



PARENTS OF VISION IMPAIRED (NZ) INC

National Office: 59 Commerce Street, Frankton, Hamilton

Postal address: PO Box 5629, Frankton, Hamilton 3242

Email: rgraham@pvi.org.nz

www.pvi.org.nz

Providing a community to support parents of children with vision impairments

1 October 2021

Tēnā koutou,

Please find attached PVI's submission on the Human Rights (Disability Assist Dogs Non-Discrimination) Amendment Bill 2021. PVI does not wish to speak to this submission.

Ngaa mihi,

Rebekah Graham
National Executive Officer
Parents of Vision Impaired (NZ) Inc
Mobile: 0226215740
Email: rgraham@pvi.org.nz

Parents of Vision Impaired NZ

Parents of Vision Impaired NZ (PVI) is a registered charity which supports parents who have blind, low vision, or vision-impaired children. There is no cost to enrol and we provide a supportive community of parents who are overcoming challenges every day. Our current membership is at just over 1300 active members, with close to 800 email subscribers. PVI offers parents advice, information, and opportunities to meet other parents. We publish a quarterly newsletter (eVision) and have a members-only Facebook page for families and whānau to share information and to network. PVI also runs an annual conference and AGM which allows parents and whānau to get together face to face for a longer time to talk, listen and learn in a social setting. Additionally, PVI takes an active part in the disability sector through making sure that the voice of visually impaired children and their parents and whānau is heard in consultations with government, schools, local councils, and other organisations.

The submission

PVI supports the proposal to amend the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the Human Rights Act 1993.

PVI supports the proposed amendments to the Human Rights (Disability Assist Dogs Non-Discrimination) Amendment Bill 2021, which would replace “guide dog” with the broader term “disability assist dog” as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

PVI notes that many members of the blind community who use disability assist dogs continue to face discrimination across multiple spheres of their lifeworlds, including, but not limited to:

- Uber drivers who refuse to allow disability assist dogs in their vehicles (e.g. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/117586297/access-issues-for-blind-people-and-their-guide-dogs>)
- Motel owners who refuse to allow and/or charge additional fees for a disability assist dog (e.g. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/93284646/man-and-assistance-dog-denied-accommodation-in-hamilton> and <https://twitter.com/KarinMary1/status/1443310822000762883?s=20>)
- Bus drivers who refuse to allow disability assist dogs to embark (e.g. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/well-good/123434620/blind-passenger-told-he-cant-bring-seeingeye-poodle-on-bus>)
- Taxi drivers and airport shuttles who charge extra fares (e.g. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/291044/disabled-forced-to-live-%27life-in-the-slow-lane%27>)
- Restaurants denying access to disability assist dogs (e.g. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/111781907/christchurch-restaurant-apologises-after-kicking-out-guide-dog?rm=a>)

We note that these news articles took time and energy by the person who was discriminated against. Despite the ready availability of training and information on the rights of disability assist dogs, businesses continue to discriminate against disabled persons who have or use a disability assist dog.

PVI notes for the record our support for ongoing advocacy and information dissemination in this particular area. We also note our support for consequences for individuals and businesses who do not abide by the rights of persons as set out in the Human Rights Act 1993.