

15 March 2010

Building access standards an investment in the future – or not!

The federal government today launched the proposed new standards for disability access to public buildings claiming it ' was a significant step towards making our buildings safer and more accessible for everyone'. www.humanrights.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2010/18_10.html#standards

According to Human Rights Commissioner Innes "Ensuring better access has to be seen as an investment in the future," and that "As our population ages, every Australian will benefit from these improvements."

While the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards clarify how those involved in accessible building can meet their responsibilities under discrimination law to ensure building access to those with disability, some known disabilities such as environmental sensitivities were left out of the process and will not be included for at least another five years – if they are included then.

The new standards are expected to come into force in May 2011, a timeframe that gives industry and regulators time to fully understand and prepare for the changes. The importance of including individuals with environmental sensitivities is very clear. Currently some environmental sensitivities such as allergy, asthma and other respiratory disorders and chemical sensitivities do not have access to buildings and services such as health and allied care, nursing homes, housing. The issues in relation to premises access largely involve air quality. This impacts not only on those with disability but the entire community.

ASEHA Qld inc is a support group for individuals with environmental sensitivities that has been advocating for their recognition and inclusion in buildings and services for around thirty years now. We hope that the Attorney General will change his mind about including environmental sensitivities in the access to building standards and the Australian Building Code. Some with severe chemical sensitivities are unable to access premises for necessary care.

Disability Access to Buildings

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The letter to the Attorney General is self explanatory.
[Letter to Attorney General re Disability Access to Buildings](#)

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