

## Housing - Your Future



A place to live is an ongoing necessity for every person, whatever their age or lifestyle requirements. Yet the majority of housing constructed in recent years, or currently being built, does not necessarily take into account the changing needs of our population, particularly our older generations.

Currently with 19% of our population having a permanent disability and up to 35% having a temporary or permanent disability, there is a substantial section of our community that may have particular housing requirements.

When you then combine this with the purchasing power of our ageing baby boomers, there is a potentially significant market segment interested in obtaining residential housing stock that is access responsive to their identified, or perhaps unidentified lifestyle needs.

Accessible or adaptable housing is just that. It does not need to necessarily appear significantly different to any other house, apartment or unit. However, it should be designed and constructed to cater for, or be able to be readily adapted to respond to, the changing living and independence requirements of occupants.

Functional ideas that can be considered to offer improved access include appropriate site selection, provision of level entry transitions, wider doorways and passages, increased internal circulation spaces and accessible toilets and bathroom areas.

Improved accessibility of the built environment can assist in providing for our *Active Ageing*. Investment in access responsive housing design and construction is therefore an investment in our own future.

### Access Audits Australia

provides the following range of services to support improved access to the built environment and to the provision of goods and services:

- t Disability access training
- t Community consultation
- t Development and Review of Disability Action Plans, Development Access Plans, policies and procedures
- t Access Audits, Evaluations and Design Advice
- t Advice and development of accessible publications, communications and web sites

AAA is pleased to advise or assist you with any access issue. Contact

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**The team at Access Audits Australia**

**wish you a happy, safe Christmas**

**and a successful 2003**



**Our office will close on 20 December until 20 January 2003**

If you would like **Access News** emailed to you contact us at AAA@hyp.com.au

## Welcome .....is very welcome

“Welcome” is the title of a book released recently by the Building Commission, Victoria. It is intended to assist architects, designers, builders and home owners to design and construct attractive, functional and accessible or adaptable housing.



This publication is the result of the collaboration of many varied contributors, including building and design professionals, as well as service providers and users. Many hints and design ideas about renovations or new homes are effectively combined with informative photographs and detailed illustrations. Issues covered include those relevant to location, outdoor and indoor areas, fittings and finishes. There are specific design comments about access needs within all rooms of a house.

“Welcome” is indeed a welcome publication, based on Australian lifestyle requirements and building construction methods. It has an easy to read layout and is written in a non-technical style. This book would be of benefit to many people considering or involved with the provision of accessible or adaptable residential housing.

You can view the *Welcome* web site at [www.buildingcommission.com.au/welcome/welcome.asp](http://www.buildingcommission.com.au/welcome/welcome.asp). to obtain further details. RRP is \$54.45 including GST (soft cover) or \$77.00 including GST (hard cover).

## Local Government Accessible Communities Awards

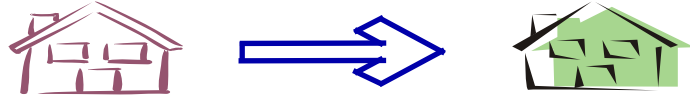
The Victorian Local Government Accessible Communities Awards were recently announced. These Awards are a joint initiative of the Department of Human Services and the Municipal Association of Victoria. A range of projects undertaken by Victorian local government authorities were acknowledged as supporting people with disabilities and ensuring their inclusion in local communities.



This years winners were:

- **Manningham Council** - for the Manningham Bus Shelter Program, which involved the installation of 198 accessible bus shelters throughout the municipality.
- **Warrnambool City Council** - for developing a framework to ensure that future Disability Action Plans across the City of Warrnambool and the Shires of Moyne, Corangamite, Southern Grampians and Glenelg follow an intergrated and coordinated approach.
- **Hobsons Bay City Council** - for production of a range of resources aimed to make Hobsons Bay an accessible and attractive destination for all tourists.
- **City of Greater Bendigo** - for a project involving the training of web designers and developers from various community groups regarding the development of web sites to comply with accessibility guidelines.
- **Banyule City Council** - for the design and construction of a wheelchair accessible Baby Change and Weighing Station for use in Maternal and Child Health Centres.
- **Moreland City Council** - for involvement in a program providing access opportunities for young people with disabilities to a range of sport, recreational and social activities during school and holiday periods.
- **Knox City Council** - for hosting a “Linking Local Action” - a one day, fully accessible forum bringing together members of Disability Advisory Committees from across the State.

## One Person's View



While some new house and land packages are more accessible than others, it can be a real benefit to find a builder who will make some modifications to improve access for a prospective purchaser. When considering a new home, Angela Snow had particular features that were particularly important to her, including a reasonably flat site with easy access to a house on the one level.

As a result of experiencing Pneumococcal Septicaemia (blood poisoning) in 1995, Angela lost both her legs below the knee, her left arm at mid forearm and her fingers and part of her thumb on her right hand. She now uses an electric wheelchair and at times an elbow crutch to assist her mobility at home, outside the house and at Latrobe University, in Melbourne, where she works in student administration.

Angela and her family have recently been able to purchase a house that has noticeable access

improvements, compared to their previous property, by selecting an existing design with potential to incorporate access responsive modifications.

Design changes undertaken prior to construction have resulted in even or graded surface transitions at entry points, easy to operate door locks throughout the interior using lever handles and a keyless entry system with an accessible keypad at the front door. The en-suite has been enlarged slightly and now has a wider cavity sliding door, a stepless shower with curtains and improved circulation spaces, instead of a shower cubicle.

Not only was ease of access into and around the house important but the issue of safety, especially in an emergency, was a prime consideration. Sliding doors from the main bedroom and some other rooms were fitted with easy to operate lock units to allow a quick exit, if required.

In case of a power blackout, an emergency lighting system with a battery backup has been installed, which enables the front door, main bedroom and kitchen areas to be illuminated to enable safe movement until power is restored.

At times Angela required assistance to enter or move about their previous home due to inherent access barriers, including a number of steps on entering the property.

This new house has enabled Angela to achieve a new level of independence, which would not have been possible without moving to another property.

Through the process of working with a builder/developer it has been possible for Angela and her family to achieve the effective adaptation of an existing building design to provide an improved accessible housing environment, responsive to their particular lifestyle requirements.

## Home Sweet Home

Designing housing to respond to the needs of all people, across a range of disciplines, can achieve improved access for everybody.

The basic requirements of a house do not alter, as we all have to sleep, eat and spend time in private spaces. However, our lifestyle and living requirements do change over time, sometimes dramatically, due to circumstances beyond our control.

## Award for Housing for Older Australians

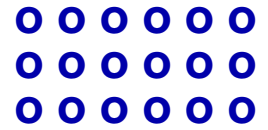
The National Lifestyle Housing for Seniors Award is a joint initiative of the Commonwealth Government and Master Builders Australia. It recognises the Australian building industry's significant role in developing innovative housing options for older Australians and is an opportunity for the building industry to showcase their innovative designs to meet the diverse needs of older people.

These awards are part of the Master Builders National Awards where builders from across Australia compete for various awards for excellence in building. For further information see: [www.masterbuilders.com.au/awards/lifestyle.html](http://www.masterbuilders.com.au/awards/lifestyle.html)

## Did you know ?

- That adaptable design can effectively extend the usability of housing for everybody, by providing for 'aging in place', without the need to undertake major, expensive renovations.
- That just eight per cent of Australians over the age of seventy years old live in aged care homes.
- That John Callahan, who is a cartoonist with spinal cord injury, once said that "I only flirt with girls who look like they have ground-floor apartments".
- That Universal Design is logical, functional design .
- That about eighty eight per cent of Australians aged sixty five years and over own their home outright.
- That developing an accessible built environment is an investment in our own future.
- That one definition of adaptable housing is a house where you can push all unwanted furniture into a spare room in three minutes and have a swinging party going in four. (*accessible, of course*)
- That the Victorian Government has launched Disability Online, at [www.disability.vic.gov.au](http://www.disability.vic.gov.au), an online resource for people with a disability, families and carers.

## New TGSi Standard

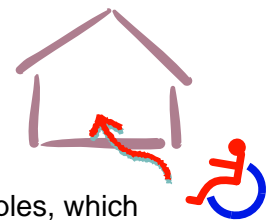


AS/NZS 1428.4:2002 : Design for access and mobility - Tactile Indicators has now been released after a lengthy review process and is current from 28 November 2002. It can be purchased from Standards Australia as a hard copy or can be downloaded from their web site at [www.standards.com.au](http://www.standards.com.au)

This Standard is applicable to the internal and external built environment and sets out requirements for the design and application of tactile ground surface indicators to ensure safe and dignified mobility of people who are blind or vision-impaired. Individuals or organisations involved with the application of TGSIs should become familiar with the requirements of AS 1428.4:2002, as there are a number of changes to the previous AS 1428.4 – 1992, which is now superseded.

## Universal - Adaptable - Accessible

Various philosophies are available to assist with the design and construction of functional housing that can be flexible to changing needs.



*Universal Design* is outlined in seven basic principles, which encourages design that provides for equitable, safe and flexible use by all persons.

*Adaptable Design* is used to describe a building that is not initially accessible, but is able to be easily modified or extended later.

*Accessible Design* describes the concept of designing and constructing housing to cater for the accessibility needs of most people by using established building codes and access standards.

## AAA Website

Details about services provided by Access Audits Australia can be found on our web site at [www.accessauditsaustralia.com.au](http://www.accessauditsaustralia.com.au)

Our site is designed to be accessible for all users. It has AAA W3C level compliance and is AAA Bobby approved. Earlier Access News editions can be downloaded and there are also links to other relevant access related web sites.

Information contained in **Access News** is intended to highlight the importance of improving access for every person

*Disclaimer:* Whilst every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication, Access Audits Australia does not accept any responsibility for inaccuracies, omissions, incorrect information or action taken as a result of any advice given or information conveyed in this publication.