



**Report on the Progress
of the
National Dialogue on Universal Housing Design
2010-2014**



Australian Network
for Universal
Housing Design



January 2015

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Executive Summary

In 2010, the National Dialogue for Universal Housing Design (National Dialogue) representing government, housing industry and community sectors identified the need to improve the provision of accessible and well-designed housing with choice for people with disability about where they live (National Dialogue, 2010). They agreed to the voluntary transformation of housing practices with an aspirational target for **all new housing to provide specified minimum access features by 2020**. Interim targets were also set. Livable Housing Australia, a not-for-profit company was charged with the task of implementing the agreement in 2011 and was funded by the Australian Government for the first four years.

The National Dialogue agreed that progress towards the achievement of the targets should be reviewed in 2013. As no review has been undertaken, the Australian Network for Universal Housing Design (ANUHD) and Rights and Inclusion Australia (RIA), provide this report in its place.

The report finds that, in spite of the support of the Australian Government and the sustained efforts of Livable Housing Australia, the housing industry, as a whole, has failed to show signs of voluntary systemic transformation. A generous estimation is that the current voluntary approach will achieve less than 5% of the National Dialogue's 2020 target.

It also finds that:

1. The National Dialogue agreement, with its aspirational target of all new housing providing specified minimum access features by 2020, has been referenced in policy documents at all levels of government, and is considered to be the key strategy in the National Disability Strategy's Outcome 1 with regard to improving access in residential communities;
2. The housing industry leaders continue to support the idea of a voluntary approach outlined in the National Dialogue agreement and prefer this to regulation under the National Construction Code/Building Code of Australia (NCC/BCA);
3. The 2013 target has not been met and the National Dialogue's targets for following years are also not likely to be met. The housing industry is not sufficiently incentivised to make real progress towards these targets;

The housing industry, as a whole, has failed to show signs of voluntary systemic transformation.

A generous estimation is that the current voluntary approach will achieve less than 5% of the National Dialogue's 2020 target.

4. The ongoing commitment by the housing industry to the National Dialogue agreement is in question, given the poor response to requests to contribute to this review. The lack of response from the three representative development companies and the peak housing industry body, the Housing Industry Association, is disappointing and of particular concern;
5. Evidence of the progress outside of LHA's formal certification process is difficult to verify. The actual outputs are variously unavailable, hidden, or difficult to obtain; and
6. Government intervention will be necessary to stimulate industry supply or buyer demand to the extent needed for the National Dialogue's 2020 target to be met.

ANUHD and RIA recommend that the Australian Government:

1. **Continue to support the 2020 target** and interim targets agreed to by the National Dialogue in 2010 as part of its National Disability Strategy;
2. **Evaluate the progress** of the housing industry towards these targets; and
3. **Assess the impact of minimum access features in all new housing** on:
 - The **housing industry**, for both Class 1 and Class 2 dwellings, including potential construction cost-savings by adopting national housing codes and requirements;
 - **Individual residents**, including their ability to visit family and friends, contribute to family and community life, and to modify housing later to cater for access requirements over the lifetime of the dwelling.
 - The **National Disability Insurance Scheme's** cost projections for home modifications, equipment and home-based support.
 - The Aged Care reforms, in particular, the **Home Care Packages Program** in keeping older people supported at home for as long as possible.
 - **Commonwealth, State and Territory public health, and aged-care budgets**, including the use of acute care hospitals, specialised residential facilities as alternative housing, and home modification services.

Incorporate minimum access requirements in the NCC/BCA for all new and extensively modified housing as a matter of priority.

If the LHA **2015 target of 50%** of all new housing with Silver level features is not met:

4. **Incorporate minimum access requirements in the NCC/BCA for all new and extensively modified housing as a matter of priority.** This should be done in conjunction with the Access to Premises Standard review; and
5. **Support Standards Australia to develop specific disability-related standards** for specialist housing based on the LHA Platinum Level.

Introduction

In 2009, the Australian Government called together housing industry leaders, community leaders and others to address the lack of inclusive housing in Australia. Called the National Dialogue on Universal Housing Design (National Dialogue), the group agreed to a national guideline and a strategic plan with the aspirational goal that *“all new homes will be of an agreed Universal Housing Design standard by 2020 with interim targets to be set within that 10-year period”* (National Dialogue, 2010). This commitment has been included in the Council of Australian Governments’ (COAG’s) National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (Australian Government, 2011), as an activity for Outcome 1, Policy Direction 3; *Improved provision of accessible and well-designed housing with choice for people with disability about where they live.*

As no review has been done, the Australian Network for Universal Housing Design and Rights and Inclusion Australia took the initiative to prepare this report.

The National Dialogue agreed to a series of ongoing reviews at two to three year intervals across the 10-year period from 2010-2020. The first of these reviews was planned for 2013. As no review has been done, the Australian Network for Universal Housing Design and Rights and Inclusion Australia took the initiative to prepare this report.

The authors

The **Australian Network for Universal Housing Design (ANUHD)** is a national network of designers, builders, researchers and home occupants who believe that housing is a vital infrastructure which should respond to the Australians’ current and future needs. ANUHD was an original member of the National Dialogue.

Rights and Inclusion Australia (RIA) is an Associate Member Organisation of RI Global. One of its aims is to organise, co-ordinate, sanction and promote initiatives that protect and advance the rights, inclusion, rehabilitation and crucial services for persons with disabilities and their families.

In 2011, ANUHD agreed to actively support the voluntary approach until it could assess the level of engagement of the housing industry and its progress towards the 2020 target. ANUHD conducted a monthly teleconference with interested people across Australia. The minutes of these meetings are distributed by email to all ANUHD members, and through social media. ANUHD and RIA have also sought information directly from National Dialogue members and LHA, and invited their participation in their forums.

The purpose of the National Dialogue

The National Dialogue was established by the Australian Government in 2009 following Australia's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. This ratification requires the Australian Government to promote the right for people with disability to access all aspects of the physical and social environment on an equal basis with others.

The Convention not only directs how housing assistance is offered (that is, people have the right "to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others" (United Nations, 2007 Article 19)), but it also challenges how housing is currently designed ("the design of . . . environments, . . . [should] be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design" (United Nations, 2007 Article 4)).

The Australian Government brought together representatives from all levels of government, and key stakeholder groups from the ageing, disability and community support sectors and the residential building and property industry "to improve the availability of Livable Housing and get industry and disability groups working together to promote it" (Shorten, 2010). The members of the National Dialogue in 2010 were:

- Australian Human Rights Commission
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian Network for Universal Housing Design
- COTA Australia
- Grocon
- Housing Industry Association
- Lend Lease
- Master Builders Australia
- National People with Disabilities and Carers Council
- Office of the Disability Council of NSW
- Property Council of Australia
- Real Estate Institute of Australia
- Stockland

The ratification of the CRPD requires the Australian Government to promote the right for people with disability to access all aspects of the physical and social environment on an equal basis with others.

The National Dialogue acknowledged that most homes have not been designed or built to include universal design principles to facilitate access by all.

The National Dialogue acknowledged that most homes have not been designed or built to include universal design principles to facilitate access by all. They agreed to a national guideline and strategic plan with the aspirational goal that ***all new homes will be of an agreed Universal Housing Design standard by 2020 with interim targets to be set within that 10-year period*** (National Dialogue, 2010). The National Dialogue set interim targets for the adoption of the guidelines in order to gauge the uptake and improvement in awareness of Universal Housing Design over that period of 10 years. The agreed interim targets for uptake by the general community were:

- 25 per cent to Silver level by 2013
- 50 per cent to Silver level by 2015
- 75 per cent to Silver level by 2018
- 100 per cent to Silver level by 2020

The targets for the uptake of the Guidelines by the Commonwealth and the States and Territories were:

- 100 per cent to Silver level by 2011
- 50 per cent to Gold level by 2014
- 75 per cent to Gold level by 2017
- 100 per cent to Gold level by 2019

“All new homes will be of an agreed Universal Housing Design standard by 2020 with interim targets to be set within that 10-year period.”
(National Dialogue, 2010)

In June 2011, Dialogue members agreed to establish a not-for-profit company, Livable Housing Australia (LHA), to drive the strategic directions set down by the National Dialogue and to champion the Livable Housing Design (LHD) Guidelines across Australia to meet these targets (Livable Housing Australia, 2012a).

Activities to date

ANUHD and RIA are aware of the following activities since the National Dialogue agreement:

Government activities

- a. The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 reported that “The Australian Government is working with representatives from all levels of government, key stakeholders from the disability, ageing and community support sectors and the residential building and property industry on the National Dialogue on Universal Design to ensure that housing is designed and developed to be more accessible and adaptable” (Australian Government, 2011, p. 34).
- b. The former Victorian Labor Government made a policy commitment in 2010 to amend the NCC/BCA to mandate four accessibility features in new housing; supported by a favourable cost/benefit analysis (Victorian Government, 2010). The features were:
 1. a clear path from the street (or car set-down/park) to a level entry;
 2. wider doorways and passages;
 3. a toilet suitable for people with disability on the entry level; and
 4. reinforced bathroom walls to allow for grab rails.
- c. In 2012-2013, the ACT Government planned to amend the NCC/BCA for Class 1 dwellings to adopt numerous accessibility features.
- d. Various governments at State and local levels promptly cited LHD guidelines in their policy statements as the key strategy for more inclusive communities. Some examples are: the Queensland Government’s Disability Action Plan 2011-2014 (Queensland Government, 2011); the proposed housing strategy for South Australia (Government of South Australia, 2011); and Brisbane City Council’s Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017 (Brisbane City Council, 2011).
- e. The Productivity Commission’s report into Care for Older Australians cited the National Dialogue agreement as the key strategy to improve the supply of suitable housing for older people, and reported that “the housing industry has embraced these guidelines and developed a plan which includes an aspirational target of having all new homes meet the guidelines by 2020” (Productivity Commission, 2011, p. 280).

Various governments at State and local levels promptly cited LHD guidelines in their policy statements as the key strategy for more inclusive communities.

Livable Housing Australia's activities

As noted above, LHA was established in 2011 to implement the recommendations of the National Dialogue. Initially funded by the Australian Government, it also seeks financial assistance from the industry and from community supporters.

(Livable Housing Australia, 2013b). Its key strategies are:

- supporting industry best practice through the LHD Guidelines;
- certifying dwellings that comply with the Guidelines;
- encouraging government, the housing industry and buyers to implement the LHD guidelines; and
- establishing an accreditation mechanism and training registered assessors on Livable Housing Design (Livable Housing Australia, 2012b).

LHA have issued 350 certificates across Australia for projects (either designed or built) that comply with the Silver, Gold or Platinum Levels outlined in the LHD Guidelines.

LHA reported the following outputs to the RIA/Standards Australia Forum on 18 November 2014:

1. LHA have issued over 350 certificates total across Australia for projects (either designed or built) that comply with the Silver, Gold or Platinum Levels outlined in the LHD Guidelines. LHA has issued 55 as-built certificates. 54 of these are Platinum level with one silver level dwelling. There are over 2050 other projects that have registered for certification.
2. 310 projects have been reviewed using the self-assessment portal since it was launched in July 2014.
3. LHA have identified 2600 other dwellings that publicly claim to have been designed or built to at least the Silver level of the LHD Guidelines but are not currently registered for certification from LHA.
4. Approximately 4000 social and affordable dwellings have been identified to date as being built over the last two years to meet at least silver level.

See **Appendix 1** for these figures in full.

ANUHD and RIA have identified a number of activities associated with the work of LHA:

- The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) has a set of guidelines that require new housing to be designed to be “adaptable”.

- The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) (Round 5) committed to give preference to projects providing Gold Level (Livable Housing Australia, 2013a); however, funding for this scheme has ceased.
- The Queensland Government reported to ANUHD that a “significant portion” of the Commonwealth Games athletes’ village is planned to provide Gold Level features. The exact figure remains unknown.
- The Green Building Council of Australia has referenced the Livable Housing Australia certification in the new version of the pilot Submission Guideline (v0.1) for the Green Star-Communities rating tool in May 2014 (email communication).
- LHA has informed ANUHD that Lendlease and Stockland, both original members of the National Dialogue, have considered including Livable Housing Design in some of their retirement village developments.

Within the estimated 140,000 approvals per year (National Housing Supply Council, 2013), ANUHD assesses that, if the housing industry met the National Dialogue targets, approximately 210,000 projects (built or designed) would be in the housing market by the mid-point of 2015, and 770,000 projects by 2020. To date, LHA estimates that approximately 9300 projects are planned or built with something like LHA silver level or above. Given the difficulties LHA have in accurately assessing the LHD housing and providing up-to-date figures, the authors included all LHA’s reported outputs (designed or built) whether verified or not. **A generous estimation is that the current voluntary approach will achieve, at best, 5% of the National Dialogue’s 2020 target.** See *Figure 1* below for a comparison of the National Dialogue targets and the LHA reported outputs.

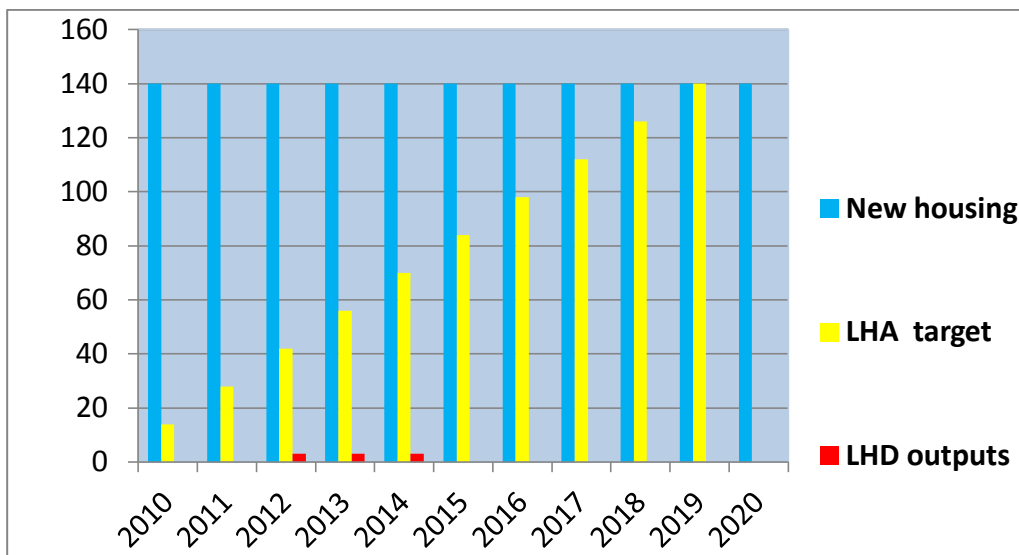


Figure 1 Graph comparing LHA outputs with National Dialogue targets

The overall figure for new housing is marked in **turquoise**.

The National Dialogue targets are marked in **yellow**.

The LHA recorded and anticipated outputs are marked in **red**.

ANUHD and RIA activities

Since 2012, ANUHD and RIA together and separately have monitored the activities of the housing industry towards the 2020 target:

a) National forum on 27 November 2012 (Canberra)

RIA hosted a public forum in Canberra which recommended the following:

- I. As Australia has an ageing population and has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), a stronger national strategy for more accessible and livable housing is urgently required;
- II. Whilst voluntary codes may assist governments and some developers, the general building industry requires a mandatory, regulatory process to ensure implementation;
- III. The recommended mandatory, regulatory process should combine available existing resources including Livable Housing Australia Guidelines, relevant Australian Standards and the Building Code of Australia; and
- IV. A mandatory process should also regulate to ensure visitability and accessibility of the surrounding built environments.

Participants . . . identified it was time to lobby government for regulation, while supporting the ongoing work of LHA in preparing the housing industry.

b) National forum on 7 November 2013 (Sydney):

ANUHD with RIA, Stockland and Livable Housing Australia hosted a forum in the Sydney offices of Stockland on **7 November 2013** and invited the National Dialogue members, industry, government and consumer representatives to answer the question: *“How to reach the 2020 target of Livable Housing Design Australia?”*

The Forum participants recommended:

- I. uniform, simplified standards for all mainstream housing to provide a “level playing field” for the housing industry with those standards to be incorporated into the Building Code of Australia;
- II. incentives and education for builders and buyers; and
- III. a system that simplified the accessibility requirements in housing.

See **Appendix 2** for a summary of the recommendations.

c) National Forum 9 May 2014 (Brisbane):

ANUHD with RIA and ten other organisations hosted a follow-up forum in Brisbane. The forum participants identified that action towards the 2020 target needed to be multi-layered. In the absence of evidence of significant progress towards the 2020 target, the workshop participants concluded that the responsibility for taking the

lead towards more inclusive residential communities rested with governments rather than with housing industry. They endorsed the three-pronged approach identified on 7 November 2013; and identified it was time to lobby government for regulation, while supporting the ongoing work of LHA in preparing the housing industry. They supported:

- I. continued advocacy for minimum access requirements for new housing in the NCC/BCA;
- II. calling the National Dialogue to account; and
- III. ongoing awareness-raising of all stakeholders (through activities comparable to those of LHA).

See **Appendix 3** for a summary of the recommendations.

d) **Survey of the Members of the National Dialogue**

ANUHD, supported by RIA, wrote to all National Dialogue members (plus the federated State-based Master Builders Associations) on **6 March 2014**. The letter outlined the LHA-reported achievements to date. It then sought answers to **four questions** based on the outcomes of the 7 November 2013 workshop:

1. *What does your organisation consider to be the barriers facing Livable Housing Australia in implementing the National Dialogue's Strategic Plan?*
2. *What do you consider is required to reach the National Dialogue's target of all new housing providing minimum access features by 2020?*
3. *What is your response to the 7 November 2013 Forum recommendation; that is, to "provide uniform, simplified standard for all mainstream housing to provide a 'level playing field' for the housing industry – through the Building Code of Australia"?*
4. *What action does your organisation intend to take in the next three years to support the work of Livable Housing Australia?*

ANUHD sent reminder emails on **20 March 2014** and **28 March 2014** to recipients who had not responded. Only eight of the twenty-four individuals and organisations originally represented on the National Dialogue responded formally to the letter.

See **Appendix 4** for a complete list of the responders.

All but one responder (Belinda Epstein-Frisch for the former National Disability and

Only eight of the twenty-four individuals and organisations originally represented on the National Dialogue responded formally to the ANUHD's letter.

Carer Council) supported the current strategy of Livable Housing Australia.

See **Appendix 5** for the responses to each question.

e) **Draft amendments to the NCC/BCA proposed by RIA:**

RIA has developed a proposed amendment to the NCC/BCA to demonstrate how very minor amendments to the NCC/BCA could lead to significant improvement in the accessibility of residential buildings.

See **Appendix 6** for RIA's proposed amendment.

This work by RIA is consistent with the findings of the Victorian Government Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) (Victorian Government, 2010) which found that the inclusion of four accessibility features in new homes "would have a major accessibility impact for people with a disability and for the wider community" (p. 18).

See **Appendix 7** for the minimum access features recommended in the Victorian RIS.

f) **Survey of State and Territory Housing Ministers**

ANUHD wrote to all State and Territory Housing Ministers requesting they report on their **achievements in the built form** to date as of October 2014.

Their replies are summarised in 0.

All State and Territory Housing Ministers have committed to providing access features a percentage of public housing to have some access features. The take-up of the Livable Housing Design guidelines is variable; with Western Australia not committing to the National Dialogue agreement (but to the National Disability Strategy) and Northern Territory and ACT citing Australian Standard 4299. Other States (South Australia and Western Australia) have developed their own standards. Only two Ministers (Tasmania and Western Australia) gave as-built figures for public housing complying with LHD guidelines that has been built since the National Dialogue.

In summary, the response is variable across Australia. While the percentage of public housing that has some access features is significant, there are no benchmarks on the standard of that housing and they have not met the agreed targets (See p. 5).

g) **Access Standards & Housing Forum - 18 November 2014 (Sydney)**

The RIA Forum was hosted by Standards Australia with over 50 attendees. Forum morning sessions included Indigenous way-finding and housing, update on Standards Australia access standards, proposed Communication Access Symbol, accessible and 'livable' housing, presentations about the ABCB, pending APS 2015 review and housing policies in Australia. These topics were discussed by all attendees during afternoon workshops.

Housing sessions agreed that the Access to Premises Standard review is an opportunity to resolve a number of technical aspects and mandate more equitable

housing. There is a need to engage with and influence the ABCB process and this requires a 'strong rationale for engagement by federal policy makers' to include housing in the 2015 APS review.

In summary, since 2012, RIA and ANUHD have been unable to identify any meaningful sign of systemic transformation within the housing industry towards the National Dialogue's voluntary approach. Further, the groups that have consulted with RIA and ANUHD are now recognising the need for government intervention, if the 2020 target is to be met.

Conclusions

The report finds that, in spite of the support of the Australian Government and the sustained efforts of Livable Housing Australia, the housing industry, as a whole, has failed to show signs of voluntary systemic transformation. A generous estimation is that the current voluntary approach will achieve less than 5% of the National Dialogue's 2020 target.

It also finds that:

1. The National Dialogue agreement, with its aspirational target of all new housing providing specified minimum access features by 2020, has been referenced in policy documents at all levels of government, and is considered to be the key strategy in the National Disability Strategy's Outcome 1 with regard to improving equitable access in residential communities;
2. The housing industry leaders continue to support the idea of a voluntary approach outlined in the National Dialogue agreement and prefer this to regulation under the National Construction Code/Building Code of Australia (NCC/BCA);
3. The 2013 target has not been met and the National Dialogue's targets for following years are also not likely to be met. The housing industry is not sufficiently incentivised to make real progress towards these targets;
4. The ongoing commitment by the housing industry to the National Dialogue agreement is in question, given the poor response to requests to contribute to this review. The lack of response from the three representative development companies and the peak housing industry body, the Housing Industry Association, is disappointing and of particular concern;
5. Evidence of the progress outside of LHA's formal certification process is difficult to verify. The actual outputs are variously unavailable, hidden, or difficult to obtain; and
6. Government intervention will be necessary to stimulate industry supply or buyer demand to the extent needed for the National Dialogue's 2020 target to be met.

The housing industry, as a whole, has failed to show signs of voluntary systemic transformation. A generous estimation is that the current voluntary approach will achieve less than 5% of the National Dialogue's 2020 target.

Recommendations

ANUHD and RIA recommend that the Australian Government:

1. **Continue to support the 2020 target** and interim targets agreed to by the National Dialogue in 2010 as part of its National Disability Strategy;
2. **Evaluate the progress** of the housing industry towards these targets; and
3. **Assess the impact of minimum access features in all new housing** on:
 - The **housing industry**, for both Class 1 and Class 2 dwellings, including potential construction cost-savings by adopting national housing codes and requirements;
 - **Individual residents**, including their ability to visit family and friends, contribute to family and community life, and to modify housing later to cater for access requirements over the lifetime of the dwelling.
 - The **National Disability Insurance Scheme's** cost projections for home modifications, equipment and home-based support.
 - The Aged Care reforms, in particular, the **Home Care Packages Program** in keeping older people supported at home for as long as possible.
 - **Commonwealth, State and Territory public health, and aged-care budgets**, including the use of acute care hospitals, specialised residential facilities as alternative housing, and home modification services.

If the LHA **2015 target of 50%** of all new housing with Silver level features is not met:

4. **Incorporate minimum access requirements in the NCC/BCA for all new and extensively modified housing as a matter of priority. This should be done in conjunction with the Access to Premises Standard review;** and
5. **Support Standards Australia to develop specific disability-related standards for specialist housing** based on the LHA Platinum Level.

The Australian Government should continue to support the 2020 target and interim targets agreed to by the National Dialogue in 2010 as part of its National Disability Strategy.

Incorporate minimum access requirements in the NCC/BCA for all new and extensively modified housing as a matter of priority.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Achievements towards the National Dialogue's targets

Livable Housing Australia presented the following outputs by the housing industry at the RIA Forum on 18 November 2014 (Sydney):

Over 350 dwellings have achieved a formal liveability certification since the launch of the Scheme in early 2013.

- 148 Platinum Design Rating
- 148 Gold Design Rating
- 30 Silver Design Rating
- 54 Platinum As Built Rating
- 1 Silver Final As Built Rating

2050 dwellings are currently registered for certification.

- This means they are in the process of being assessed for a design rating.
- This includes a mix of standalone dwellings, medium density and high density developments.
- 85 per cent of these properties are in the private market.

310 dwellings/projects have been reviewed using the self-assessment portal since it was launched in July 2014.

Approximately 4000 social and affordable housing dwellings have been identified to date as being built over the past 2 years to meet, at least the silver level, of the LHD Guidelines.¹

2600 dwellings connected to a range of projects have been identified as meeting, at a minimum, the silver level of the LHD Guidelines. These projects have made public statements of compliance and are a mix of built product and projects under construction.

¹ See Appendix 8 for the responses from State and Territory Housing Ministers to ANUHD regarding their adoption of Livable Housing Design Guidelines.

Appendix 2. Recommendations from the Sydney Forum.
Workshop on 7 November 2013 at Stockland Offices, Sydney
How to reach the 2020 target of Livable Housing Australia?

Summary of recommendations

Recommendations by workshop participants	Score
<p>Provide national regulation</p> <p>Provide uniform, simplified standard for all mainstream housing to provide a “level playing field” for the housing industry –through the Building Code of Australia.</p>	32
<p>Develop incentives</p> <p>Develop incentives for LHA certification, faster approvals for developers, and as a criterion for 1st home owner grants.</p>	23
<p>Educate builders and consumers</p> <p>Ensure CPD as a prerequisite for registration.</p> <p>Make it a core subject in design and building education.</p> <p>Make Livable Housing Design aspirational through the mainstream media.</p>	21
<p>Make it simple for builders</p> <p>Use App with design elements, harmonising codes and standards, pattern books and terminology.</p>	18
<p>Incentivise builders to help drive delivery</p> <p>Explore various options; e.g., faster approvals through council, stamp duty concessions, GST exempt for accessible components, industry awards, requirements for first home owner grants etc.</p>	11
<p>Improve research and data in the area of housing design</p> <p>Consider liveable dwellings as a national resource to be tracked—to monitor supply and demand, and spill-over effects to other policy areas.</p>	10
<p>Provide education</p> <p>Educate industry to assist buyers. To be able to sell it, it is important to educate sales staff.</p>	8
<p>Make information available</p> <p>Include Liveability indicators in real estate information – display homes and interactive displays.</p>	7
<p>Develop awareness campaign</p> <p>Target a media campaign using aspirational terminology –targeting the LHA 2020 goal.</p>	6

**Appendix 3. Actions identified at the Brisbane Forum
Report on the Recommendations* from the
“Delivering our Housing Future” Forum
Friday 9 May 2014**

<p>Keep doing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to advocate vigorously for enhancements to BCA based on what we know will deliver. • Keep all signatories of the Kirribilli Dialogue to account for their commitment to the aspirational target of all new housing reaching Silver Level by 2020 by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ demanding accurate and timely data and progress reports; ○ promoting work of Livable Housing Australia, in particular, that Livable Housing Design is easy and doable, and promotes inclusion and sustainability. • Continue to educate, communicate and raise awareness with all stakeholders.
<p>Stop doing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop aligning universal housing design to people with disability and older people only; • Stop expecting the housing industry to self-regulate; • Stop accepting the inaction of government authorities with regard to the lack of inclusive housing
<p>Start doing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively lobby for regulation; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consider an incremental approach ○ think beyond building costs (cost/benefit analysis for health and aging in place); ○ find champions with a good story stressing the economic imperatives ○ get leverage from the NDIS campaign. • **Continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ convince home owners to make the economic investment in livable houses while they are working ○ consider incentives/levy ○ seek market good prototypes ○ influence and education in schools and universities ○ encourage certifiers to become accredited Livable Housing Australia assessors ○ encourage local governments to include LHDG in ordinances.

*This summary is developed by the organising committee of the Forum from the list of responses gathered in the afternoon workshop.

While these actions were not specifically directed to **Livable Housing Australia, they are already within LHA’s strategic plan.

Sponsors:

Anti-Discrimination Commission (Queensland)	Queensland Action for Universal Housing
Australian Network for Universal Housing Design	Design
Council for the Ageing (Queensland)	Queensland Advocacy Incorporated
Deicke Richards Architects	Queenslanders with Disability Network
Griffith University	Spinal Injuries Australia
Queensland University of Technology	Standards Australia
	Urban Design Alliance (Queensland)

Appendix 4. List of responders to ANUHD's letter

	Company	date	type
1	Australian Human Rights Commission		No formal response
2	Australian Institute of Architects	1 April 2014	letter
3	Australian Local Government Association		No formal response
4	COTA	2 April 2014	Email supporting LHA letter
5	Grocon		No formal response
6	Housing Industry Association		No response
7	Lend Lease		No response
8	Livable Housing Australia	1 April 2014	letter
9	Master Builders Association ACT	10 April 2014	Email response
10	Master Builders Association Australia	24 March 2014	Email response
11	Master Builders Association Newcastle		No response
12	Master Builders Association NSW		No response
13	Master Builders Association NT		No response
14	Master Builders Association Queensland		No formal response
15	Master Builders Association SA	17 March 2014	email
16	Master Builders Association Tas		No response
17	Master Builders Association VIC		No response
18	Master Builders Association WA		No formal response
19	Dougie Herd (formerly Disability Council NSW)		No formal response
20	Belinda Epstein-Frisch (formerly NDCC)	19 March 2014	letter
21	Property Council of Australia	29 April 2014	letter
22	Real Estate Institute of Australia		No response
23	Stockland		No formal response
24	Victorian Building Authority	25 March 2014	letter

Appendix 5. Responses to the four questions

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
<p>What does your organisation consider to be the barriers facing Livable Housing Australia in implementing the Dialogue’s Strategic Plan?</p>	<p>What do you consider is required to reach the Dialogue’s 2020 target of all new housing providing Silver level features by 2020?</p>	<p>What is your response to the 2013 Workshop recommendation; that is “provide uniform, simplified standard for all mainstream housing to provide a ‘level playing field’ for the housing industry through the Building Code of Australia”?</p>	<p>What action does your organisation intend to take in the next three years to support the work of Livable Housing Australia to reach the 2020 target?</p>
<p>Australian Institute of Architects The agreed targets for an increase in livable housing are ambitious and rightly so, in order to achieve the much needed improvements amongst Australia’s housing stock.</p>	<p>“However, I believe we also need to be mindful of the importance of establishing a strong foundation in order to facilitate the best chance of achieving those targets.”</p>	<p>“We believe that a voluntary, market driven strategy involving a partnership between industry, government and consumers is the desired approach.”</p>	<p>“The Institute is committed to a more livable Australia and we will continue to actively contribute in pursuit of that goal.</p>
<p>Belinda Epstein-Frisch (former member of NDCC, currently with Family Advocacy) The major barriers facing Livable Housing Australia in implementing the Dialogue’s Strategic Plan include ignorance, complacency and a sense that upgraded standards through Livable Housing Australia will cost more.</p>	<p>Community education may be useful but can never be sufficient to change entrenched practices.</p>	<p>participants [at the November workshop] recommended national regulation as the most likely approach to reach the Dialogue’s target of having all new housing providing Silver level features by 2020.</p>	<p>Family Advocacy most strongly supports the view that the Building Code of Australia is the vehicle to require the application of universal design principles in housing. Family Advocacy will pursue the requirement for regulation through advocacy at the Commonwealth and State level.</p>

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
<p>Livable Housing Australia supported by COTA No response.</p>	<p>We remain committed to our voluntary, market driven approach and to working in partnership with industry, consumers and governments to deliver livable design outcomes for all Australians.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the Workshop recommendations that you have cited in your letter however do not necessarily agree with your evaluation. From our reading it is clear that educating builders to help drive delivery actually was the most rated recommendation (Recommendations 3,4,7 combined). This is a key focus and business area for LHA and we believe it will lead to the outcomes you are equally committed to achieving.”</p>	<p>We will be communicating our progress to the Commonwealth Government in July [2014]. “[The significant progress to date] will be further enhanced by our new online assessment portal and website which is due to be launched shortly.”</p>
<p>Master Builders Association</p>			<p>Master Builders will continue its support for the greater adoption of the Livable Housing Design Guidelines. Our commitment is demonstrated in a number of tangible ways including the delivery of awareness/training programs to its members, its promotion on our own website and of course my own personal involvement as a Director of Livable Housing Australia.</p>

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
<p>Master Builders Association ACT The barriers, we believe, are communicating to our members that incorporating Livable Housing Design Guideline elements into the construction of a house, or unit, will not result in excessive additional costs. I also believe that one of the barriers is regulating or mandating universal housing design guidelines in the NCC. Such a move would give builders the option to increase costs and use the universal design guidelines as a reason for increasing those costs when, in fact, in practice a large number of the features incorporated in the Livable Housing Design Guidelines are already incorporated with little or no extra cost. In other words, some of these practices have become normal practice and is now seen as progressive design.</p>	<p>We have certainly reached the 25% silver level, but this would need to be confirmed by undertaking a survey of housing and unit stock in the Territory. As I have stated above, it is now fairly common practice in the majority of residential projects, apart from some of the first home buyer product, that features are included incorporating at least silver level. However, if statistical data confirms that we are not progressing at the desired level, then we collectively need to develop a promotional strategy for all the key industry players including architects, developers and builders. This strategy should explain that silver level can be achieved by a sensible voluntary approach without adding excessive costs and without the need for a mandatory regulatory approach.</p>	<p>My concern with the regulatory approach is that builders and developers will immediately see this as an additional cost impost, whereas the voluntary approach is adopted as best practice without excessive add-on costs. The voluntary approach should be given every opportunity to develop the agreed targets without the need for mandating requirements in the NCC.</p>	<p>Master Builders ACT totally supports the voluntary approach supported by Livable Housing Australia and will promote the benefits and the market edge for builders who incorporate features to the silver level standard, with the objective of achieving this outcome by 2020. I believe that we now have the design issues around level access/non-threshold requirements resolved with issues regarding termite barriers and DPC levels. We still have some practical design issues that need to be resolved, but we are confident that this is achievable and will continue to partner with Livable Housing Australia in resolving these issues.</p>

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
<p>Master Builders Association SA Industry will need to be encouraged to accept such an initiative. A major barrier to implementing the strategic plan will be the additional costs associated with meeting these requirements and its impact on housing affordability. It will also be essential to ensure Silver Level provisions are able to be designed into buildings. This may not be possible in every situation. Increased industry awareness is required to ensure that initial concept designs pick up accessibility issues at the design stage</p>	<p>A greater understanding of the principles for Liveable Housing needs to occur in both the Community and Industry. Master Builders SA has always expressed the view that Liveable Housing must be voluntary because of the additional cost implications involved, a mandatory scheme would simply be cost prohibitive in the current market. To reach these targets incentives will be required. Tax concessions or higher first home owner grants could be considered. Rather than mandating requirements it may be better if incentives were offered via tax concessions or additional grants to cover any additional costs.</p>	<p>Master Builders SA does not support mandating Liveable Housing requirements in the BCA. Although the word “mainstream” is used, not all designs are suitable to Liveable Housing. Difficult to access sites are a challenge and achieving Silver Level may have significant cost implications for these types of dwellings. For example, a lift for a class 1 building with garage on ground level with the site rising from the street level. In this situation a lift would be costly but may be the only practical solution to achieve mobility impaired access. Additionally, not all builders have products that are easy to access. Transportable buildings are an example and are invariably built up of the ground. The increase in small narrow sites or sites rising significantly from road level also present problems.</p>	<p>Master Builders SA will work in a collaborative way to support the work of Liveable Housing Australia and assist in educating and preparing our members for implementation of a voluntary universal housing design standard. In consultation LHA and the Master Builders SA have agreed to issue information and education collateral from LHA to our members through our many media forums including e-newsletter, print material, digital media and television.</p>

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
<p>Victorian Building Authority The main barriers appear to be 'What is the benefit in providing these design options?' and 'Will designing to the LHA guidelines help with additional sales of dwellings?' These are the common questions raised by builders and developers. There does not appear to be a tangible benefit for the builders. There will not be any cost savings such as there are in developing energy efficient houses for example. The social benefits of the guidelines do not appear to rate highly with volume builders</p>	<p>Awareness of the provisions and benefits by designers, builders, developers, home owners, community in general, builders and developers providing design options for their various styles of dwelling. Having a major volume builder come on board with LHA and be a champion of the cause.</p>	<p>If industry do not take up the guidelines voluntarily then regulating for them is an option through the National Construction Code (NCC). To have this considered by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) would require the development of the evidence as to why the guidelines should be regulated for. The costs, benefits (and who would benefit) would be important to know. The process for development of new provisions to be included in the NCC is 2-3 years.</p>	<p>The Victorian State Disability Plan makes mention of supporting LHA and this work commitment needs to flow through to Government building work.</p>

<p>Question 1 Property Council of Australia Governments: At present, none of Australia’s nine governments are taking the[ir current] opportunities. –this is a major barrier to achieving the goals stated in the Dialogue’s strategic plan.</p> <p>Private sector At present, there is no demonstrable or significant demand for ‘livable’ or universal design features. This makes the task of changing industry practices extremely difficult. In addition, the incorporation of ‘livability design’ elements increases the cost of dwellings. There is a widespread perception even by those committed to this agenda that such costs are considerable. Furthermore, many developers, builders and their marketing agents are of the strong view that some elements of the LHA guidelines detract from consumer appeal – that is, the guidelines foster design outcomes counter to the design attributes sought by consumers. This is particularly the case in relation to bathroom design – a critical factor in consumer decision-making.</p> <p>Community advocates We are unaware of any efforts by other community groups to directly assist LHA meet the objectives of the Dialogue.</p>	<p>Question 2 Governments Governments should deploy their purchasing power to require LHA compliance in all housing-related programs. That is, access to taxpayer support should be contingent on: a) meeting a prescribed LHA Silver, Gold or Platinum standard; and, b) attaining LHA certification that the standard has been met. This requirement should relate to all programs, including (but not limited to) NRAs, NAHA, NDIS, Indigenous housing, Defence housing, and State government housing programs.</p> <p>Increase Industry Awareness Several programs are underway. LHA has worked with training organisations to craft a standard professional development course. This course is being rolled out by LHA, professional societies and trade bodies. More industry workshops are required. LHA is also producing newsletters that promote case studies and innovative practices relevant to its agenda. Those materials are also incorporated into various industry body and community newsletters. Several specialist and mass media organisations have publicised LHA’s Guidelines and activities. LHA does not have the budget to run more extensive awareness programs. A basic app that provides a simple entry-point to the LHA Guidelines has been produced. A growing panel of independent assessors has been established. All assessors have passed an online examination. More assessors are required.</p>	<p>Question 3 There are several elements of the workshop recommendations that support propositions outlined above. We do not agree with the categorisation of issues and thus voting outcomes listed in your attachment two. Greater regulation will create negative externalities. For instance, the cost of housing for the most needy will inevitably rise when regulatory solutions are deployed. Clearly, the extent of negative externalities will depend on the design of any regulatory approaches. The task of developing regulation that will survive a rigorous regulatory impact statement is significant and time consuming. Most critically, should government and community advocates adopt a regulatory approach, industry will inevitably re-direct its resources away from LHA to a more traditional regulation negotiation mode. LHA will lose its mandate and be forced to dissolve. LHA was designed to avoid the wasteful 17-plus year negotiation process associated with the incorporation of Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements into the Building Code of Australia</p>	<p>Question 4 This letter summarises our extensive support for the objectives and work program of LHA.</p>
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	<p>Provide Tools The forthcoming key to LHA’s success is an interactive web-based tool that will help practitioners design and build livable homes. The tool will contain in-built assessment systems and access to case studies, as well as practice notes and a database of assessors. It is anticipated that a pilot of this tool will be launched in July 2014.</p> <p>Efficient Accreditation The tool noted above will also enable online assessment of homes – this will greatly reduce paper work and compliance costs.</p> <p>Reinforce Benefits of Livable Design It is critical that the benefits of livable design be better quantified and communicated. LHA is collecting some of this data. However, other stakeholders could do far more to help make a case that will boost consumer demand by market segments.</p>	<p>(BCA). The Property Council and other industry bodies supported a “comply with the BCA to acquit obligations under the DDA” model. Nevertheless, the regulatory pathway was incredibly inefficient. A voluntary approach is superior.</p>	
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Appendix 6. Proposed draft amendments to the NCC/BCA



Proposed by RIA Network
ABN 60 149 775 100

26 June 2014

Proposed APS / BCA amendment to include accessible housing

Existing BCA extracts – and *recommended APS / BCA amendments*

Class 1 – one or more buildings which in association constitute –

- (a) Class 1a – a single dwelling being
 - (i) a detached house; or
 - (ii) one of a group of two or more attached dwellings, each being a building, separated by a fire-resisting wall, including a row house, terrace house, town house or villa unit;

Class 2 – a building containing 2 or more sole-occupancy units each being a separate dwelling.

D3.1 General building access requirements

Buildings and parts of buildings must be *accessible as required* by Table D3.1, unless exempted by D3.4.

Table D3.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Class of building	Access requirements
<i>Class 1a</i>	<i>To and within at least one floor normally used by the occupants</i>
Class 1b A boarding house, bed & breakfast, guest house, hostel or the like	To and within ... etc
Class 2 Common areas	From a pedestrian entrance required to be accessible to at least 1 floor containing sole-occupancy units and to <i>and within the</i> entrance doorway of each sole-occupancy unit located on that level.

D3.2 Access to buildings

- (a) An accessway must be provided to a building *required to be accessible* –
 - (i) From the main points of a pedestrian entry at the allotment boundary; and
 - (ii) from another *accessible* building connected by a pedestrian link; and

(iii) from any *required accessible* car parking space on the allotment

D3.4 Exemptions

The following areas are not *required* to be *accessible*:

- (a) An area where access would be inappropriate because of the particular purpose for which the area is used.
- (b) An area that would pose a health or safety risk for people with a disability.
- (c) Any path of travel providing access only to an area exempted by (a) or (b).

Table D3.5 CAR PARKING SPACES FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Class of building to which the carpark or carparking area is associated	Number of accessible carparking spaces required
<i>Class 1a</i> <i>Class 2</i>	<i>1 space for every single dwelling or 1 space for every 5 attached dwellings or sole-occupancy units.</i> <i>ISA use is optional</i>
Class 1B and 3	To be calculated by multiplying ... etc

Table F2.4(a) ACCESSIBLE UNISEX SANITARY COMPARTMENTS

Class of building	Minimum accessible unisex sanitary compartments to be provided
<i>Class 1a</i>	<i>Not less than 1 adaptable bathroom for every single dwelling, with reinforced wall areas</i>
Class 1b	Not less than 1 etc
Class 2	<i>Not less than 1 adaptable bathroom for each sole-occupancy unit, with reinforced wall areas</i> Where sanitary compartments are provided in common areas, not less than 1.

Note – these recommendations are subject to modifications of other related BCA clauses, including Section D Access & Egress: Objective, Functional Statements and Performance Requirements as applicable.

Appendix 7. Minimum access features in the Victorian Government's RIS

Report extracts

Four accessibility features have been identified which, if included in new homes, would have a major accessibility impact for people with a disability and for the wider community ((Victorian Government, 2010, p. 18).

- A clear path of travel from the street (or car set down / park) to a level entry;
- Wider doorways and passages;
- A toilet suitable for people with limited mobility on the entry level; and
- Reinforced bathroom walls to allow grab rails to be fitted inexpensively if needed later.

Estimated extra over cost of features are 0.1% to 0.3% of total unit costs (p. 68).

The RIS conclusions regarding proposed BCA changes / variations are:

- The benefits to society of the proposed variation to the BCA are expected to exceed the costs;
- The net benefits of the proposed variations are greater than those associated with any practical alternatives;
- The proposed variation does not restrict competition; and
- The proposed variation would not lead to a material change in the administrative burden on industry (p. 16).

Appendix 8. Summary of responses by State and Territory Housing Ministers.

State	Position	Response	As built Nos
QLD	The Hon. Tim Mander MP Minister for Housing and Public Works	The Department...has committed to adopting and promoting the Livable Housing Design Guidelines. The department's procurement and design requirements for new apartments and houses including houses in remote Indigenous communities, reference the Livable Housing Design Guidelines 'Gold' and 'Platinum' levels. The department requires proposals for apartment projects to maximise the number of ground-floor and lift-served apartments designed to the LHD guidelines. Up to 30% of social housing apartments in new multi-unit projects are required to meet the Platinum level, with all remaining ground-floor and lift-served apartments designed to Gold level. The minimum standard for houses is Gold level, with the Platinum standard specified for projects in response to identified client need.	No figures given
NSW	The Hon. Gabrielle Upton Minister for Family and Community Services	Aim to achieve a minimum of 50 percent of new dwellings designed with liveable housing features. The Liveable Housing standards (<i>sic.</i>) are included in the LAHC Design Standards and exceed "Gold" level of the Livable Housing Australia's <i>Livable Design Guidelines</i> .	No figures given
VIC	The Hon. Wendy Lovell MLC Minister for Housing	I can advise that the Victorian Government has consulted with the Commonwealth concerning the National Dialogue on Universal Housing Design and the Commonwealth Government has been informed of progress.	No figures given
SA	The Hon. Zoe Bettison Minister for Social Housing	It is estimated that 90% of homes constructed for Housing SA currently meet [SA Universal Housing Design] criteria. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing SA's current position for newly constructed housing is of a standard comparable with Silver and Gold levels of the NLHDG targets. • Housing SA Disability Housing which is focussed on providing for the specific needs of the occupants, almost comprehensively meets the Platinum NDLDHG targets. 	No figures given

State	Position	Response	As built Nos
TAS	The Hon. Jacquie Petrusma MP Minister for Human Services	<p>On 1 April 2012 the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services formally adopted a new policy with addressed housing design by setting minimum standards for new social housing developed by Housing Tasmania. This includes, where appropriate, affordable housing projects undertaken by the not for profit sector with Tasmanian Government support.</p> <p>The fifth objective of this policy was to establish the Liveable [sic] Housing Design Guidelines and universal housing design principles as a minimum standard for all new developments. These minimum standards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homes constructed to meet the changing needs of residents across their lifetime by ensuring they are easy to enter and move around in, are capable of easy and cost-effective adaptation for the specific needs of aged people and people with disabilities as per guidance from the Liveable [sic] Housing Design Guidelines- generally at the silver level however for kitchen, laundry and bedroom space, at Gold level. • Specialist housing for people with significant disabilities should reach the Gold and if possible the Platinum Level. • The Liveable [sic] Housing Design Guidelines will provide direction when planning for the construction of new residential developments. <p>I am pleased to say this policy has significantly shaped how Housing Tasmania delivers new dwellings. The policy has also been successfully applied to the refurbishment of existing Housing Tasmania properties, where appropriate.</p>	84 new homes. 10 existing units modified to Platinum level 71 new homes planned.

State	Position	Response	As built Nos
WA	The Hon. Bill Marmion MLA Minister for Housing	Western Australia has not committed to the National Dialogue's proposed targets and we will not be reporting to the Australian Network for Universal Housing Design. I am pleased to advise that Western Australia incorporates universal design principles in many of our building and construction programs, reflecting our commitment to the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020. Between 2009-2010 and 2013-2014 more than 2,000 completed dwellings funded through the department have incorporated "substantial elements" of universal housing design	2009-2010 and 2013-2014 more than 2,000 completed dwellings funded through the department have incorporated "substantial elements" of universal housing design
ACT	The Hon. Andrew Barr Minister for Housing	Housing ACT has constructed 73% of its new properties to a Class C standard [AS4299] with the remaining 27% to Gold Standard under the Liveable [sic] Housing Guidelines".	No figures given
NT	The Hon. Matt Conlan Minister for Housing	The Department's requirements have incorporated universal design features for many years and it promotes core universal design features similar to those described in the Liveable [sic] Housing Design Guidelines. Decision regarding the use of the Australian Standard AS 4299 Adaptable Housing are made on a case by case basis taking into account a range of factors, including the client group to be housed and the available budget. The Department's requirements include the Australian Standard AS4299 Adaptable House Classification C as a minimum, and Australian Standard AS 1428.1 Design for access and mobility to bathroom and toilet design where required. The high percentage of new public housing construction in the Northern Territory already meeting the guidelines has shown to be sufficient to meet the current need of tenants.	No figures given

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