



MEMORANDUM

To: Grey Power Associations, Federation Board, Zone Directors
From: Sandy Feringa, Chair – Disability & Access Alliance Sub-Committee
Date: 3 February 2024
Subject: Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill – online petition & March to Parliament

Hi,

Since its inception Grey Power Federation has been an active supporter of Access Alliance and Access Matters Aotearoa and we actively support their efforts to have effective accessibility legislation so that every New Zealander is able to participate fully in their daily lives, regardless of age and whether or not they have a disability. On a daily basis a quarter of New Zealand's population struggles with basic activities due to access barriers. Barriers need to be removed, even in the workplace

The Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill was passed in 2022. However, because of defects in the legislation the Access Matters' campaign to amend it received over 15,000 signatures on its previous petition.

As a result of that and everyone else's efforts the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill was put on hold until after the 2023 election so it could be reviewed and rewritten.

The Bill is currently on pause indefinitely. The new Government needs to know that a redraft is urgent and important to their constituents and that the nation wants strong and effective accessibility legislation for all its citizens.

A petition is a great way to get improved accessibility legislation in front of a cross-party Parliamentary Committee, and to gain the attention of all our politicians.

A new petition is available online asking for the withdrawal of the current Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill, and for a new Bill to be drafted that includes minimum standards, a regulator and an enforcement mechanism. We ask you to sign the online petition and also encourage your family and friends to sign it too.

The link for the online petition is:

<https://www.change.org/p/petition-for-drafting-a-new-accessibility-for-new-zealanders-bill>

In conjunction with the online petition Access Matters has planned a March to Parliament which will take place on Thursday, 7 March 2024 from 12.30pm – 3.30pm. Their website states the following key objectives of the March are:

1. Advocate for the removal of barriers affecting our communities
2. Advocate for a rewrite of the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill with enforceable standards, a regulator, a barrier notification system and a robust dispute resolution process.

It is anticipated there will be up to 4 separate starting points in Wellington with different distances from each to Parliament, all suitable for people with mobility devices such as mobility scooters and wheelchairs, as well as those who use walking aids such as walkers (Zimmer frames) and walking sticks. Further details will be available once traffic management and other Council requirements have been arranged.

Participation is encouraged from Grey Power members, their families and friends to support Access Matters Aotearoa to take part in the March to Parliament and raise awareness to achieve their objectives.

Regards,

Sandy

SANDY FERINGA
Chair
Disability & Access Alliance Sub-Committee