



AUSTRALIAN  
NETWORK  
ON DISABILITY

# Annex 2 - Dignified Access Review of Australian Parliament House

Department of Parliamentary Services 2023

02 8270 9250

[www.and.org.au](http://www.and.org.au)

Level 3, 80 Clarence Street, Sydney NSW 2000

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## 1. Introduction

This report is a review of **Australian Parliament House, Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country, ACT 2600** to determine potential barriers, and opportunities to improve the user experience, for people with disability using the facility.

Australian Network on Disability refers to 'Dignified Access.' Everyone – employees, visitors, clients – should be able to access your premises in a dignified way. This goes beyond compliance and takes into consideration the unique user experience of the environment from the perspective of:

1. **Vision** considers barriers that may affect people being able to see within the environment. This includes colours, brightness, lighting, colour contrast, size, shape, and placement of the graphical and text elements.
2. **Hearing** considers sounds in the environment (e.g., volume, pitch, clarity, and location of sounds), including the impact on the sensory experience.
3. **Thinking** considers the cognition required to complete a task within the environment.
4. **Communication** considers the ability to understand information and people within the environment, as well as the ability to other express oneself to others.
5. **Locomotion** considers the ability to move around the space and support features available to support balance and movement.
6. **Reach and stretch** considers the stretch or extension required to complete a task.
7. **Dexterity** considers the fine motor skills required to complete a task.

The [Access to Premises Standards](#) apply to new buildings and new or affected parts of existing buildings submitted for building approval after 1 May 2011. In practical terms this means businesses are compelled to upgrade accessibility only as part of refurbishments requiring building approval. It is worth noting that when modifying a part of a building, businesses also need to make sure that the affected parts are also compliant. An affected part is the principal entrance of the building and any part of the building that is necessary to provide a continuous accessible path of travel from the entrance.

The other legislative framework that applies to property is the Disability Discrimination Act in relation to workplace modifications. While Australian Parliament House is not compelled to change the features of its property until it is upgraded, employees with disability may request changes as part of a workplace modification to enable them to do the essential requirements of their role. Australian Parliament House would then need to establish that the change would create unjustifiable hardship to avoid doing it.

Progressive organisations realise the benefits of attracting employees with disability and the cross-benefits for other staff and users when their premises are accessible. We hope that the following supports your organisation in this endeavour.



## 2. Dignified Access Review

### 2.1 Main Entrance / Entering the Building

#### Dignified access is

The principal entrance and path of travel into the building is accessible to all employees, visitors, and clients.

- A continuous accessible pathway without a step, stairway, turnstile, revolving door, escalator or moving walkway.
- If there are several entrances and one entrance is not accessible, there are directions to an accessible entrance (the principal entrance is accessible).
- Alternate entrances are mainstream entrances, not through loading docks or goods lifts for example.
- Contrasting strips on all glass doors and walls. Wherever possible, the marking chosen should contrast in colour with the background colours behind the glass.

There is a clear path of travel (clear, flat, and unobstructed) from the street to a main entrance when travelling/arriving in a variety of ways:

- By foot.
- By car – from an accessible parking space.
- By taxi.
- By mobility scooter (which is not covered in the standards).
- There is passing space for two wheelchair users.

Clear and legible signage allowing people to find their way directly to their destination:

- Floor occupancy signage is accessible / legible:
  - Large font with high contrast letters. For example, good signage would include letters at least 17.5mm high for each metre of viewing distance. Signage should use a sans serif font, upper and lower case rather than just upper case.
- The lift must be clearly signposted from the building entry, including Braille and tactile indicators.

Doors are accessible to all employees, visitors, and clients.

- Automated doors work best.
- Door pressure – standards require only 20 newtons force (only about 2kg) to open a door.



## **Australian Parliament House findings**

Australian Parliament House has a multitude of public and private approaches and entry points including a public entrance at the Great Verandah, House of Representatives entrance, Senate entrance, and the Ministerial entrance. All entrances are approachable by all modes of transport, car, taxi, ride share, bus, bike or on foot. Recommendations in this section are applicable to all.

### **Great Verandah Public Entrance**

#### Features

- Step free wide entry point.
- Lift connecting entrance from underground carpark and drop off level.
- Support staff on hand to provide assistance.

#### Barriers

- Accessible entry signage minimal
- Tripping hazard small pebble dashed bins at ankle height against building wall.
- Cobbles underfoot.
- Minimal contrast of stone surfaces of ramps and stairs.
- Large water feature without barriers or tactiles.
- Incline to entrance for pedestrians walking up from Federation Mall.
- Negotiation of security to proceed into the Marble Foyer.

### **House of Representatives Entrance**

#### Features

- Private security turnstile swipe 945mm.
- Intercom 1355mm.
- Member entrance automated door.
- Wide double entrance >1600mm.
- Auto button 945mm.
- Good contrast of white on bronze signage.
- Hearing augmentation technology available.

#### Barriers

- Stepped entry (lift and option via staff car park).
- Railings only on single side of stairs.
- Minimal signage.
- No TGSIs sighted.
- Private security turnstile hearing loop 1640mm.
- Turnstile width tight 710mm.
- Additional stairs past gate with no TGSIs or nosing cues.





- No curb cuttings off pavement to member entrance.
- Security bollards with minimal colour contrast.
- Intercom pole with minimum colour contrast in pathway of travel.
- Planted trees blocking pathway of travel.
- No contrast on doors or glass floor to ceiling windows.
- Single height tall security desk 1200mm.
- Negotiation of security process.

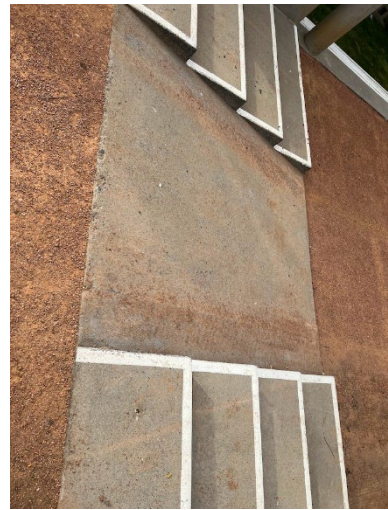
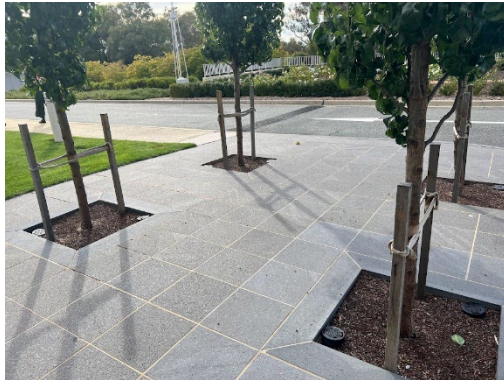
## **Walk up to House of Representatives Entrance**

### Barriers

- Steep uneven pathway with multiple treatments such as gravel, dirt, and concrete.
- No continuous step free pathway of travel.
- No accessible bathrooms sighted.
- Bathrooms sighted with stepped entry only.
- Rose Garden space used for events with grass and gravel underfoot.

### **Recommendations**

- Prioritise the provision and update of signage, wayfinding and instructions communicating to users regarding disability access, and the availability of independent building access.
- Alert visitors of the accessibility features and barriers by including comprehensive site access information on your website (potentially on your contact page), and when sending meeting/event/interview invitations (including availability of accessible features). Include sensory barriers too e.g., café noise.
- Investigate the opportunity to build a social story or a virtual tour to empower users with access understanding prior to arrival.
- Review contrasts on glass doors. Requirement is solid contrasting lines not less than 75mm wide with lower edge between 900mm and 1000mm.
- Relocate touchpoints such as swipe access, hearing augmentation and intercoms at accessible heights between 900m and 1200mm.
- Provide railings on either side of a stairwell to support all users with mobility needs.
- Remove ankle height bins along the wall of the public entrance.
- Review contrast of bollards and additional installations such as intercom poles to reduce the risk of them being a tripping hazard.
- Review application of TGSIs and apply them consistently and logically.
- As a best practice measure, install beacon technology e.g., Blindsquare / Bindi Maps in the lobby and surrounding public areas.
- Seek to provide a step free path of travel through the gardens and park off Wyman Street to the Formal Gardens East.
- Install an accessible bathroom in addition to the male and female bathrooms in the park at Wyman Street.





**Figure 1** Entrances

## 2.2 Security

### Dignified access is

Security screening at Australian Parliament House ensures a safe environment for both parliamentary staff and visitors. On entering Australian Parliament House all members, employees and visitors are screened. All users should be able to enter Australian Parliament House in a dignified way. For some people with a disability the process can be challenging, traumatic and triggering. With minimal security practice research and standards for people with a disability available it is imperative we consider users' needs, listen, learn, and improve processes and policies. Please note in this section we did not take measurements or photos.

### Barriers

- Single height security desks 1000mm.
- No cut out for wheelchair users to sign in.
- Security gates not wide enough for some wheelchair users.
- Circulation space impacted at busy times.
- Minimal information available on the security process and what to expect for visitors.

### Recommendations

- Consider multiple height or adjustable security desks.
- Provide cut out spaces at security desks so wheelchair user need to stretch is reduced.
- Review widths of security gates ensuring wheelchair users are able to easily move through without fear of getting stuck, damaging their equipment or self (hands getting stuck).
- Provide clear information including a social story so users are able to understand expectations before arrival.
- Co-review security procedures and policies with users with a lived experience to inform Australian Parliament House on creating a best practice.



## 2.3 Reception

### Dignified access is

All employees, visitors and clients can equitably access the reception area and communicate with the receptionist.

- Audio augmentation in reception
- Reception desk design and height. Is the reception desk a barrier to an employee working in the role as receptionist and to any employee, visitor or client wanting to use the space and communicate with the receptionist?
- Can all visitors sign in?
- Chairs have arms to provide support moving in and out of chairs.
- Chairs have space underneath the chair to allow a person to place their feet underneath the chair to assist in standing.

### Australian Parliament House Lobby / Reception Findings

Australian Parliament House has many locations with reception desks such as: concierge or customer service within the Marble Foyer, temporary and permanent security desks within public and member spaces, and receptions of offices and office suites. Please use the below recommendations to support access outcomes across the building.

#### Features

- Door width 860mm.
- Automated height adjustable reception desk.
- Great circulation with large amounts of space.
- Natural light.
- Double screen monitors with adjustable arms.
- Chairs with arms and wheels (adjustable).
- Open bins.

#### Barriers

- Single height sign in desk 990mm (foyer).
- Single height security desk 1020mm (representatives).
- Single level reception desk 1080mm (gym).
- Reception desks with no wheelchair cut outs.
- Furnishing colour contrasts poor.
- Chairs without arms to support users.
- Powerpoints at back of desk or on floor.
- Furnishing blocking pathway of travel.
- Hearing augmentation not provided.



## Recommendations

- Provide training for staff on how to welcome visitors with disability. Australian Network on Disability would be happy to facilitate this training.
- Provide multiple height or adjustable reception desks.
- Check on the provision of hearing augmentation and instruction of usage and process.
- Be aware of movable furnishings or signage within the space ensuring they are not in the circulation pathway.
- Replace gloss finish laminate on signage with matte finish to reduce glare of signage.
- Seek to provide multiple seating options including seating with arms supporting mobility outcomes.
- Review power point access and seek alternative reducing the need to reach.
- Ensure furnishing contrasts are good allowing for easy identification of elements.
- Consider carpet colour and pattern use as it is a significant element of enabling design, patterns can be interpreted as barriers or level changes by people with neurological, sensory processing or sight conditions.
- If using touch screens provide alternative options as they can present as a barrier to some users especially those with vision impairment.





## Figure 2 Reception

### Optional suggestions of good practice in other companies:

Some organisations are removing the higher receptionist table and having individual pods or stands whereby the person at reception or concierge will move around to the front of the pod or stand to meet and greet any visitor. This provides a more personal experience and removes the barrier of a high desk. These pods also have hearing loops installed above them to enable inclusion of people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing.

## 2.4 Meeting Rooms

### Dignified access is

Providing your employees, visitors, and clients with the facilities to be able to have a meeting at an appropriate and dignified venue / room that is suitable for the purpose of that meeting.

### Australian Parliament House findings

Australian Parliament House has a wide range of meeting rooms and areas available for employees and visitors to meet and collaborate with various sizes and layouts.

### Committee Meeting Room

#### Features

- Door width 850mm.
- Non-adjustable table height 750mm.
- Chairs with arms, wheels and adjustable.
- Carpet surface supporting safe chair movement.
- Good circulation for movement.
- Good temperature.
- Soundproofed walls.
- Buttons with labels.

#### Barriers

- Door weight >6kg.
- Hearing augmentation signage height 1525mm.
- Loud clock ticking.

### Representatives Committee Meeting Room

#### Features

- Door width 800mm x2.
- Good circulation.
- Non-adjustable table height 760mm.
- Table clearance 720mm.
- Chairs with arms, wheels and adjustable.



- Hearing augmentation available.
- Open bins.
- Exit switch 1200mm.

### **Minister Suite Meeting Room**

#### Features

- Door width 850mm.
- Non-adjustable table height 715mm.
- Table clearance 650mm.
- Light switch 1040mm.

#### Barriers

- Door weight >7kg.
- Chairs with no arms or wheels.
- Limited circulation space.
- Touch screen technology.

#### **Recommendations**

- Ensure there is enough circulation space with clearance so users with mobility devices feel included.
- Consider reach and dexterity when locating controls and power points on meeting tables.
- Provide automated adjustable tables with braille tactiles within meeting rooms allowing accommodations for all wheelchair types.
- Consider privacy when using spaces and pick the right space for the right meeting.
- Consider visual surface contrast and furnishings to support improved identification by people who are blind or partially sighted for safe and effective circulation.
- In future refits/refurbishments consider access to technical controls to be at an accessible height ideally 900mm to 1200mm.
- Touch screens can present as a barrier to some users especially those that are blind or have low vision, consider alternative options. Users that are blind or have low vision are not able to use current meeting room booking systems.
- Provide portable hearing augmentation.
- Where hearing augmentation is available provide clear instructions on process, use and barriers to consider.
- Replace gloss finish laminate on signage with matte finish to reduce glare of signage.
- Provide instructions for room controls.
- Provide seating with arms to support mobility or provide a range of seating options.
- Consider environmental elements such as temperature and sound as both impact the comfort and productivity of users especially those who are hypersensitive or neurodiverse.



- Provide open bins.
- Review options to mitigate the sound of clocks aiming to reduce sensory impact.



**Figure 3** Meeting Rooms

**Optional suggestions of good practice in other companies:**

Some organisations are adding automated sliding doors to meeting rooms to ensure equitable access for all.



Example of hearing loop sign with braille

## 2.5 Doors and Doorways

### Dignified access is

Doors are accessible to all employees, visitors, and clients:

- Automated doors work best.

All employees, visitors and clients can easily move into / between rooms:





- Manual door:
  - Door pressure – standards require only 20 Newtons force (only about 2 kg) to open a door, but poor hydraulic door closers mean that this is rarely achieved and can be too heavy to open. Doors must be easy to open.

#### Door controls:

- Door handle that will **not** allow a person's hand to slip off the handle. For example D or D lever style.
- Lock knobs; lever controlled and large enough to be able to grip. Internal door locks are almost never installed correctly to standards (usually they are too small and hard to grip)

#### Door widths:

- Standards dictate the width. Can a person using a mobility scooter easily pass through the door with turning space inside the room / area?

The Building Code requirement (See AS 14281 s13.5.2(e) Door Controls) for doors other than fire doors and smoke doors where a door closer is fitted, is for the force required at the door handle to operate the door shall not exceed the following:

- (i) To initially open the door - 20N
- (ii) To swing or slide the door - 20N
- (iii) To hold the door open between 60 and 90 degrees -20N

Some of the doors tested in the building exceeded 20N (approx. 2kg).

If a force is required this may be impassable for a wheelchair user, person with limited strength or mobility requirements. It also makes it more difficult for people who are moving equipment or carrying objects.

Consideration also needs to be given to the height of any swipe/pass activation or controls for any door. Swipe card heights/controls need to be appropriately located between 900mm and 1100mm from the floor.

#### Recommendations

- Review the force required to open all non-automated doors – standards require only twenty newtons of force (2kg). A priority should be the accessible bathroom doors.
- Install automatic doors where possible.
- Pay special attention to:
  - Staff dining room terrace doors 10kg
  - Internal corridor doors 8-10kgs
  - Manual accessible bathroom door 5kg
  - Accessible bathroom 6kg



- House of Representatives courtyard door 9kg
- Senator lobby door 6kg



**Figure 4** Doors

## 2.6 Parking

### Dignified access is

- A continuous, accessible path of travel to the accessible parking space(s) and into the office from the car space.
- A clear path of travel (clear, flat, and unobstructed).

From a compliance perspective, any accessible parking space will need to meet the following requirements:

- Accessible parking is not required if you have less than 5 parking spaces.
- The door leading into the car park (e.g., from the lifts) needs to meet standard and require a force of up to 2kg or 20 Newtons to open the door.
- Accessible car spaces need to have the international logo on the bay's surface. The dimensions need to meet standards (AS/NZS 2890.6 Parking facilities: Off-street parking for people with disabilities).
- New style dimensions with shared space:
  - Angled:
    - Dimensions should be 5400mmx2400mm.
    - Side shared area 5400mmx2400mm (either side).
    - End share area 2400mmx2400mm (either end).
  - Parallel:



- Dimensions should be 7800mmx3200mm.
- Side shared area 7800mmx1600mm (side).

### **Australian Parliament House Findings**

Australian Parliament House has both public and private underground parking in multiple locations. Accessible public parking is available in the Forecourt Basement. Taxi and ride share are also able to drop off adjacent to the forecourt's accessible parking zone providing access to ramp entry.

### **Forecourt Basement**

#### Features

- Multiple accessible parking bays available all best standard.
- Use of international logo.
- Shared zones marked in yellow for transition.

#### Barriers

- Transition area bollards silver offering poor contrast.
- Path of travel from allocated parking space challenging with a steep ramp and long path to entrance lifts.
- Wayfinding is very poor and signage minimal.
- Surface contrast of the basement space is minimal – floors and walls.
- TGSIs are not utilised providing little guidance to the pathway of travel to the Great Verandah public entrance.
- The pay station swipe and intercom is at an inaccessible height of 1610mm.

### **Ministerial Parking**

#### Features

- Multiple accessible parking bays available all best standard.
- Use of international logo.

#### Barriers

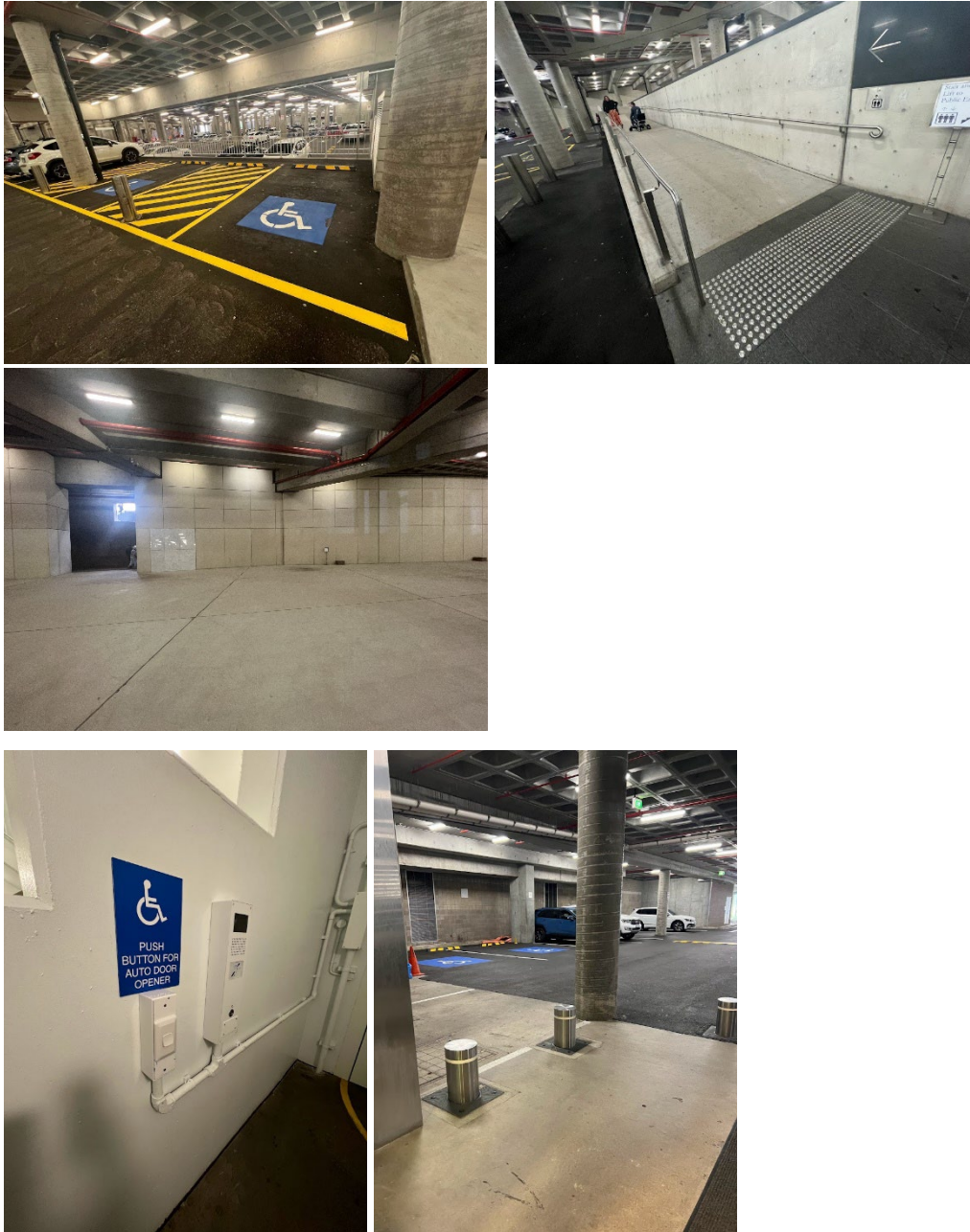
- Shared zones marked in yellow for transition not sighted.
- Low bollards with poor contrasting in pathway of travel.
- Circulation space between some bollards tight.

### **Recommendations**

- Review path of travel from public accessible parking bays to the Great Verandah public entrance via ramp, steps and lift 12 V1 to G and upgrade current accessible features, with special consideration of the ramp, signage, and wayfinding provisions.



- As part of the accessible features review consider surface contrast finish of walls and floors within the basement level carparks – currently all surfaces are concrete and offer no visual contrast.
- Install better contrast finish to bollards.
- Alert visitors of accessibility features and barriers of your building by including site access information on your website (potentially on your contact page), and when sending meeting / event / interview invitations.



**Figure 5** Accessible parking



## 2.7 Stairways

### Dignified access is

All spaces accessed by steps or stairs can also be accessed using an alternate path of travel which is also near to the stairs. For example, a ramp or a lift. Where options are not available or designed poorly this will have a particular impact on people who may be using mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or crutches or users who are not ambulant.

- TGSIs are applied consistently and logically.
- Stairway handrails are on both sides, are smooth and have the same height as you use them.
- Stairway handrails have an indicator on them to tell you what floor you have reached.
- Stairs have opaque risers; transparent materials are not used (thereby not changing depth perception) and have a non-slip contrasting strip on the nosing.

### Australian Parliament House Findings

Australian Parliament House is a huge building with multiple levels and many stairways. There are consistencies found with design such as fire escapes and inter floor connections of the senate and house. There are also examples of inconsistencies such as outdoor areas, and unique facilities including the gym and basement level security entry points.

Providing different ways achieve safe and effective vertical circulation allows staff and visitors to move freely.

#### Features

- Some Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs) installed.
- Handrails are on both sides.
- Good nosing contrast (black).
- Closed steps.

#### Barriers

- TGSIs not used on all stairways.
- Handrails not available.
- Handrails on single side of stairwell.
- Poor nose contrasting.
- Glare of lighting reflecting on surface.

### Recommendations

- Review internal and external stairways to bring them up to standard.
- Provide handrails on either side of the stairwells.
- Upgrade and improve nose contrasting.



- Seek options to mitigate current glare on wood finished surfaces.
- Where steps are the only option for users seek dignified alternatives such as the squash court at the gym and path of travel through Wyman Street parklands.



**Figure 6** Stairways

**Optional suggestions of good practice in other companies:**



Example of braille and tactile sign on handrail to indicate which floor you are on.

## 2.8 Lifts

### Dignified access is

Path of travel, including the lift, is accessible to employees, visitors, and clients.

- Lift cars wait for slower travellers.
- At the ground floor, if there is a floor number selector keypad, the floor selection is audio announced for the user.
- There are sufficient directions from the keypad to the lift well.
- The lift car audio announces (bell, sound or "car A has arrived") at the ground level as well as a visual cue.
- There is an audio and visual announcement when you arrive at each floor.
- The standard Braille emergency call buttons are at a height and in a position that can be reached by all.
- What is the user experience if the user misses the lift car?

### Australian Parliament House Findings

With over ten floors Australian Parliament House is home to 42 lifts.

#### Features

- Call button 1135mm.
- 1605mm by 2400mm providing space for circulation.
- Swipe button 865mm.
- Door width 1000mm.
- Buttons with braille.
- Handrails.



- Internal audio good.

### Barriers

- No accessibility features sighted.
- No mirrors to support turning.
- Some emergency/alarm buttons at 1500mm.

### **Platform Lifts (security and dining hall)**

#### Features

- Call button 980mm.

#### Barriers

- Requires support for use.
- Manual door.
- Directions information poor contrast.
- Waiting time to lock and unlock.

#### **Recommendations**

- Review accessibility features of lifts ensuring all features are engaged, especially audio.
- Door dwell time should be at least 8 seconds.
- Review audible information and indication to be provided in a range of between 20-80dbA at a maximum frequency of 1500Hz.
- Provide accessibility interfaces button which enables features such as audible announcements.
- A mirror should be provided to assist backwards movement by the wheelchair user.
- Platform lifts should be easily accessed and have clear instructions for use.
- Ensure controls can be reached by seating and standing users.







## Figure 7 Lifts

### 2.9 Accessible Bathrooms

#### Dignified access is

Convenient and equitable access to the accessible toilet/bathroom that can accommodate a carer and is intuitive to use.

- An accessible toilet on each floor.
- Signage directing people to the accessible toilets.
- Doors:
  - Door pressure – standards require only 20 Newtons force (only about 2 kg) to open a door, but door hydraulic door closers mean that this is rarely achieved, and toilet doors can be too heavy to open.
  - Internal door locks are almost never installed correctly to standards (usually they are too small and hard to grip).
  - D or D level door handles.
- Use of accessible toilet:
  - Transition space (on and off the toilet itself).
  - Circulation space.
  - Reach from the toilet:
    - Toilet roll holder.
    - Handrails.
    - Flushing mechanism.
    - Emergency button that links to reception.
  - Appropriate back rest on toilet.
  - Sink and taps:
    - Area for wheelchair user underneath sink.
    - Space on/next to sink to place personal items.
    - Lever taps.
    - Taps on the side.
    - Consider mirror – tilt and size.
    - Access to soap dispenser/hand towels.
- Hooks or other device for hanging/storing clothes at an appropriate height for all users.



- Accessible toilets are only used by employees, visitors or clients that need to use the accessible toilet. Not as a matter of course for all employees, visitors, or clients.
- If there are shower facilities, to have accessible shower facilities. Consider, could all showers and changing facilities be accessible? Or at a minimum there is an accessible shower/changing room.

### **Australian Parliament House Findings**

Australian Parliament House has a Changing Places facility in its public area located near Queens Terrace Dining Room and adjacent to the Post Office. Changing Places allows people with high support needs to participate in all elements of community life and in this case democracy. Australian Parliament House also has a high number of accessible bathrooms provided across the public and private space. Features and barriers vary, the recommendations here will be applicable for all.

### **Changing Places**

#### Features

- An automatic door with a clear opening of 950 mm at a minimum.
- Height-adjustable adult-sized change table.
- Constant-charging ceiling track hoist system.
- Centrally located peninsula toilet with handrails either side for support.
- Additional circulation space more than standard accessible toilets.

### **General Accessible Bathroom**

#### Features

- Room width >3000mm x 3000mm.
- Handrail side and back.
- Backrests.
- Accessible mirror.
- Sink 900mm.
- Accessible soap dispenser 940mm.
- Long lever sink tap.
- Door knob good size.
- Open bin.

#### Barriers

- No international sign of access.
- No signage indicating left or right hand use.
- Heavy manual door >6kg.
- Door width 720mm.
- Sanitary bin in incorrect position.
- Poor contrast of duress alarm (white on white).



- Doors wedged open to main bathrooms, removing privacy.
- Trolley in pathway of travel.
- Free standing baby changing table vs wall fold away.
- Engaged indicator small and hard to see.
- No hand rails.
- No backrest.
- No tactiles.
- No shelf next to sink.
- Strong smelling deodoriser.
- Shower head without long arm lever.
- No shower curtain in poor condition.
- No kick plate on doors.

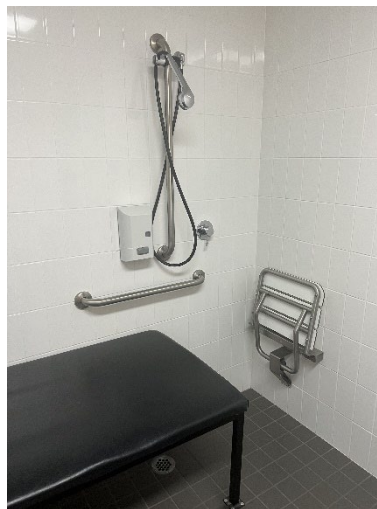
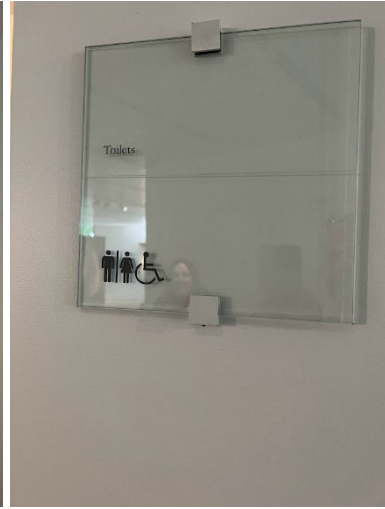
### **Recommendations**

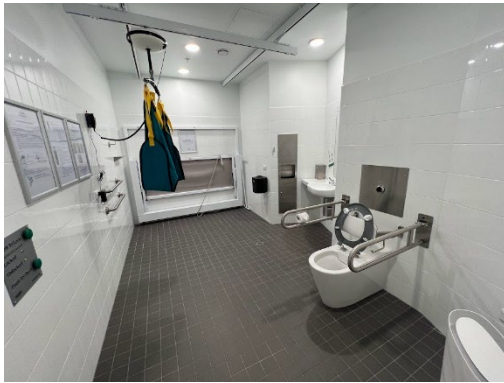
- Accessible bathrooms should be available on each level.
- Opportunity to install automated doors.
- Provide and display the international sign of access.
- Provide signage indicating left or right hand use.
- Review accessible bathrooms and ensure they meet standards.
- Improve contrast of personal emergency button – currently white on white.
- Ensure cleaners / building management have instructions that sanitary bins should be placed wall-side of the toilet pan.
- Replace any gloss finish laminate on signage with matte finish to reduce glare of signage.
- Investigate opportunity to install kickplates to manual doors as they support wheelchairs users and protect the doors (note not required with automated doors).
- Review door knob on inside of door lock and seek to replace with alternative >45mm long.
- Provide lever handle for shower head withing bathrooms that include a shower.
- Noting the strong bathroom deodoriser smell sensory differences - a person can be over-sensitive, under-sensitive or both. Someone can experience sensory differences with sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, balance, or body awareness. Sensory experiences can change how someone feels physically, where they can go and how they interact with others. Recommend working with cleaning management to change or reduce spray frequency of the deodorisers.
- Note accessible toilets are only used by employees, visitors or clients that need to use the accessible toilet. Not as a matter of course for all employees, visitors, or clients.
- Install a visual emergency evacuation alarm (refer to Fire and Emergency Procedures section of this report).
- Install an emergency help button linked to reception / security in case a person comes out of their chair and requires assistance. ISO 21542 CI 26.14 requires “an assistance



alarm, which can be reached from changing or shower seats, from the WC and by a person lying on the floor, shall be provided in all accessible toilets and accessible sanitary rooms. This alarm should be connected to an emergency help point, or where a member of staff can assist.”

- Review phone coverage of accessible bathrooms especially those located in basement levels.





**Figure 8** Accessible bathrooms

**Optional suggestions of good practice in other companies:**

Some organisations are adding adult change tables into their accessible bathrooms to provide equitable access for people with disability and their carers.



Sample duress button

## 2.10 Kitchens and Dining Spaces

**Dignified access is**

Being able to use the kitchen facilities independently.

- Access to hot and cold water:
  - the tap handles are lever style handles.
  - taps are located to the sides of the sink.
- Access to the sink:



- the sink has space cut away underneath it for access by a wheelchair user.
- Table and bench heights and seating are accessible:
  - there is a mixture of seating heights and styles (including chairs with arms).
  - there is a mixture of bench and table heights.
- Access to microwave and appliances:
  - if placed in shelving.
  - at benchtop level.
- Access to refrigerator considering direction of door swing relative to approach and wall.
- Access to crockery and cutlery.
- Non-slip floor.
- Access to vending machines.
- Accessible water fountains/bubblers.
- Access to use the rubbish bins.
- Consistent layout on each floor (if applicable).

### **Australian Parliament House Findings**

With its vast footprint and wide scope of activities Australian Parliament House has numerous kitchen and dining areas for public and private use. These include kitchens for events, commercial and staff dining for members and non members. Office suites also included kitchens as part of their standard lay out. All recommendations below are applicable.

### **Office Kitchens**

#### Features

- Nonslip flooring.
- Good natural light.
- Multiple options for seating.
- Multiple table and bench heights available.
- Lots of circulation space available.
- Bench heights 940mm.
- Low height microwaves 520mm.
- TV with captions.

#### Barriers

- Cups, glasses, and dishes at high levels – top height 1620mm.
- Tea, coffee, sugar etc at back of bench out of reach (820mm reach).



- No handles on cupboards or drawers.
- Taps at back of sink.
- No sink cut out available to provide wheelchair access.
- Laminated signs producing reflection and glare.
- Closed bins.
- No chairs with arms.
- Sliding door 760mm.

## **Events and Commercial Kitchens**

### Features

- Nonslip flooring.
- Wayfinding for staff working service.
- Catering lockers at multiple heights 510mm and 1380mm.
- Fire extinguisher 1060mm.
- Fridge door release 1160mm.

### Barriers

- Bins and trolleys blocking pathway of travel.
- Event chairs with no arms.
- Large door wedges and chairs used to keep open doors, which are a tripping hazard.
- Emergency phone high (1580mm).
- Door release buttons 1480mm.
- Paper towel height 1580mm.
- Fire blanket 1515mm.
- Walk in fridge personal alarm 1640mm.

## **Staff Dining Hall**

### Features

- Good circulation.
- Counter height 650mm.
- Table height 710mm with 650mm clearance.
- Good natural light.

### Barriers

- Carpet pile at entrance challenging to walk on and for wheelchair users.
- On the way in there is a lean to the left.
- Plant pots in the pathway of travel.
- No chairs with arms.
- Patterned carpet can cause sensory barriers of depth and trip perception.
- Terrace doors >10kgs.



- Stepped exit to terrace dining a tripping hazard and inaccessible.
- Outdoor pathway uneven, pavers and grass.
- Smoke free environment with users still smoking.
- Exclusive disability table reserved is not dignified.

## **Aussies Café**

### Barriers

- Noisy space and potential for sensory overload as the entrance point from the Marble Foyer.
- Poor circulation of pathways and furnishings especially when busy (morning and lunch) and when parliament is sitting.
- Table height challenging for motorised wheelchairs.
- Chairs without arms.
- Low lighting.
- No captions on the TV.
- ATM reach and stretch challenging for wheelchair users with no undercut.

### **Recommendations**

- Consider reach and position of appliances and dispensers such as microwaves / dishwashing liquid / common tea and coffee amenities etc. to ensure they are accessible for someone using a wheelchair or of short stature.
- Locate taps at front or side of bowl, rather than the back to allow access for everyone.
- Ensure cups, plates, crockery and any other regularly used items are available at lower accessible heights (between 900mm and 1200mm).
- Consider adding cut-out section underneath sinks in all kitchens – allowing for wheelchair access.
- Explore matte finish options for signage to reduce glare and reflections which can limit visibility of signage.
- Review lay of carpet within the entrance/exit of the staffing dining area corridor seeking to fix uneven surface.
- Automate doors to courtyard and provide ramped access.
- Review outdoor pathways of travel with the aim to provide step free, slip free and obstacle free options.
- Provide seating options with arms to support users requiring ambulant supports.
- Provide a mixture of tables that provide options in height and clearance allowing for all needs to be accommodated (rather than isolating a single accessible table).
- Review no smoking policy and management.
- Locate fire blankets and fire extinguishers to be at accessible height and nearer kitchen appliances (900mm to 1200mm).
- Review kitchen appliances, especially fans and lighting, considering sensory processing, try reducing sound and light luminance.





- Sensory differences - a person can be over-sensitive, under-sensitive or both. Someone can experience sensory differences with sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, balance, or body awareness. Consider noise from the kitchen fridges.
- Consider neutral pattern free carpets - colour and pattern use is a significant element of enabling design, patterns can be interpreted as barriers or level changes by people with neurological, sensory processing or sight conditions.
- Ensure well stocked First Aid Kits with relevant signage and First Aid Officer contact details are available near to kitchen areas be at accessible height and nearer kitchen appliances (900mm to 1200mm).
- Engage captioning if TVs are in use.
- Consider, remove, or relocate items such as bins/plants blocking natural pathways of travel.



**Figure 9** Kitchen and Dining



### Optional suggestions of good practice in other companies:



Example of an accessible sink



Example of accessible microwaves at various heights

## 2.11 Utility/Storage Areas

### Dignified access is

Storage and utilities offer equitable access:

- Circulation space within storage / utility space.
- Height of and access to printer and fax machine.
- Screens of printer and fax machines are tilted towards the user.
- Storage height of commonly used objects is accessible to everyone.
- Filing cabinets/storage for files are accessible to everyone and compactus are not utilised.

### Features

- Good circulation space >1000mm.
- Open shelves.



- Accessible height bench tops <900mm.
- Often used items available on bench.
- Printer controls 955mm with adjustable screen.
- Printer on desk 1090mm.

### Barriers

- Some obstacles in way e.g., bin and paper boxes.
- Some heavy items stored on the floor e.g., paper.
- Laminated signs producing reflection and glare.
- Locker keypad and opening mechanism challenging for users with limited manual dexterity.
- Locker usage can be inconvenient and undignified when needing to access medication or storing headsets that provide sensory relief.

### **Recommendations**

- Consider clearance space within utility areas being aware of obstacles in pathways and on bench tops.
- Replace any gloss finish laminate on signage with matte finish to reduce glare of signage.
- Consider font size when providing written information supporting ease of reading.
- Use larger font for labels to inform users of cupboard and drawer contents.
- Add handles to cupboards. Handles should be easy to open with one hand, without twisting the wrist or using any tight grasping or pinching motion. The best handles for this purpose are U-shaped. Levers or push-type mechanisms also are acceptable.
- Ensure all staff are asked if they require any adjustments to access lockers, putting in place any adjustments as required noting they should be appropriate for people with limited reach, strength, and dexterity.
- Relocate First Aid Box and AED to a location that provides ease of access at a height of no more than 1200mm.



**Figure 10** Utilities

## 2.12 Workstations and Work Areas

### Dignified access is

All employees, visitors or clients can easily work at any workstation at any time.

This means all workstations have:

- Adjustable ergonomic chairs.
- Adjustable desks.
- Adequate lighting for the work being undertaken.
- Unobstructed path of travel to/from the workstation.
- Sufficient and appropriate desk space and depth.
- Computer height is adjustable.
- Ease of use of equipment such as desk phone and power points.
- Dignified access works at its best when there is a workplace adjustments policy and procedure in place for adjusting the workplace and technologies for employees, visitors, and clients with disability.

### Australian Parliament House Findings

#### Findings

- Some adjustable desks.
- Desk height 700mm, clearance 690mm.
- Desk reach 600mm.
- Good desk space and leg room beneath desks.
- Chairs with wheels, good contrast seat and legs.



- Ergonomic chairs.
- Double screen monitors with adjustable arms.
- Good circulation.
- Some natural light.
- Workplace adjustments available for staff.
- Open bins.
- TVs with captions.

### Barriers

- Corridor width tight (875mm).
- Non adjustable desks.
- Power points located at back of desk or on the floor.
- Some chairs with arms.
- TVs observed did not feature captions.
- Poor contrast of door stops a tripping hazard.
- Poor contrast of furnishings with carpet.
- Furnishings blocking or impeding pathway of travel.
- Circulation space challenging (730mm).

### **Recommendations**

- Review power point access and seek to reduce the need to reach.
- Improve circulation and remove obstacles from pathway of travel.
- Consider sensory processing in the workspace and especially try reducing audio disturbances.
- Provide seating with arms to support mobility or provide a range of seating options.
- Add handles to cupboards. Handles should be easy to open with one hand, without twisting the wrist or using any tight grasping or pinching motion. The best handles for this purpose are U-shaped. Levers or push-type mechanisms also are acceptable.
- Replace gloss finish laminate on signage with matte finish to reduce glare of signage.
- Ensure all staff are asked about the adjustments that they may require. This should be an ongoing process as an individual's requirements may change across the entire organisation / across their employee lifecycle.
- Where staff experience distractions working in an open plan environment, work with staff members to identify adjustments. These may include allocating desks in quieter areas, allocating quiet rooms, adding partitioning to an allocated desk, or working from home.
- Consider visual surface contrast and furnishings to support improved identification by people who are blind or partially sighted for safe and effective circulation.
- Review brass door stops to improve contrast mitigating potential tripping hazard.
- Engage captions on TVs.



**Figure 11** Workstations

## 2.13 Senate and House of Representatives

The Senate, Australia's upper house, has 76 members. Here, red predominates reminding us of the British House of Lords. The House of Representatives, Australia's lower house, has 151 members. The hall is dominated by green, a colour historically associated with the House of Commons in the British Parliament. Both spaces similar in design and layout provide two unique environments designed around tradition, symbolism, security, and political process. Here we consider the overlay of access needs. Access has not been considered in this space.

### Findings

- Automated door width 920mm.
- Opening timing 13 seconds.
- Button height 1105mm.
- Ramp provided to access Senate floor.
- Senators and Representatives provided with own seat (sharing a double).
- Seat height 435mm.
- Desk height 835mm with 675mm clearance.
- Back rest and lumbar pillows provided.
- Open bins.
- Foot stools available.
- Lobby doors 900mm.
- Chairs with arm rests.
- Good contrasting of furniture.
- TV screens televising the room.

### Barriers

- Speaker's door width small 770mm.
- Front bench not an option for a wheelchair user.
- Stepped entry to floor.
- Steps up to advisors' seats.



- Thick carpet impedes wheelchair access.
- Non adjustable desks.
- Integrated handles on desk drawers.
- Hearing loop technology not sighted.
- Buttons without labels for technology.
- Ramp only available in Senate.
- Old and defunct accessibility lifts.
- Lobby door 6kgs.
- Poor contrasting of plant pots.

### Recommendations

- Provide step free access to the floor and advisors seating.
- Review carpet lay and pile to support improved transition.
- Investigate the opportunity for automated/modular seating and desks.
- Provide handles to drawers and cupboards. Handles should be easy to open with one hand, without twisting the wrist or using any tight grasping or pinching motion. The best handles for this purpose are U-shaped. Levers or push-type mechanisms also are acceptable.
- Review hearing augmentation provision, process, and instructions.
- Provide a ramp within the House of Representatives.
- Automate doors.
- Review visual contrast between fixtures and fittings, and room surfaces inclusive of the lobby space.



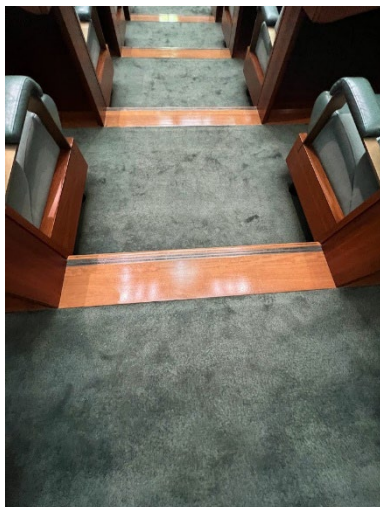






Figure 12 Senate and House

## 2.14 Senate Office Suite

The Senate is one of the two houses of the Australian Federal Parliament. It consists of 76 senators with each senator having their own private office. Currently Senator Jordon Steele-John's office is the only office that has considered and applied universal design to the space. Designing for access benefits all. The two spaces are compared in this section.

Element	Universal Design Office (1)	Standard Office (73)
<b>Entrance and Reception</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automated door 960mm ✓</li> <li>• Auto door button 1050mm ✓</li> <li>• Light switch 1050mm ✓</li> <li>• Aircon switch 1050mm ✓</li> <li>• Reception desk auto height adjustable ✓</li> <li>• Open bins ✓</li> <li>• Pinboard 1120mm ✓</li> <li>• Good furniture contrasts ✓</li> <li>• Circulation space maximised ✓</li> <li>• Staff office slide door 950mm ✓</li> <li>• Automated Senator office slide door 950mm ✓</li> <li>• Door frame colour contrast to support vision awareness ✓</li> <li>• No raised transition strips between doors ✓</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual door 875mm ✗</li> <li>• Door weight &gt;6kg ✗</li> <li>• Light switch 1050mm ✓</li> <li>• Aircon switch 1790mm ✗</li> <li>• Reception desk 720mm ✓</li> <li>• Open bins ✓</li> <li>• Pinboard 1120mm ✓</li> <li>• Poor furniture contrasts ✗</li> <li>• 3 manual doors off reception ✗</li> <li>• Circulation limited within closed space ✗</li> <li>• Staff office door 800mm</li> <li>• Senator office door 800mm</li> <li>• Kitchen door 760mm ✗</li> <li>• Raised transition strips between doors ✗</li> </ul>



<p><b>Kitchen</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open kitchen circulation 1270mm ✓</li> <li>• Floor surface with glare ✗</li> <li>• Multiple bench heights 880mm and 770mm ✓</li> <li>• Sink with taps at the back ✗</li> <li>• No sink cut out ✗</li> <li>• No handles or labels on cupboards or drawers ✗</li> <li>• Frequently used items at low heights ✓</li> <li>• Low height microwave ✓</li> <li>• Low height dishwasher ✓</li> <li>• Kitchen light switch 1050mm ✓</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kitchen circulation 980mm ✗</li> <li>• Floor surface with glare ✗</li> <li>• Bench height 920mm ✓</li> <li>• Sink with taps at the back ✗</li> <li>• No sink cut out ✗</li> <li>• No handles or labels on cupboards or drawers ✗</li> <li>• Cupboard height 1610mm ✗</li> <li>• Kitchen light switch 1050mm ✓</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bathroom</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully accessible bathroom ✓</li> <li>• Automated door ✓</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No accessible bathroom ✗</li> <li>• Bathroom door manual 6kg ✗</li> <li>• Bathroom door width 870mm</li> <li>• Taps at back of sink ✗</li> <li>• Dimensions 1495mm by 1850mm ✗</li> <li>• Bathroom open bin ✓</li> <li>• Small lock knob ✗</li> <li>• Clothes hook at 1810mm ✗</li> </ul>
<p><b>Offices</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senator office natural light with blinds ✓</li> <li>• Blind height 1390mm ✓</li> <li>• Open bins ✓</li> <li>• Static round table ✗</li> <li>• Pinboard 1180mm ✓</li> <li>• Staff office with auto desks ✓</li> <li>• Chairs with arms and wheels ✓</li> <li>• Printer 1420mm ✗</li> <li>• Adjustable display screen ✓</li> <li>• Pinboard 1180mm ✓</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senator office natural light with blinds ✓</li> <li>• Blind height 1390mm ✓</li> <li>• Open bins ✓</li> <li>• Static table 710mm, clearance 660mm ✗</li> <li>• Pinboard 1180mm ✓</li> <li>• Staff office with auto desks ✓</li> <li>• Chairs with arms and wheels ✓</li> <li>• Printer 1420mm ✗</li> <li>• Adjustable display screen ✓</li> <li>• Pinboard 1180mm ✓</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open shelves ✓</li><li>• TV with captions ✓</li><li>• Light switch height 1070mm ✓</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open shelves ✓</li><li>• TV with captions ✓</li><li>• Light switch height 1070mm ✓</li></ul>
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## Recommendations

- Consider universal design and dignified access for all office spaces.
- Provide automated slide doors both at the entrance and internally.
- Install colour contrast around door frames.
- Maximise circulation space with modified open plan layout.
- Provide adjustable tables.
- Access to technical controls to be at an accessible height ideally 900mm to 1200mm.
- Remove raised transition strips.
- Add handles to cupboards. Handles should be easy to open with one hand, without twisting the wrist or using any tight grasping or pinching motion. The best handles for this purpose are U-shaped. Levers or push-type mechanisms also are acceptable.
- Consider user signage / labels of cupboards and drawers.
- Provide adequate ventilation.
- Locate taps at front of bowl, rather than the back to allow access for everyone.
- Add cut-out sections underneath sinks in all kitchens
- Provide low level microwaves and dishwashers.
- Provide accessible bathroom layout dimensions so that office bathrooms can be fitted out as accessible.
- Provide accessible bathroom features as standard such as automated door, accessible facilities taps, dispensers, sink cut out, clothes hooks etc.
- Review power point access and seek alternative reducing the need to reach.
- Provide multiple seating options including chairs.
- Consider sensory processing in the workspace and especially try reducing audio disturbances.
- Ensure photocopier is at accessible height and has an adjustable display screen.



**Figure 13** Entrance and Reception



**Figure 14** Kitchen





**Figure 15 Bathroom**



**Figure 16 Senator Office**



**Figure 17 Staff Office**

## **2.15 First Aid Room**

### **Dignified access is**

A dedicated space that provides a relaxing environment for users. It provides a space for qualified first aid staff to attend to minor injuries and illnesses. The space could also be used to move away from a stressful or upsetting situation or to access information or activities intended to promote wellbeing.

To consider:

- Location away from the main work environment and busy areas.
- Signed and designated private space.



- Lockable door with status indicator (e.g., occupied / unoccupied).
- Neutral and calming colours to promote a sense of calmness and well-being.
- Quiet acoustic space.
- Facilities for washing and sanitisation.
- Suitable and accessible storage.
- Range of furniture including a fully adjustable bed or similar that is large enough to enable a person to lie flat.
- Sufficient space for wheelchair access and circulation within.
- Visual contrast between fixtures and fittings, and room surfaces.
- Adjustable environmental controls (e.g., air conditioning, lighting).
- One elevation should be kept free of artwork or plants to avoid excessive stimuli.
- A wellbeing kiosk and noticeboard to display wellbeing information may be included, but ideally both should be positioned at one end of the room and not encroach on the seating area or natural light.

### **Findings**

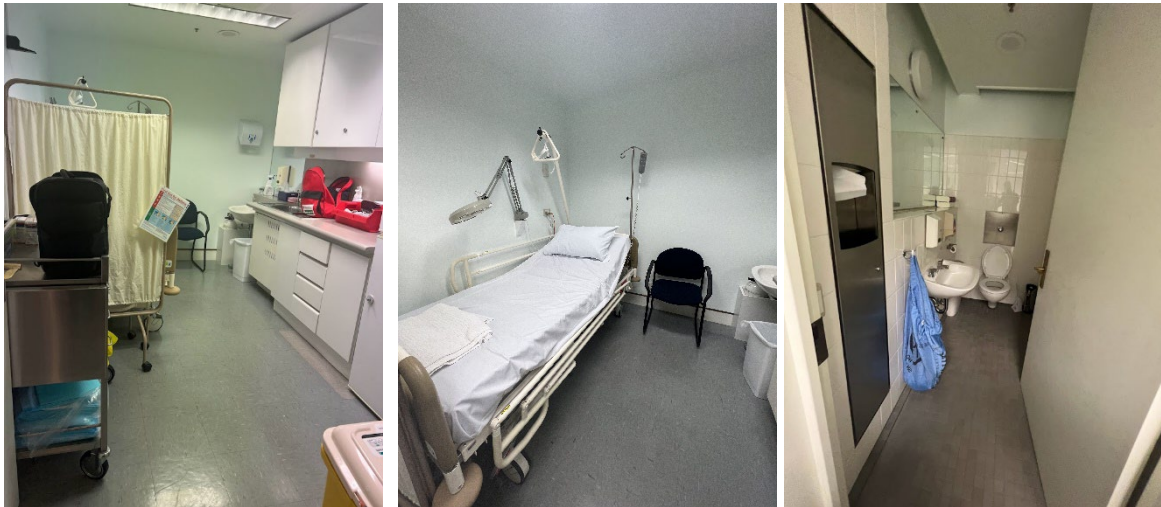
- Phone height 1385mm.
- Nonslip floor.
- Treatment door width 810mm.
- Adjustable bed.
- Sink 745mm with clearance space underneath 625mm.
- Bench height 620mm.
- Pamphlet display unit with multiple levels.

### **Barriers**

- Circulation challenging 1000mm.
- Circulation impacted by bins and equipment.
- Sink taps that require dexterity to twist not levers.
- Taps at the back of the sink.
- No accessible bathroom.

### **Recommendations**

- Review furnishings and equipment layout to maximise circulation.
- Install lever taps to improve ease of use.
- Provide an accessible bathroom.
- Review best practice recommendations.



**Figure 18** First Aid

## 2.16 Multi-faith Room

### Dignified access is

A multi-faith room can provide a quiet, private space away from the office environment for users to spend time taking part in structured or unstructured meditation, reflection, or prayer, either singly or in groups.

If a multi-faith room is not provided, people may experience stress, anxiety, and feelings of exclusion and discrimination. People may also feel obliged to use unsuitable spaces, impacting their feelings of dignity and freedom to practice their faith.

- Signed and designated private space.
- Visual privacy and sound insulation.
- Neutral design aesthetic.
- Wudu facilities for completing ablutions, with at least one accessible ablution unit available in each ablution room.
- Facilities for disabled access (e.g., step free access, sufficient space to manoeuvre a wheelchair next to one prayer washing facility, wall mounted grab rails and drop downs support rails).
- The accessible ablution unit is nearest to the entrance.
- Shoe rack and low shelf for drying clothing.
- Separate areas for males and females.
- Sufficient space for wheelchair access and circulation within.
- Visual contrast between fixtures and fittings, and room surfaces.
- Adjustable environmental controls (e.g., air conditioning, lighting).

### Findings

- Accessible by lift.

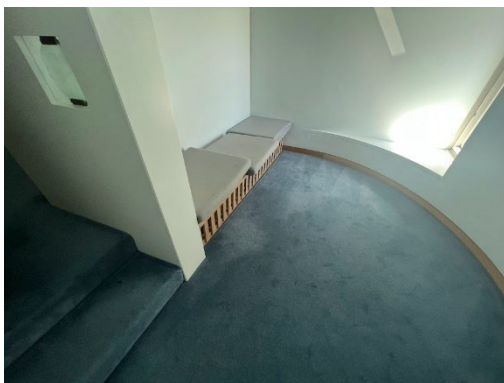


### Barriers

- Open plan with lack of privacy.
- Stepped entry point to individual space.

### **Recommendations**

- Provide a multi-faith room both for the public and staff.
- Investigate the opportunity to provide a private space.
- Need for step free entry.
- Review best practice recommendations.



**Figure 19** Multifaith Room

## **2.17 Parents Room (not sighted)**

### **Dignified access is**

Users who are nursing mothers or those who have parenting responsibility for their children whilst at work, can benefit from a dedicated space to express milk, or feed or change their baby.

If a parenting room is not provided, people may feel obliged to undertake these activities without adequate privacy and dignity or feel that they are unable to maintain a normal working pattern.

Consider:

- Signed and designated private space.
- Lockable door with status indicator (e.g., occupied / unoccupied).
- Comfortable chair and table (see Furniture) that can be rearranged.
- Access to power points and a microwave to sterilize storage containers.
- Breast pump with a power socket, and a dedicated storage area.
- Wheelchair accessible facilities, including a lowered or adjustable worktops,
- storage cupboards with easy to grip handles and sink with soap dispenser.
- Baby changing facility (e.g., pull down baby changing table) with nappy disposal.
- Suitable fridge for storing expressed milk, with method of designating ownership.





- Provide sufficient space for wheelchair access and circulation.
- Good visual contrast between fixtures and fittings, and room surfaces
- Adjustable environmental controls (e.g., air conditioning, lighting)

**Recommendations:**

- Provide a parents room both for the public and staff.
- Review best practice recommendations

## **2.18 Sensory Wellbeing Room (not sighted)**

**Dignified access is**

A quiet restorative space should be provided for users who require lower levels of visual and auditory stimuli, to work to their best potential. These should also be considered for users who need quieter areas. If a quiet and sensory neutral space is not provided, people with sensory and neurological processing needs may find it difficult and potentially distressing to work in more traditional spaces, in particular communal and open plan areas.

To consider:

- An accessible workstation, including height adjustment and wheelchair access.
- A location away from the main work environment and busy areas, without being remote and feeling separated.
- Signed and designated private space, with occupied status indicator.
- Low arousal, low reflective, low pattern, neutral and calming colours to promote a sense of calmness and well-being.
- Colours should reflect nature (e.g., browns, greens), with plain ceilings, matte walls - bright and vivid colours should be avoided.
- Complex, repetitive patterns and bold linear patterns should be avoided.
- Quiet acoustic space, with a low level of background noise and utilising absorptive materials to minimise echo.
- Utilisation of natural light with measures to control glare or shadows (e.g., blinds).
- A range of furniture that can be easily re-positioned, including seating with arm and back support, and soft seating and reclining options.

**Recommendations**

- Provide a sensory wellbeing room both for the public and staff.
- Review best practice recommendations.

## **2.19 Assistance Animal Facilities (not sighted)**

**Dignified access is**

Staff, visitors, or customers may be accompanied by an assistance dog, and their needs should be met. If not, people who rely on assistance dogs, for example for sight loss or



emotional support may feel excluded from buildings. Assistance dog toilets or spending areas should be provided in certain locations to allow people who use assistance dogs to toilet their dogs in a safe and clean manner. Service dogs are entitled to enter public and other spaces and provision should be considered essential for supporting people with disabilities. Removing barriers to people being accompanied assistance dogs would be considered a reasonable adjustment to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities.

To consider:

- Clear communication that the relief area is for both pets and service animals.
- Easy access to the relief area and its amenities, including for pet parents using assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, or canes.
- Pet-friendly turf, grass, or another surface that's gentle on paws in all types of weather.
- Non-slip easily cleaned surface around the relief area.
- A waste bag dispenser with a trash receptacle attached or nearby, both of which are regularly serviced.
- Adequate lighting for safe use by people and pets.
- Effective drainage and a spray or sprinkler system that ensures the pet relief area is properly cleaned and helps to minimize odours.
- Clear rules that remind pet owners of their responsibilities when using the space.
- Sanitizing or hand-washing options for pet parent hygiene. Also consider a leash hook or carrier space to safely free up pet parents' hands for hand washing.
- A readily visible resource number or QR code for questions or issues.
- Documented cleaning and maintenance standard operating procedures and a regular schedule for area maintenance, such as spraying down the surface, removing trash and refilling waste bags.
- If indoors, ensure adequate ventilation to maximize air flow and minimize odours.
- If outdoors, ensure adequate separation from vehicular traffic areas, at minimum allowing a few feet between the relief area and a parking lot or street.

### **Recommendations**

- Provide assistance animal facilities for the public and staff.
- Review best practice recommendations.

## **2.20 Gym**

### **Dignified access is**

People with disability receive the same physical, mental, and social benefits from participating in sport and physical activity as any other participant. However data shows adults who have disability participate in sport or physical activity less than adults who don't. Australian Parliament House provides gym facilities for all staff including a swimming pool,



gymnasium, squash court and additional amenities. Dignified access would mean that everyone can participate equally and benefit from fitness activities.

### Barriers

- Single level reception desk 1080mm.
- Low level section of reception desk not used for purpose.
- Stepped entry to squash courts.
- No contrasts installed on glass doors.
- Signage in pathway of travel.
- Swimming pool does not have accessible independent entry point.
- Hoist pool entry point out of use and process for use not understood.
- Gymnasium area circulation space around equipment poor.

### Recommendations

- Provide a multi level reception desk.
- Review and note stepped entry points and inaccessible elements of the gym.
- Seek to provide step free entry to all facilities.
- Review contrast stripes of glass doors and windows.
- Investigate provision of hoist pool entry clarifying equipment availability, process, and instructions.
- Instigate an accessibility review of entire gym complex ensuring access for all.

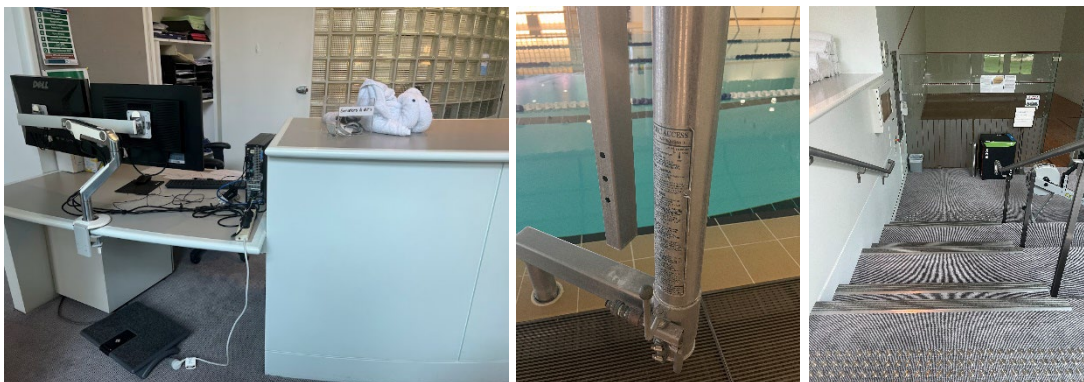


Figure 20 Gym

## 2.21 Floor Surfaces

### Dignified access is

All employees, visitors and clients should be provided with safe and effective flooring surfaces, both internal and external to buildings. If flooring surfaces are not well designed, there is a risk of blind or partially sighted people falling (e.g., steps), people suffering slips and trips, and some people with neurological processing differences finding navigation difficult (e.g. use of bold patterns).



- Access routes that have a firm slip-resistant and reasonably smooth surface.
- Floor surfaces that avoid producing glare.
- Highly contrasting floor patterns are avoided due to potential disorientation and interference with any safety features (e.g., hazard markings).
- Firm slip resistance.
- Good contrast with wall surfaces.
- Avoidance of very shiny finishes (e.g., to protect against glare and perception of being slippery).
- Even flooring surfaces, and where two different thicknesses of flooring are laid adjacent to one another, a bevel trim or strip is used to address the difference.
- Blocks or edges of highly contrasting floor surfaces or patterns are avoided as these can be interpreted as barriers which can result in confusion and a lack of confidence for some people.
- Very large patterns can be interpreted as barriers or level changes by people with neurological, sensory processing or sight conditions, and are avoided.
- Repetitive patterns can be difficult for people with balance conditions and are avoided.
- Where a slope is present this is denoted by a visually contrasting floor covering and may need a higher slip resistance.
- Carpets or mats are even and with a shallow pile.
- Surfaces which promote a good acoustic environment.

### Barriers

- Some surface areas highly polished producing glare such as The Great Hall and Members Hall.
- Carpet usage throughout both public and private areas causing challenges for manual wheelchair users including fatigue with use.
- Some carpet such as the blue pathway of travel into the staff dining hall provides an uneven surface with pedestrians and wheelchair users veering to the left on entry. *(Users visible self-steered into the wall and were unsteady on their feet).*
- Noting a slight gradient/slope is present on exiting the Great Hall, the gradient is not visually denoted and can cause users to stumble.
- Patterns such as the carpet utilised in the staff dining hall and pavers adjacent to the pathway of travel in the court yards can be interpreted as barriers or tripping hazards.
- The external pathways within the House of Parliament's many court yards are slippery when wet *(users slipped on walkthrough).*

### **Recommendations**

- Please review best practice suggestions.



**Figure 21** Floor Surfaces

## 2.22 Sensory Design

### Dignified access is

All employees, visitors and clients should be provided with an environment that safely supports sensory differences. Environments are influenced by many factors, including noise, lighting, glare, density of use, smells, décor, perceived temperature, passage of air and surrounding activity / movement.

It is not about a single condition, difficulty, or difference. There is variety in the way we each speak, think, move, act, and communicate. As a consequence, the way we interact with our environment can vary from person to person. It is dynamic and might change over time, for example, due to an incident such as brain injury, trauma, disease, stroke, an age related condition or a change in mental wellness.

Environments that do not take into account sensory design are likely to contribute to poor mental health and impaired wellbeing for people with sensory processing differences.

To consider:

- Sounds, of various types, including intermittent or continuous, from loud to very quiet and particularly when unexpected.
- Visual “noise” which may be caused by light, glare, shadows, colours, patterns, movement, proximity, technology, or clutter.
- Spatial and layout considerations.
- Unwanted or extreme sensory feedback through smell, touch, taste, or temperature.

### Barriers

- With over 2700 clocks located in Australian Parliament House the loud ticking noise of clocks was noted.



- During sitting days for the beginning of parliament, a vote of other business causes the bells to ring throughout the building causing distress and sensory overload for some users.
- Over deodorised bathrooms can be overwhelming and may trigger medical conditions.
- Glare of some surfaces such as polished floors and borders of internal pathway can trigger migraines and headaches.
- Noise and smell of water feature in the Members Hall.
- Wooden surfaces producing loud noise when walked on.

### Recommendations

- Please review best practice suggestions.
- Investigate the opportunity to reduce the sound of clocks.
- Work with cleaning management to seek opportunity to moderate deodoriser frequency.
- Consider building a sensory map of Australian Parliament House.



Figure 22 Clocks

## 2.23 Wayfinding and Signage

### Dignified access is

All employees, visitors and clients should be provided with clear and consistent orientation signage. If information is not clear people, in particular those with sight loss or other sensory processing differences, may be unable to navigate spaces. Well recognised symbols are often better than words for most types of vision, and have the additional benefit of overcoming language barriers. All employees, visitors and clients can independently (as appropriate) find their way around the space to different key locations.

- Consistent design throughout the spaces.
- The introduction of different colours, or styles or signs at later points in a building should be avoided to prevent attentional bias.
- The International Symbol for Access on all facilities for people with a disability.
- Appropriate sign size and height for viewing angles and distances.
- Good visual contrast and lighting.



- Use of tactile letters and symbols for people who are unable to read visual information.
- Size and case of typography and symbology, suitable for reading distances.
- Signs positioned to avoid reflections from daylight or artificial lights and provided with sufficient lighting.
- Signboards that contrast with their background.
- Short, simple, easily understood messages, used only where necessary.
- Way finding assistance is provided by way of TGSI paths, or other Braille, tactile signs or way finding techniques.
- TGSIs are used consistently and logically.
- The general lighting inside is suitable for the use of the space.
- Pathways are free from obstruction.
- New employees are briefed and provided wayfinding tours.

### **Australian Parliament House Findings**

Having a consistent layout enables a person to more easily locate where they need to be, especially if a person has low vision or is blind.

There is no requirement for tactile maps in the Australian Standards, but a tactile map located near the door to/from any lifts and at the stairs will enable people to orient within a space and locate key areas such as meeting rooms and toilets.

Different floor surfaces (texture and contrast) for the walkway assist people in navigating through space.

TGSI's should be applied consistently and logically at stairs between floors and where the floor gradient is changing.

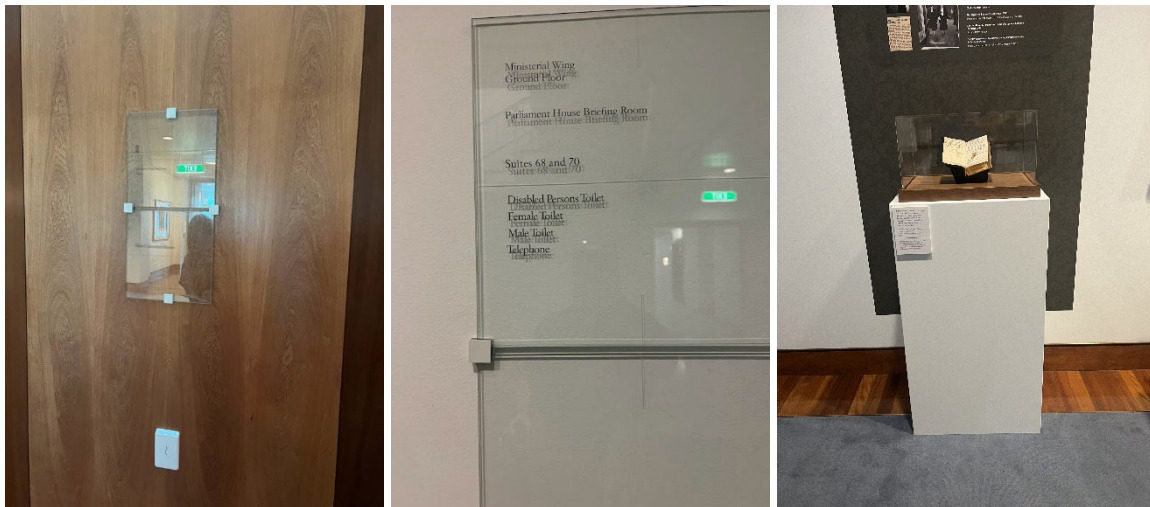
### **Barriers**

- Floor maps are hard to see and often too high up to use.
- Obstacles in pathway of travel such as plant pots, furnishing, files and art works.
- Signage font found to be too small especially for users with a vision impairment.
- Not enough wayfinding support from the basement carpark to the Great Verandah public entrance.
- Use of glass signage is causing glare and the inability for users to read information.
- Some language used for signage is not person first such as "disabled persons toilet".
- Contrast of signs with their background found to be challenging such as display information on paintings against similar coloured walls.
- The International Symbol for Access (white wheelchair on blue background) is not used to communicate on all facilities for people with a disability.

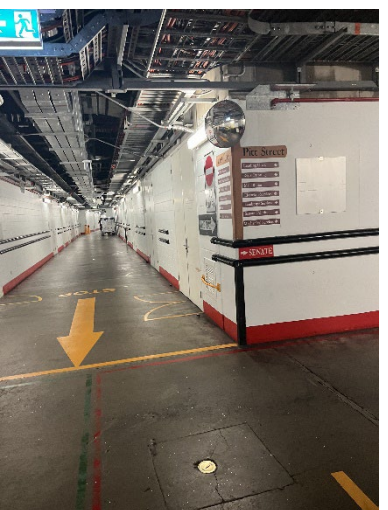
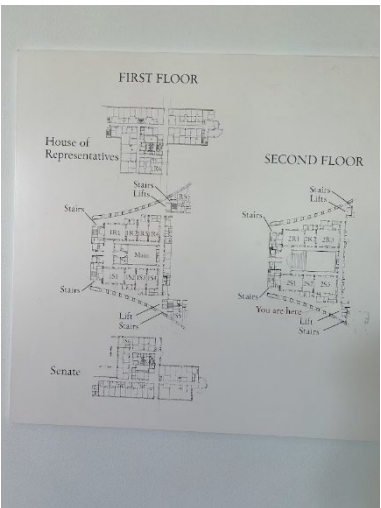
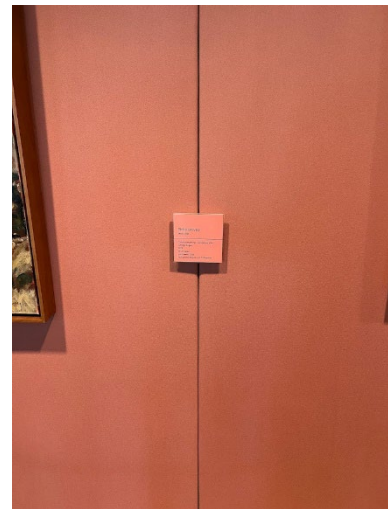
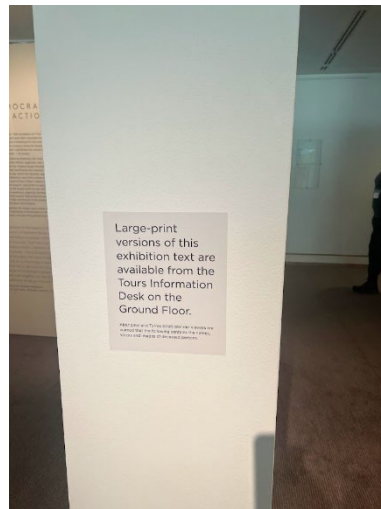
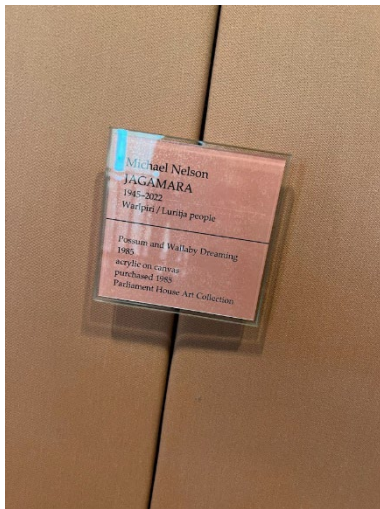


## Recommendations

- Consider best practice guidelines for signage.
- Review and update signage design guide for all signage at Australian Parliament House.
- Remove the use of glass as an element of signage as it creates glare and reflection rendering the intent of information provision obsolete.
- Explore matte finish options for signage to reduce glare and reflections which can limit visibility of signage.
- When considering wayfinding (or any) design elements embed access needs in the process, with special consideration of sensory sensitivities.
- Explore new options for arrival wayfinding signage and indicators especially from basement carpark.
- Remove or relocate items such as bins / plants blocking natural pathways of travel.
- Incorporate sensory considerations into wayfinding. Stockland have just released a sensory map of their shopping centres which can act as a guide. Australian Network on Disability would be happy to connect Australian Parliament House with Stockland to learn more about their sensory mapping project.
- Where required provide guided tours of premise to assist with memory mapping of premise.



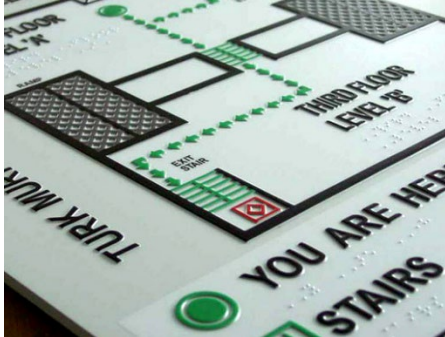






**Figure 23** Wayfinding and Signage

**Optional suggestions of good practice in other companies:**



Example of a tactile way-finding map

## 2.24 Fire and Emergency Procedures

### Dignified access is

Appropriate and dignified structures and processes need to be put in place to ensure all employees, visitors and clients can evacuate in an emergency.

- A person with disability should be able to evacuate in a dignified way:
  - For example, there is enough space in the evacuation stairwell for a wheelchair user to wait and for people to pass by.
  - For example, a person with mobility impairment has a strategy in place to exit the building in a dignified way such as using an evacuation sling or chair.
- All emergency exits should be clearly shown using illuminated exit signs.
- All emergency and evacuation procedures should be clearly displayed on appropriate signage.
- Evacuation warnings are both auditory and visible. This is especially important in bathrooms, prayer rooms, medical/rest rooms, or areas where employees, visitors and clients may be alone.

Unfortunately having visual alarms to assist workers who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing in the event of emergency is not common. As part of any workplace adjustments procedure for any employee who is hard of hearing, determine the combination of SMS alert, visual cues, and other strategies for safe egress in an emergency. This can be especially important when an employee will be by themselves, for example in the bathroom or quiet room.

### Australian Parliament House Findings

#### Features

- Good lighting of fire stairwells.



- Closed steps in fire stairwell.
- Large landing spaces.

### Barriers

- Minimal wayfinding signage.
- Some stairwells without TGSIs.
- Some steps with poor contrasting nosing.
- Handrail on inside of stairwell only.
- Height of AED great than 1400mm.
- First Aid kits inaccessible at 1680mm.
- Warden intercoms located >1500mm.
- Some furnishing blocking access to emergency equipment and comms.

### **Recommendations**

- Review the design of emergency alarms within Australian Parliament House and revert to traditional red colour vs brass fittings.
- Understand where emergency alarms are audible and visual and where there are any gaps.
- Ensure Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are in place and managers ask employees periodically if they require one. If a plan includes locating staff member in fire stairwell, please consider space provided and question whether there is enough additional room for circulation.
- Review instruction signage with goal to provide in a more accessible format and matt finish to reduce glare.
- Relocate AED and fire blankets between 900m and 1200mm.
- Relocate emergency phones, break glass panels and emergency contact information/diagrams at accessible height between 900m and 1200mm.
- Provide alternative means of communication for fire wardens and first aiders in addition to phone numbers and email: SMS.
- Review fire escape doorways and remind staff of importance of keeping doors clear of obstacles.

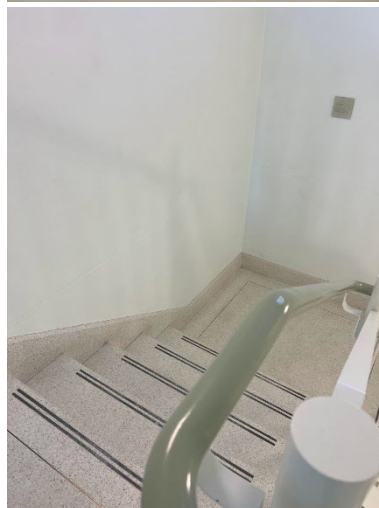
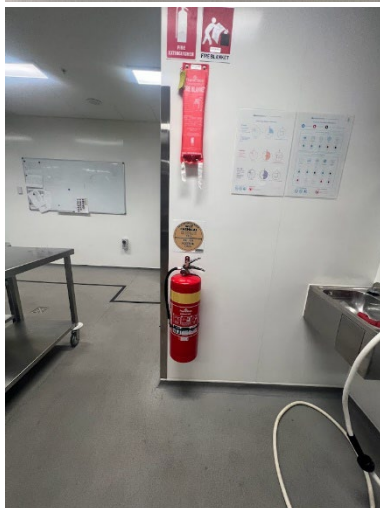
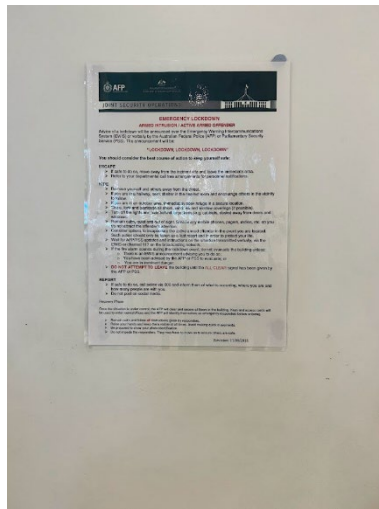


Figure 24 Emergency



## Appendix 1 – Emergency Evacuation

In 2010, the Australian Standards for Planning for Emergency Procedures in Facilities (AS3745.2010) was updated to make a greater distinction between emergency planning and emergency/ evacuation procedures. Below are some of the expanded and revised sections of the standard:

(a) duties of the emergency planning committee and emergency control organization; (b) provisions for occupants with a disability; (c) education and training; and (d) guidance on how to determine the size of the emergency control organization.

When developing emergency response procedures, consideration shall be given to occupants and visitors who for one reason or another are unlikely to be able to act optimally in an emergency.

Suitable strategies in an emergency or evacuation should be discussed with those occupants from the facility who have a disability and a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) developed for each of those individuals.

### Essential Steps

During an emergency, the fire warden should notify 'buddies' to assist those identified as requiring additional support to exit the building:

- Identify a refuge area for people with reduced mobility (e.g., fire isolated stairwells).
- Fire warden to advise emergency personnel (i.e., fire fighters and police) of the location of people with reduced mobility in refuge areas.
- Evacuation drills should be conducted regularly, including evacuation of people with disability and those requiring assistance to evacuate.
- Emergency exits should be clearly shown using illuminated exit signs.
- Emergency and evacuation procedures should be clearly displayed on appropriate signage.

### Employees with Disability

Fire wardens should be aware of any people with mobility impairments in their work area. Mobility impairment is a physical, psychological, intellectual, or sensory impairment, either temporary or permanent, which may result in a person requiring assistance during an emergency evacuation.

### Wheelchair users

An evacuation strategy should be developed with the wheelchair user to take individual issues into account. It may be appropriate to advise local emergency personnel that there are wheelchair users in the workplace, particularly if located in a high-rise building. It is not recommended to lift the person out of their wheelchair and carry them.



Fire isolated stairwells are protected from fire and smoke for up to two hours and can be a safe refuge area.

## **Anxiety or other mental illness**

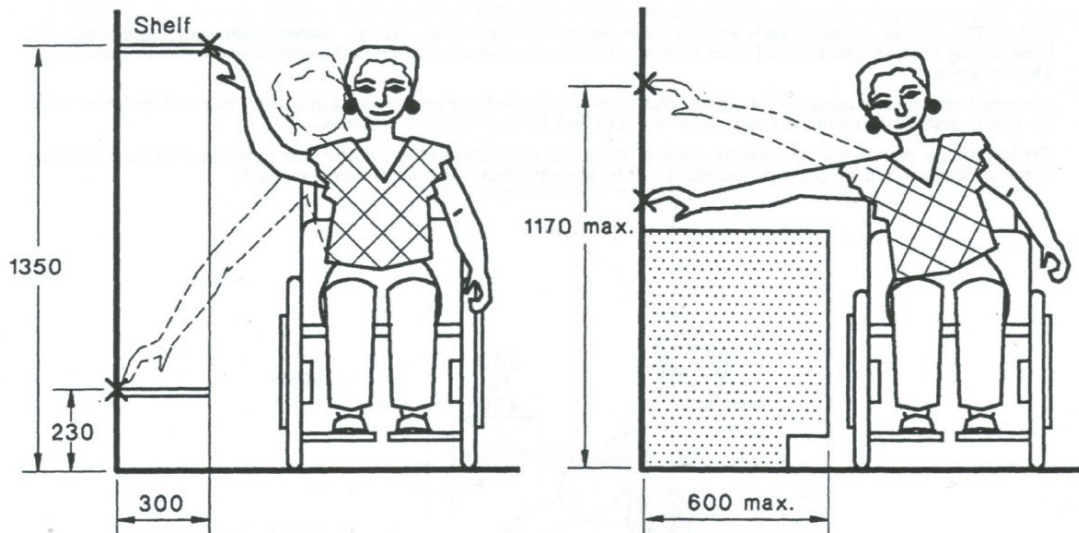
Emergency situations can be particularly stressful for people with anxiety or other mental illnesses and implementation of a PEEP would be advisable. For people who have shared anxiety or mental illnesses, pre-assign a 'buddy' to assist them during the evacuation process, this should only be done in consultation with the employee.

## **Emergency procedures checklist**

- Have the evaluation procedures been developed to consider the needs of all employees?
- Has a fire warden been assigned to each work area?
- Is the fire warden aware of people who require assistance to exit?
- Are all employees familiar with the evacuation procedures?
- Are evacuation drills conducted regularly, including practice for people with disability?
- Are smoke detectors and fire extinguishers installed and regularly tested?
- Are flashing light fire alarms installed?
- Has each employee who may require assistance had a PEEP developed and implemented?
- Are all emergency exits clear and unobstructed?
- Are the emergency procedures available in appropriate formats to meet all employees' needs?



## Appendix 2 – Reach standards





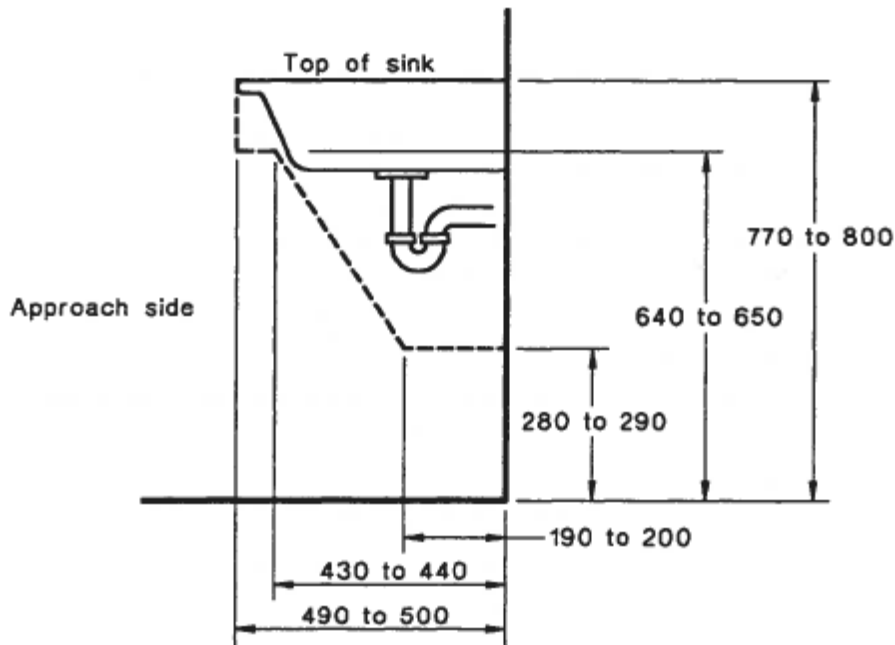
## Appendix 3 – Door Controls and Kitchen Sinks

### AS 1428.1 s13.5.2 (e) Door Controls

For doors other than fire doors and smoke doors where a door closer is fitted, the force required at the door handle to operate the door shall not exceed the following:

- (iv) To initially open the door - 20N
- (v) To swing or slide the door - 20N
- (vi) To hold the door open between 60 and 90 degrees -20N

### AS1828.2 – Kitchen Sinks



NOTE: Equipment may be located within the broken line.

DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES





## **Appendix 4 – Bathrooms / Showers**

### **AS 1428.1 s 15.4.4 Clothes hanging devices**

A clothes hanging device shall be installed 1200mm to 1350 mm above the plan of the finished floor and not less than 500 mm out from any internal corner.

### **AS 1428.1 s13.5 (d) Door Controls**

Where knobs are installed, they shall have a lever handle of a minimum length of 45mm from the centre of the spindle.



## **Disclaimer**

Australian Network on Disability has reviewed the premises with consideration of dignified access and user experience. This in no way replaces a full technical access audit. Australian Network on Disability has taken care to provide practical information with the knowledge available at the time of writing but accept no responsibility for any actions that arise from this information.