below.

- The development of physical and attitudinal environments inclusive of the needs of disabled people.
- The dual challenge in addressing issues within the institution of the DCC in relation to disabled staff and the wider city in relation to residents and visitors.
- Challenges of linking in to the existing DCC Policies and Strategies.
- To achieve the vision, the need to work in collaboration with other organisations locally and nationally; both governmental and NGO.
- The impact national legislation has, especially when the implications for disabled people have not been practically addressed or implemented at that level (e.g. National Transport Guidelines).
- Implication of the recent Human Rights Commission Inquiry into accessible public transport and the resultant "Accessible Journey" Report.
- Dunedin's geographical size, historical architecture and rural areas.
- Addressing the needs of disabled visitors who are not familiar with the city and its facilities.

4.0 WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE: VISION FOR AN INCLUSIVE CITY

"The Dunedin City Council has a vision for an inclusive Dunedin where all can engage in their personal, community and civic life with independence."

To attain this vision, a series of goals has been proposed by the Council:

- Goal One: Dunedin is accessible.**
- Goal Two: Dunedin is barrier-free.**
- Goal Three: The Dunedin City Council supports the social, recreation and cultural opportunities of disabled people.**
- Goal Four: The Dunedin City Council is a good employer in providing a safe and accessible working environment.**
- Goal Five: Disabled people are involved in the democratic process.**
- Goal Six: Communication by the Dunedin City Council is inclusive of disabled people.**

These goals link to:

4.1 Dunedin City Council Mission Statement

Our purpose is to maintain and enhance our community for the long-term well-being of our people and environment, through innovative leadership and provision of cost-effective services.

4.2 Role and function of the Dunedin City Council

The DCC can contribute to the community outcomes in a number of different ways:

The DCC has established relationships, networks and working groups with many organisations, groups and institutions and has the capability to play a role in promoting the development of a society that is inclusive and supportive of disabled people. In

partnership with other organisations and stakeholders, it will promote best practice in relation to supporting disabled people.

(See Appendix 4 for details of the roles and responsibilities as listed in the Council's LTCCP.)

4.3 Links to Dunedin City Council's Long Term Council Community Plan

The strategy is linked to the DCC's LTCCP. In particular, developing communities where people feel included and connected.

5.0 FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

5.1 Goal One: Dunedin is accessible.

Objective: Disabled people are able to move about the city easily and safely without being limited by physical access issues – including buildings, footpaths and recreational facilities.

Rationale:

The principles of universal design focus on designing things that are usable by all, regardless of ability or age. The accessible journey (refer to Appendix 1) applies universal design enabling the physical environment to be inclusive of disabled people. (For example, not just providing accessible car parks but considering how a person can easily get from the car park onto the footpath, reach the entrance of a building and access the reception area.)

Public transport needs to be inclusive of all people. This includes increasing the number of low floor/kneeling buses to ensure those with mobility impairments and guide dogs can easily use the bus services. This also benefits the elderly, parents with pushchairs and tourists. Other cities, such as Christchurch, have committed to having 85% of their

buses accessible. Consideration also needs to be given to the kerbing and height of the footpath so that a level exit from the bus can be achieved. Bus shelters need to have space to accommodate people using wheelchairs.

1. Key Action:

Adopt the universal design principles, including the "accessible journey". Ensure planners and regulatory staff receive appropriate training. The Dunedin City Council is a joint lead agency, as well as being a promoter and facilitator of this action.

2. Key Action:

Work with the Otago Regional Council (ORC) to ensure public transport is accessible to all. The ORC has the role of lead agency and funder.

The above key actions are linked to the LTCCP: Accessible City, "A city with a transport network that supports economic development, and where people can move about easily and safely."

3. Key Action:

Work with funding bodies to ensure that new and upgraded properties/event centres are designed to meet the maximum access requirements for accessibility. The Dunedin City Council is involved in monitoring or influencing, and has an advocacy role.

4. Key Action:

Develop a programme of barrier-free audits of all public buildings owned and managed by the DCC, including recreational facilities and social housing. Implement a plan of action to address barriers and allocate resources. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

5. Key Action:

Involve accredited barrier-free auditors in all significant projects (design, milestone monitoring and sign off). The Dunedin City Council is a joint lead agency, and promoter and facilitator of this action.

The above key actions are linked to the LTCCP: Sustainable City and Environment, "A city that makes the most of its natural and built environment."

5.2 Goal Two: Dunedin is barrier-free.

Objective: Disabled people are able to move about the city without being limited by attitudes, and increasing understanding and acceptance of disabled people.

Rationale:

This goal looks at attitudes rather than physical barriers. It promotes a culture where all members of the community have a positive understanding of disability issues. Through this, attitudinal barriers will be reduced.

1. Key Action:

Ensure the District Plan amendments reflect a barrier-free perspective. The Dunedin City Council has a lead agency and regulator role for this action.

This action is linked to the LTCCP: Sustainable City and Environment, "A city that makes the most of its natural and built environment."

2. Key Action:

Develop leadership of disabled people. The Dunedin City Council has a supporter and advocacy role for this action.

3. Key Action:

Disability awareness training is implemented for councillors and DCC staff as a key training area. The Dunedin City Council has the role of lead agency and provider.

The above key actions are linked to the LTCCP: Supportive City, "A city where residents feel included and connected with their wider community."

5.3 Goal Three: The Dunedin City Council supports the social, recreation and cultural opportunities of disabled people.

Objective: Ensure that disabled people are able to participate in social, sporting and cultural events, and support the development of projects run by, and for, disabled people.

Rationale:

To ensure a barrier-free environment, the full spectrum of impairments (physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual) needs to be catered for. The DCC is responsible for a large number of buildings and facilities, including community facilities such as libraries and swimming pools. It is important that all these facilities are accessible to disabled people. It is equally important that DCC offices are barrier-free to provide a working environment that is accessible to disabled people. The DCC, which is also responsible for administering legislation governing all building and construction (through its consents and permits processes in the private sector), is similarly in a position to monitor building projects developed by the private sector and to ensure that such projects comply with accessibility standards.

The involvement of barrier-free auditors is a critical part of ensuring appropriate inclusion and access in the built environment. Planners and related staff need to have an understanding of the diverse needs of people with impairments, (visible and hidden), and

the impact of the built environment. It is also important to understand how design impacts and benefits disabled people. Encouraging more disabled people to train to be barrier-free auditors is a way of supporting disability leadership.

This would be an area where the DCC could show its support of the disability culture as a possible funder of events. Objective 9 of the NZDS states: "Support lifestyle choices, recreation, and culture for disabled people." (A recent example was the support given by the DCC to the local disability community in their planning and funding of the "Celebrate Diversity Week" in the first week of December 2006.)

Disability-friendly protocols, developed in conjunction with disabled people, will help ensure events are accessible and will enable and encourage the participation of disabled people. The DCC would be able to make it a requirement for all new DCC funded events to show that they are disability-friendly and existing events will be required to work with the DCC to improve their accessibility.

1. Key Action:

The DCC should give consideration to events, which allow disabled people to participate at all levels. The DCC is a supporter, promoter and facilitator of this action.

2. Key Action:

Develop and implement disability-friendly protocols for the organisers of community and city events that are DCC-funded. The DCC has a joint lead agency and advocacy role for this action.

The above key actions are linked to the LTCCP: Culture and Learning, "A city that provides and encourages participation in a broad range of sporting, recreational and leisure activities."

5.4 Goal Four: The Dunedin City Council is a good employer and provides a safe and accessible working environment.

Objective: Ensure that the DCC employs disabled people and provides a supportive environment for disabled people.

Rationale:

Making a commitment to be a leading employer of disabled people would contribute to a diverse workforce, and one that reflects the communities that the DCC represents. Objective 4 of the NZDS states: "Provide opportunities in employment and economic development for disabled people." Research has shown disabled people face more barriers to finding work and their workforce participation levels are far lower than those without impairments (Jameson and McPherson, 2005). The EEO Trust (2005) Disability and Employment online survey highlighted the discrimination that can take place during the recruitment process. For example, the interviewer should ideally focus on a person's skills and abilities rather than any impairment. Negative attitudes towards disabled people are a huge barrier to gaining employment and to career advancement. Recruitment practices and recruitment agencies often impose selection bias even when an employer may promote an inclusive environment (EEO Trust, 2005).

1. Key Action:

Review Human Resources policies to identify barriers and actively promote the employment of disabled people by the DCC. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

2. Key Action:

Include a specific focus on disabled people in the review of employment policies. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

The above key actions are linked to the LTCCP: Wealthy Community, "A city that encourages strong local business and employment growth, and attracts increasing numbers of new business and tourists."

5.5 Goal Five: Disabled people are involved in the democratic process

Objective: Ensure that disabled people are encouraged to take part in the democratic process and they are involved in making decisions on issues which affect them.

Rationale:

An inclusive Dunedin needs input from all sectors to be truly representative. Many of the functions of the DCC have a direct impact on the lives of disabled people, for example: urban planning, roading, building control, parks and walkways, leisure and community facilities, libraries and information services. Disabled people have had limited involvement in the DCC's decision-making processes or consultation on major facilities and infrastructure development.

Developing leadership of disabled people is Objective 5 of the NZDS, (Foster leadership by disabled people). It is important to develop the leadership of disabled people to enable them to advocate and provide leadership for themselves. The DCC's role here would be one of supporter and possible funder of relevant projects. For example, the DCC's support of the "Celebrate Diversity Week", organised by local disability groups, will have the following benefits:

- Promoting an inclusive community and challenging negative attitudes
- Supporting the development of youth with impairments
- Providing local and national media opportunities for the city
- Showing Dunedin celebrates the contributions of disabled people.

Research has shown a key step to changing attitudes and promoting inclusion is through disability awareness training. Negative attitudes towards disabled people is one of the biggest barriers to their participation in the community. The DCC's lead will make a big difference in disability awareness. Objective 1 of the NZDS states: "Encourage and educate for a non-disabling society."

1. Key Action:

Develop a Disability Issues Advisory Group, which is represented on all appropriate DCC working parties, this group to present an annual action plan to the DCC to guide the implementation of the DCC's Disability Strategy. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

2. Key Action:

Review procedures to ensure there are no barriers to disabled people being appointed to working parties, management committees and other governing bodies. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

3. Key Action:

Ensure all other DCC strategies and policies are inclusive of disabled people and reflect their needs and requirements. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

The above key actions are linked to the LTCCP: Supportive City, "A city where residents feel included and connected with their wider community."

5.6 Goal Six: Communication by the Dunedin City Council is inclusive of disabled people

Objective: Access to DCC information is available to all people.

Rationale:

Participation of disabled people in city activities is dependent on communication of information in an accessible format. This is successfully being done with City Talk, which is recorded and available in an audio format. Objective 6 of the NZDS states: "Foster an aware and responsive public service." This is key for the participation of disabled people.

Websites are an increasingly important means of communicating with the community. Guidelines need to be introduced to ensure that people with impairments are able to use the DCC website and understand its content. Language used needs to be clear and free of jargon. In particular, the DCC should be aware of ways to make websites accessible for people with visual impairments, such as, using specially developed software programmes and ensuring material prepared for the City of Dunedin website is published in a format which is compatible with these programmes.

Disabled people are valued members of the Dunedin community and should be represented in city publications. There are opportunities to show that Dunedin is an inclusive city in publications such as "Are You Ready for Dunedin" promotional 50-page document, which currently contains no images of disabled people.

1. Key Action:

Produce and promote accessible format versions of key public documents. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

2. Key Action:

DCC websites are designed and continually developed to be inclusive. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

3. Key Action:

The DCC will work towards ensuring accessible communication is available with all DCC departments. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

4. Key Action:

DCC publications include quality inclusive images showing disabled people engaged in life of the city. The DCC has the role of lead agency and provider.

The above key actions are linked to the LTCCP: Supportive City, "A city where residents feel included and connected with their wider community."

6.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Indicators of Success

This plan will be monitored by a two-way process where the DCC reports to disabled people on their progress and disabled people have the opportunity to report to the DCC on the impact and the effectiveness of the strategy.

This will include:

- A disability steering group and a core team of DCC staff to monitor delivery of the action plan.
- Community forums and other processes for people to give feedback - including the DCC's annual plan.
- Incorporating disability in the DCC's social, economic and human resources monitoring.

Indicators of success may include:

- A reduction in the number of complaints to customer service staff about access and related issues.

- A reduction in the number of complaints about the footpaths and kerbing in the city.
- An increase in the accessibility of buildings owned by the DCC.
- An increase in the number of accessible buses operated in the city.
- Increased levels of satisfaction by disabled people regarding their ability to participate in activities in the city.
- An increase in positive feedback for disabled people.
- Improvement of access to Council housing.

The review process may result in an adjustment of the goals and actions. The strategy as a whole will be reviewed after three years (in 20010/11).

APPENDIX 1

Explanation of key terms

Access/Accessibility/Barrier free

The terms access, accessibility, and barrier-free are used interchangeably throughout the strategy and framework. They all refer to the removal of barriers, whether they are attitudinal or environmental, which increases the opportunity for disabled people to participate in the community.

Accessible Journey

In order to comply with access requirements a building must have an "accessible route". This is defined as a "...continuous route that can be negotiated unaided by a user of a wheelchair, walking frame or guide dog." The route must extend from a street boundary or car parking area to those spaces within the building required to be accessible to enable people with disabilities to carry out independently normal activities and processes within the building. (The Building Regulations 1992 First Schedule, Clause A2 p.9)

Approachability, Accessibility, Disability-friendly and Usability

The concepts of approachability, accessibility, disability-friendly and usability can be summarised as being those which enable a person with a disability to approach, enter and use a building and its facilities and carry out the normal functions and activities for which it was designed.

Definition of Disability

The Disability Strategy and framework for action is based on the social model of disability used in the 2001 New Zealand Disability Strategy (NZDS): -

Disability is not something that individuals have. Individuals have impairments. These may be physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual or other impairments. Disability is the process which happens when one group of people creates barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have.

Our society is built in such a way that assumes we can all see signs, read directions, hear announcements, reach buttons, have the strength to open heavy doors and have stable moods and perception.

New Zealand will be inclusive when people with impairments can say they live in a society that highly values our lives and continually enhances our full participation (Ministry of Health, 2001, p.1).

Disabled person/people

Person/people with an impairment – whether physical, intellectual, emotional or otherwise – who experience(s) disabling environments or attitudes.

Disability Sector

Disabled people, together with their families and all organisations whose purpose focuses on disabled people or the disability community.

Universal Design

The principles of universal design focus on designing the built environment so it is accessible and usable by everyone including people with disabilities. For example, a door handle that is a push lever not requiring strength to grip and twist, and is at a height wheelchair users can reach. Further information can be obtained from <http://www.udeducation.org/>

http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm

APPENDIX 2

According to the NZDS 2001, one in five people has a disability in New Zealand. This equates to approximately 22,000 people in Dunedin. The disability survey shows that many people have more than one impairment, and that physical impairment is the most common. The survey indicates that the South Island has a higher rate of disability compared to the North Island. This is possibly related to the finding by the Human Rights Commission (2004) that disability increases with age, and the South Island's older population.

The Human Rights Commission states "...in their daily lives disabled people remain among the most disadvantaged citizens. Societal knowledge of the status of people with disabilities is clouded by a lack of understanding of these issues. This impacts on policy design and delivery and on everyday practices in schools, homes, workplaces and public places. A key barrier to disabled New Zealanders is their invisibility in society. Disabled people lack authentic involvement in decision-making and policy development in relation

to health and disability, education, access to services and information and physical access to services and information and to many places including buildings and transport". (2004, p.88-89).

The Dunedin City Council's Disability Strategy has been developed by a disability consultant and has involved a feedback meeting with the disabled community and formal DCC consultation.

Councils in other centres have adopted disability strategies. This strategy has been developed after reviewing the strategies of Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland, Manukau, Christchurch, Invercargill and Hamilton.

2.1 A Profile of Dunedin City

Dunedin has the largest land area of any New Zealand city. Its urban area is a compact university city of 121,000 people, including a tertiary student population of 21,000. There is a large rural base with a number of smaller urban population areas. In 2004 the Otago District Health Board noted that the city has a higher proportion of older people (many with impairments) and younger disabled people than northern urban centres.

Dunedin is the financial and commercial hub of the Otago region. The rich heritage of Victorian and Edwardian architecture and hilly topography provide some access challenges. Because of its commitment to, and investment in, the pursuit of educational excellence, it is a city with many cultural and sporting opportunities and events.

2.2 Legislative Context

There are a number of legislative documents that underpin this strategy. A selected summary is outlined below.

2.2.1 New Zealand Disability Strategy (2001)

Central Government adopted the New Zealand Disability Strategy (2001) (NZDS). It outlines the vision for a non-disabling society that values and enhances the full participation of disabled people.

Currently the NZDS does not identify roles, actions or objectives for local government. However, the NZDS and the New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights (2005) stress that participation in decision-making by disabled people is a key area that needs addressing.

The NZDS identifies positive action around housing, employment, accessibility and transport issues.

Objective 4: Provide opportunities in employment and economic development for disabled people;

Objective 6: That Government agencies, including territorial bodies, are to be aware of, and responsive to, disabled people;

Objective 8: Support quality living in the community for disabled people and

Objective 9: Support lifestyle choices, recreation and culture for disabled people (Ministry of Health, 2001).

The NZDS has been recognised within the DCC's other strategy initiatives such as the Cycling Strategy, Road Safety Policy and the Pedestrian Strategy.

2.2.2 The New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights Mana ki te Tangata: Priorities for Action: 2005-2010

The New Zealand Action Plan identifies the barriers, which prevent disabled people from fully participating in society. These barriers include a lack of authentic involvement in decision-making and policy development, barriers to services and information and access to many places. Disabled people are viewed as among the most disadvantaged citizens in New Zealand. It is noted that local authorities have a significant role in ensuring the accessibility of services.

2.2.3 Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of New Zealand. As stated in the NZDS, the relationship between Maori and the Crown in the disability sector is based on participation at all levels, partnership in service delivery and protection and improvement of Maori well-being. The DCC is committed to upholding the Treaty principles.

2.2.4 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In an international context, the United Nations adopted, in August 2006, an international disability convention to ensure visibility and status for disabled people. In April 2007 New Zealand led the United Nations signing of this convention. Although not yet ratified by Parliament in New Zealand, the signing of the convention indicates its intention to pass the convention into law and is reflected in this document.

2.2.5 Local Government Act 2002

This requires the DCC to identify and involve people in decisions that affect them. People need to be consulted and able to express their views in ways appropriate to their needs.

2.2.6 Building Act 2004

This requires the DCC to comply with the code for new buildings and, where practicable, for significant alterations.

APPENDIX 3

Links to Dunedin City Council Policies and Strategies

- Transportation Strategy
- Pedestrian Strategy
- Cycle Strategy
- Sport and Recreation Strategy
- Amenity Strategy
- Play Strategy
- Community Facilities Plan
- Older Persons Policy
- Proposed Urban Design Strategy

Appendix 4

The DCC can contribute to the community outcomes in a number of different ways:

- **lead agency** – being largely responsible for action in a particular area.
- **joint lead agency** – managing a programme in conjunction with other organisations.
- **supporting** – providing support to leading agencies.
- **monitoring or influencing** – looking to influence other players.
- **no direct influence** – being aware of the programme.

When the DCC takes on a role, it can also be involved in a number of different ways:

- **provider** – carrying out the programme using its own resources. This is most common when the DCC is the leading agency.
- **funder** – making a financial investment in the programme.
- **regulator** – developing and enforcing rules as appropriate.
- **promoter and facilitator** – encouraging progress by organising interested parties or securing financial support from other sources.
- **advocate** – publicly expressing support.

In some cases, the DCC may be involved in more than one way for an individual programme. For the sake of simplicity, these have been narrowed down to three main roles (lead provider, provider with others and supportive of other parties), and these are used to indicate a contribution to the programmes defined in this section.

REFERENCES AND USEFUL RESOURCES

Auckland City Council (2004) **Disability Framework for Action**. Auckland, Auckland City Council.

Human Rights Commission (2005) **The New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights Mana ki te Tangata: Priorities for Action: 2005-2010**. Wellington, Human Rights Commission.

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