

Attention Attorney General Robert McClelland + House of Representatives

I include below my response and items for consideration and inclusion in the New Disability (Access to Premises Buildings) Standards 2009.

**DOORWAYS** – under the 2009 draft are to be 850 mm. My doorways on my home were built at 850 mm wide internally and externally. The Builder told me it did NOT cost any more for this. My 4 wheel electric mobility scooter is 690 mm wide. I use the mobility scooter outside but also to give me access up my back door ramp into the house. 8 cm's either side of the doorway entrance is hard to negotiate even for an 'experienced' scooter user. My back door way has an aluminium door frame with a lip (lip is built up either side with timber). This lip can make a mobility scooter or my wheelchair 'slip' somewhat going over the lip/frame. Also the turning area of many wheelchairs/scooters/4 wheel walkers/prams is more, necessitating wider door ways.

I feel very excluded when I go around to a friend's house or unit/apartment and cannot get in the doorway. I have to sit outside – not very convivial to keeping and making friends. I cannot get to the toilet either. I have to cut short the visit as I have to go home to my toilet. Many of us do not visit others nor make new friends because of our exclusion of access into residential homes.

Many seniors own homes on larger blocks but would like to downsize to units or apartments ..... however when we go to look at these places, the small internal and external doorways do NOT take wheelchairs, scooters, 4 wheel walkers, prams.

Ambulance vehicles and beds are now wider. Many manual wheelchairs are bigger/wider these days too as the population is getting taller/wider. Indeed as are women's prams etc.

1. **I request that all internal/external doorways – including apartments/units/residential homes be 900 mm wide NOW from 2009 onwards. (not in the future – why wait) Why exclude apartments/units/new houses ?**

**ACCESS** - How much is too much ? Seems an easy excuse for many building owners who want the rental bucks \$ but no responsibility. The residential house retro-fit/renovation to a doctor's surgery in a street near me – the rental p.a. is \$35,000 but the cost for decent access was too much apparently! If it costs too much to include disabled access, perhaps it should not be retrofitted/renovated at all.

2. **Can you tell me was \$5,000 extra too much ? (To make this premises disabled friendly) Is there a scale of how much is too much ? Surely on a rental of \$35,000 p.a. the cost of \$5,000 for disability access was NOT too much !!**

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BY: LACA

**RAMP GRADIENTS** – The ramp at my back door cost me \$1400. Built by the Council and they tell me to the Australian Standard which they assured me was correct for all usage. It must be noted by Councils and builders and relayed by them to customers and the public, that the Gradient on a ramp built to Australian Standard does **NOT fit all circumstances/disabilities**. To my utter dismay when I tried to wheel myself up the ramp in my manual wheelchair it was IMPOSSIBLE for me to do so. I do NOT have sufficient strength in my upper body, arms, shoulders hands etc. as I have rheumatoid arthritis. (I am under 60).

A friend of mine who is 85 – cannot push himself up his ramp and neither can his wife who is not disabled, but just 85 years old !!!

With an ageing population, a great percentage of whom would have strength issues, this gradient problem must be addressed, (for each person, individually). It is NOT 'One Size fits all'.

I also note that the Australian Standard is NOT MANDATORY so Councils/builders could and perhaps should, be made to build/approve gradients in perspective of disability.

**3. What can/will you do about gradients in relation to Australian Standard's gradients that do NOT fit many disabilities, particularly in seniors ?**

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting. Please acknowledge receipt of this and answer my 3 questions please.

Heather  
Knox Area Victoria