



Australian Network for
Universal Housing Design

11 November 2015

Hon Bruce Billson MP

Chair

Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme

NDIS.Sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir,

Regulation for minimum access features in new housing in the National Construction Code

I refer to the Hansard report of your public hearing roundtable on housing for people with disability on 23 October 2015. On behalf of Australian Network for Universal Housing Design (ANUHD), I humbly offer you further information for your consideration.

ANUHD views the lack of suitably accessible and visitable housing in the community as a major impediment to the success of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). People with disability and their families need to have the full range of housing options, tenure and type to choose from to enable them to live and participate in our communities. ANUHD's focus is on the construction of all new housing to a minimum accessible standard. This would greatly assist the ability of all people with disability, including those supported by the NDIS, to have a home environment where they are able to exercise choice and control over their everyday activities and to visit other people in their communities.

This is a well-supported idea. In 2009, the Australian Government's Business Investment Group recommended, along with the establishment of an NDIS, mandatory access requirements for all new housing¹. In 2010, the National Dialogue for Universal Housing Design (National Dialogue) representing government, housing industry and community sectors, including ANUHD, agreed to a national design guideline² and a strategic plan³ for **all new housing to provide specified minimum access features by 2020**.

In 2011, Livable Housing Australia, a not-for-profit company, was established to implement the agreement and received \$1M from the Australian Government for the first four years.

¹ Business Investment Group. (2009), The Way Forward. Retrieved 08 Nov 2015 from

https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/dig_report_19oct09.pdf

² National Dialogue. (2010). Livable Housing Design. Retrieved 08 Nov 2015, from

https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/09_2012/lhd_guidelines_2012_secondedition1.pdf

³ National Dialogue. (2010). Strategic plan. Retrieved 08 Nov 2015, from

https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/national_dialogue_strategic_plan.pdf

So confident was the Australian Government that the plan would work, they included it in the 2010-2020 National Disability Strategy and obtained COAG's endorsement.

The agreement called for a review in 2013 and regularly thereafter to assess the progress of the plan⁴. **No review was done**, so ANUHD⁵, as an original signatory, undertook an independent review in 2014. The ANUHD review⁶ found that, in spite of the financial support of the Australian Government and the sustained efforts of Livable Housing Australia, the housing industry leaders failed to take up the plan. A generous estimation is that **the current voluntary approach will achieve less than 5% of the National Dialogue's 2020 target**.

We ask that you support ANUHD recommendations that the Australian Government:

1. **Continue to support the 2020 target** agreed to by the National Dialogue in 2010 and included in its 2010-2020 National Disability Strategy;
2. **Assess the impact of mandatory minimum access features in all new housing** in the National Construction Code on:
 - The **housing industry**, for both Class 1 and Class 2 dwellings;
 - **Individual residents with disability**, 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, specialist disability housing, equipment and home-based support. We suggest the Australian Government also consider the impact on the Aged Care reforms, in particular, the **Home Care Packages Program** in keeping older people supported at home for as long as possible.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Margaret Ward PSM

Mr David Brant

Convenors, Australian Network for Universal Housing Design

⁴ National Dialogue. (2010). Strategic plan. Retrieved 08 Nov 2015, from https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/national_dialogue_strategic_plan.pdf p. 7.

⁵ In partnership with Rights and Inclusion Australia (RIA).

⁶ ANUHD/RIA. (2015) Report on the Progress of the National Dialogue on Universal Housing Design 2010-2014. Retrieved 08 Nov 2015, from <http://anuhd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/Report%20on%20NDUHD%20Jan2015.pdf>