

07/05/2023
Hularii Mckenzie
Wadsworth Crescent
Redwoodtown
Blenheim 7201

To Marlborough District Council – Annual Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the annual plan process 2023.

We are writing to submit to the annual plan again the need for accessible change facilities in and around Marlborough with specificity to an accessible change facility at Pollard Park but also throughout our region – We will also speak to the policy that was created around said facilities.

1. Policy surrounding Accessible Change Facilities in Marlborough
2. Pollard Park
3. Regional Facilities
4. Need For 24/7 Facilities – KMART Westwood
5. Changing Places NZ
6. More changing tables at Stadium 2000

01. Policy surrounding Accessible Change Facilities in Marlborough: We'd like to start with this as these feed into every aspect of the submissions I have today. In 2019 we were asked to be a part of the process of creating Policy surrounding accessible change facilities in Marlborough, on 15/07/2019 a letter with ours and other families of Marlborough recommendations regarding what we should be looking for in a facility to cater for all needs. We spoke in the letter - *See attached *Document 01* - about the standard of these facilities should be Changing Places NZ, that where we look to break the wheel they have already succeeded. When last I brought this to Council there was 1 up and running Changing Places NZ facility in Hamilton Gardens, there are now 5 Changing Places NZ Facilities open around the North Island, another is set to be opened in Hawke's Bay, with a seventh facility planned for opening later in the year, there are also more in talks and in the planning stages including in the South Island. In March 2020 a proposed draft of the Policy came out for consultation which I submitted feedback on - *Please see attached of both the draft and submission *Document 02 and Document 03** - I went into detail on every point with the highlights being:

*1. Specialist change facilities will generally include the following features: We ask addition of Modelling of our Policy be on having a Changing Places facility, this should be our benchmark, so we are aiming for the gold standard with expert advice and robust equipment for our community.

*2. At least one Council provided specialist change facility will remain open 24 hours daily: As many as possible of Council's provided specialist change facility will remain open 24 hours daily.

*3. In addition to the specialist change facility at Stadium 2000, there will be two other specialist change facilities located in Council buildings in Blenheim: We ask the comment about the Stadium 2000 be removed as it is simply not true.

*4. Where additional facilities are requested in Blenheim, the matters that will be considered include: a) the need identified for the additional facilities b) the extent to which existing facilities are used or cannot accommodate the additional demand c) the location proposed and the numbers of people anticipated to attend or be accommodated at the location d) the costs of installing the facility and ongoing maintenance costs: We ask that this part with required

numbers of attendance be removed so the number of users isn't the importance, people's right to toileting is irrespective of this.

*5. As funding and space becomes available and based on evidenced needs, consideration will be given to the provision of one specialist change facility in Picton: We ask this is a high priority and that there is no need for evidenced need as we and other would-be users are stating there is a need, we and those that live and travel through have nothing in Picton.

As I google 'Accessible change policy Marlborough' today, We note from [Provision of Specialist Change Facilities \(marlborough.govt.nz\)](#) there is no mention of Changing Places NZ as a model, It still says only one facility will be 24/7, Thankfully the reference there are accessible change facilities specific to the additional needs this group requires has been taken off but there is still reference to the need identified – (here we are right now identifying the need) and It still talks about the need in Picton.

We thank council for making some of the amendments we asked for, but I ask you again to amend the policy for the things that were missed as they help to stop making the policy limiting to our community of disabled peoples.

First, we'd ask the Policy 4.3 - There will be two specialist change facilities located in Council buildings in Blenheim - under the Accessibility Policy be taken away as Blenheim is a large ever-growing town and community and there is need for more than what was the planned two, 4.4 of the Policy helps to manage this already without 4.3 limiting even the suggestion of any more accessible rooms. We need as many of these facilities to be 24/7 as we can, At Te Huri @ Liz Davidson the have a swipe fob to get into the room, any other room created with an outside door should be able to use the same fob for access, we have the technology already in use, we are not werewolves that have a set time to be out and about, we shop at Kmart at 11pm for Christmas, we get off the Ferry at 12am after hospital visits to Wellington, we travel back from Nelson at 5pm after Gymnastics, if you only make one facility 24/7, you are missing so many opportunities to help us live our best lives, to be members of our society. We largely don't want to be a burden and just go about with our families like everyone else but we need your help.

- Changing Places NZ is the gold standard not just here in Aotearoa/NZ but around the world and we are likely to be left without one helping to connect our Marlborough Whanau to the rest of the country if we keep dodging it. Create one (In Picton?) and give us around the region accessible change facilities based on the policy we have created – We then have the best of both worlds! There's no reason we can't do both.
- We ask that this policy be brought up and looked into both by the Council and those on the Accessibility Committee to see if the opportunity is available for accessible changing facilities to be added to New and Upgrades to Facilities i.e., Landsdowne Sport's Hub, Rai Valley Public Toilet's, Relocation of Picton's I-Site, Westwood Development etc.

02. Pollard Park: We ask that the council again continue the work and commitment made towards an accessible change facility at Pollard Park. This was submitted in 2019 and \$100,000 was allocated to a changing place at Pollard Park, subsequently policy surrounding these facilities was made for our region and we were all set to go, with the devastating effects of Covid 19 there was a concern the accessible changing facility at the library and at Pollard Park would be in jeopardy as it was said - there is limitations to funding certain 'lollies' in this year's annual plan - so together with other families it was asked that the intended \$100,000 earmarked for a facility at Pollard Park be used to ensure the changing facility at the New Library wouldn't be taken away and in conjunction with guidance from Changing Places NZ the money could help make the New Library accessible change facility an official 'Changing Places NZ' facility to be incorporated into the New Library Build so we could be the first with one in the South Island, with a look after two years, as the need at

Pollard Park is still there, into allocating funds again to an accessible change facility at Pollard Park.

My family were sick when the walkthrough for the Library happened late last month so I was unable to attend, and I haven't had a chance to see what the accessible change facility is like in the New Library but from correspondence since the request it's understood the money earmarked for Pollard Park was indeed utilized in the New Library change facility build but it is not a Changing Places NZ Facility and Changing Places NZ was not contacted. Although we are disappointed this happened this way, we look forward to utilising the facility incorporated into the New Library build to help our girl and many others access their community. I ask again that funds be allocated to Pollard Park having an accessible change facility. We and other families both in our region and outside of it enjoy the park and all its accessible playground facilities – Donated and Provided by Differently Abled Children of Marlborough alongside community organisations – Our girl as well as so many others still desperately need a changing facility here, with Family Days, Events at Churchill Glade or just a visit to play at the park and feed the ducks, if changes need to be done our choices are still, years after my first submission, either change them in the boot or backs of vans or load up the family and visit the only accessible room Te Huri in town usually making us leave the grounds and not coming back because the time it takes to get there and change and come back it's generally time to go. We as late as December last year had been messaging the team at 'Marlborough Mitre 10 Mega Christmas in the Park' asking for them to set aside parking for our van so our daughter could both see the show but should the need for a change happen and we couldn't get out we could change her in the back of the van. Again I reiterate that is now a 13year old teenager and all that comes with it being changed in the back of a van in the middle of the park at Christmas in the Park – now we have the ability and have created in our van with blacked out tinting and curtains for the windows, a van space that protects her dignity as best we can but so many other families cannot and we shouldn't have to do this even though we can. A facility as Pollard Park would mean a walk with her and her siblings for a toilet stop and change and back to the festivities.... Just like everyone else. We ask this happen again. - *Please see attached letter dated 09/04/2020 regarding the reallocation of funds *Document 04 -*.

03. Regional Facilities: As the Accessible Policy states - As funding and space becomes available and based on evidenced needs, consideration will be given to the provision of one specialist change facility in Picton – We ask that the time is now – We ask funding to be allocated to a change facility in Picton, we ask that in lieu of the accessible change facility at the New Library not being a Changing Places NZ that this be our opportunity to work alongside Changing Places NZ to create accessible change for Picton: The Heart of the Sounds and the Gateway to our Region! We currently have nothing there, this happened to us during the Tuia 250 where we had to door knock for our group of Wheelchair users to find a place suitable for changing so that they didn't miss the once in a lifetime opportunity and thankfully Mikey's Bar opened its doors but a pub shouldn't have to, We experienced this most recently at the ANZAC Dawn Parade, our family of 7 travelled over in our van, those who were there remembering our fallen may have heard our daughters screams in the silence, and we were privileged to listen to our Mayor Nadine speak and then the invitation to join at the RSA with everyone, unfortunately as incontinence goes, our daughter needed a change, with no facilities available we had to forgo that and travel 25ks back to Blenheim to use Te Huri @ Liz Davidson. 20-30mins with a bowel motion just to find a place to change.... I ask could any of you do it? Our girl and others don't need to be waiting in number 1's, 2's or as all parents and carers know...the dreaded Number 3's. When we move to thinking of where a facility like this could be....on the 5th of May this Article came out [Former aquarium site floated for Picton i-Site upgrade | Stuff.co.nz](#), it is the perfect opportunity and space to

house a Changing Places NZ facility. I ask that council move to make this a reality ASAP. We desperately need it.

Examples of missed opportunities in our Marlborough Community:

Rai Valley: Is sadly a missed opportunity, we travelled recently to TOTS Gymnastics for our girls and passed through from Blenheim to Nelson, Nelson to Blenheim twice, knowing Rai Valley Bathrooms were recently redone without accessible change facilities and knowing Nelson doesn't have any either we again have to travel with a mattress in the back of our van for changing and care needs, we shouldn't have to, most in our community don't even have this as an option. We need to be looking at these Accessible Facilities as an option to include in new and upgrades to builds so the costs are at least manageable for us to keep creating opportunities to help our disabled community access their region.

Landsdowne Sports Club: Is another missed opportunity for our disabled community, those in our community love and participate in sports, we have siblings/friends/family who do Friday night Netball and Saturday Rugby, if given some thought this is a prime opportunity to include our disabled Whanau to live their best lives as sports connects us all. We were fortunate that the organisers of our younger daughters Netball games gave us the ability to Park our van in the Netball Courts by the sausage sizzles for our daughter to change so she could go and watch her sister play. It's small things like this that are massive that our disabled community miss out on – The irony wasn't lost on us changing in the back of a van, whilst then looking across the court at a brand new 4million dollar building and thinking how great it would have been to just go across the court to the Sports Hub complex and change with dignity if it was thought of in the build.

04. Need For 24/7 Facilities – KMART Westwood: I highlighted the need for these facilities to be 24/7 and have spoken previously about how if even one person needs it to access their own community it is worth it. I know of many families and times when there being no accessible changing facilities families have gone without accessing an event, community get together, Family BBQ, when I think of ourselves, that we have to leave Picton to change at Te Huri @ Liz Davidson, had that not been there for us to use we would've just gone home, but because it was there we were able to change and go for breakfast at McDonalds as a family, it seems small but that's massive for us, coming off the ferry at 12am and changing there even if it's just been once is lifechanging for us and others to get our family members out of wet or soiled nappies and clothes. Previous events – Te Pataka O Wairau Night Market, ANZAC Parade, Santa Parade, Rotary Bootsale Market, Concerts in town all couldn't be accessed and enjoyed if we couldn't access Te Huri @ Liz Davidson 24/7. With this life changing facility alongside the New Library servicing the centre of town, we are asking that council look to the future and an accessible change facility be added at planned public toilets out in [Westwood Business Park](#) 'Blenheim's Fastest Growing Shopping, Dining and Work Community.' This area is being highly developed with KMART being a major drawcard as well as major players like Pak'n'Save and Bunnings, along with the café and other businesses out there and heading out there, it is only a matter of time before a Public Toilet is needed for the general public, we ask the disabled public of Marlborough be considered and thought of as well, this could be a prime opportunity for another 24/7 Accessible change facility utilizing the same fob system we currently have at Te Huri @ Liz Davidson. We would hate to look over at a public toilet facility as we drive away from Westwood on a day out or casual shopping because we had to leave for changing. Having a facility here helps our disabled community access another part of their home, our girl and others are at Marlborough Girls College now and if a facility was here, they could explore life skills at the shops practising budgeting, practising list creation and food shopping, enjoying lunch with their friends, family, and teacher aides without having to leave for changes where currently this wouldn't be an option. Please don't let this be another missed opportunity.

05. Changing Places NZ: I just wanted to again add their website and information for the Council to consider most especially for a build in Picton. [Fully Accessible Public Bathrooms | Changing Places New Zealand](#) – Did you know that Standard Accessible Bathrooms are Unsuitable for an Estimated 20,000 New Zealanders?
[What's the Problem? - Changing Places](#)
[Where Should Changing Places Be? - Changing Places](#)
[Who Needs Changing Places - Changing Places](#)
[What are Changing Places? - Changing Places](#)
[Build a Changing Place - Changing Places](#)
06. More changing tables at Stadium 2000: Again, we thank Council for recognising that the changing rooms at Stadium 2000 are not suitable to be called accessible change facilities as outlined in the policy, however as frequent users of the Stadium and it's Pools (Our daughter, as do many others use the facility weekly for rehabilitation and recreational use) we see constantly the need for additional change tables in the Stadium, there are currently two change tables – One we have donated – set up in the first block of change rooms. These rooms are not disability specific and are regularly used by families and babies, we and others struggle most times to access a change table both in arriving to change to use the facility as well as getting out to get changed, most of the time we have to stay in the pool and have a spotter wait for a room to become available and signal to get out of the pool and them directing family's trying to use it a disabled person is coming so can they please wait. The young adults we all live and work with are some of the most vulnerable to temperature change especially when wet, any delay in drying and warming can lead to significant health complications, as the rooms aren't sealed the cold we feel is magnified for them exacerbating the chill and risk. When we went only a few weeks ago with MGC we had four wheelchair users with staggered changings time, we saw another four wheelchair users and collectively we all at some stage had to wait for access to the change tables as families changed babies or just used a bigger room for comfort. We ask for the Council to work alongside Stadium 2000 to provide an additional two changing tables – *like the ones at Te Huri @ Liz Davison* [Amtech Medical - Ergosol Wall Mount Height Adjustable \(1800mm\) For Wet Areas Battery Powered](#) for example though the one we have there is mains powered: See attached *Document 5 for reference (Please note this was used for Te Huri in 2017 so prices and models may be different – and to work alongside the Stadium to make at least two of the four Changing rooms at the Stadium Disability only with clear signage so we can help to keep our disabled community both safe and healthy when entering and exiting the pool with their ability for a quick change but also more able to access such a vital resource for their ongoing longevity, muscle, bone and physical health needs in being able to swim. For some of these users with disabilities swimming is the most free them and their bodies can be, sometimes it's the only time they can do something unassisted and any help we can give them to access and not turn away because of the health risk is great. Help also with educating abled users to know what these rooms and change tables are for and shared knowledge around why, even though is a quick change and easier for a everyday swimmer, leaving these for those that need it are so important would be amazing as well.

Summary:

To conclude again I'd just like to highlight what we are asking Council to Consider in the Annual Plan:

1. Amend Accessibility Policy to reflect the true needs of our disabled community to continue make it easier to see the need and then provide the facility for the accessibility we long for in our community. Taking away of 4.3 - Policy 4.3 - There will be two specialist change facilities located in Council buildings in Blenheim so even the possibility of asking for changing facilities isn't prevented.
2. We ask Council again to continue the work and commitment made towards an accessible change facility at Pollard Park. As seen in the letter provided the money earmarked for this project was asked to be used if a Changing Places NZ facility could go into the New Library, and if it did the need was still present for a changing facility at Pollard Park and should be looked into two years later. Given we are three years on we ask council to again recommit to this to make it happen.
3. We ask Council to consider and commit to a Changing Places NZ facility in Picton to help service our changing needs, there is currently nothing there, there is space being made available with the Aquarium moved, the New Ferry Terminals are planned and Picton is the Gateway to our Region and gives residents and visitors the ability to change with dignity when coming off or going on the Interislander. What a way to greet and say goodbye to our visitors and look after our community. Everyone could enjoy New Years and Picton Foreshore events and selfishly We could also join our Mayor, Community and Service Members at the Picton RSA for future ANZAC Day Dawn Parades which we would love.
4. With the ever-growing space out at Westwood Business Park, we ask council to commit when building proposed public facilities, they include accessible changing facilities for our disabled community that can be accessed 24/7. As the area grows and our families want to spend time out in the area, we need a place to change so we are not having to leave – taking away our opportunity to be in our community and our ability to support spending in our community.
5. We ask Council to liaise with Changing Places NZ for consultation regarding a facility in Picton to service our community needs but also the needs of our disabled visitors, friends, and families.
6. Work with the Stadium 2000 to provide two additional change tables for the other family change rooms at the stadium to lessen the wait and danger times our disabled community face in entering and exiting the pools. Work with the Stadium to make two of the family change rooms specific to disability changes instead of being family change and help to educate and get the information out about why leaving these rooms for those that need it is so important.

Thank you for the opportunity and time to read this submission, we hope council can help us to better access our community and realise the dream we have of just being able to go about our lives as everyone else contributing and enjoys our community together.

Many Regards

Hularii Mckenzie and Family

Ph: 027 860 8157

Email: bubbaamber_bailey@hotmail.com

