



Accessible Buildings – an issue for all Australians ***Public hearing in Canberra on 26 February***

The House Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee will conduct the first public hearing for its inquiry into the Draft Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards 2009 in Canberra on Thursday 26 February 2009.

Representatives from the Human Rights Branch of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department will discuss the intended operation of the draft Premises Standards and other existing schemes. They will also outline the key technical provisions in the draft Standards and types of buildings exempted from the Standards.

The Committee Chair, Mark Dreyfus QC MP, said, "It is crucial that public buildings provide equal access for disabled Australians and Australians with mobility impairments. As the Australian population ages, difficulties in accessing public buildings will affect an ever-increasing number of Australians."

"These standards will further protect and promote the full participation of people with disabilities in the community and have important implications for the future development of buildings. The accessibility of buildings is an issue of importance for all Australians," he added.

The Committee has been asked to inquire into the following terms of reference:

- the appropriateness and effectiveness of the proposed Premises Standards in achieving their objects
- the interaction between the Premises Standards and existing regulatory schemes operating in state and territory jurisdictions, including the appropriateness and effectiveness of the proposed Model Process to Administer Building Access for People with Disability, and
- whether the Premises Standards will have an unjustifiable impact on any particular sector or group within a sector.

Details of the hearing:

Date: Thursday 26 February 2009

Time: 9:30 am – 11:00 am

Location: Committee Room 1R2, 1st floor, Parliament House, Canberra

Witnesses: Representatives of the Attorney-General's Department

Full program details available at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/laca>

Further public hearings for the inquiry are likely to be conducted in March 2009.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the public hearing, or listen to the broadcast on **FM 96.3** in Parliament House, and via webcast on the APH website:

<http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>.

Accessibility: Please contact the Committee Secretariat for information about accessibility at public hearings.

For interview:

Contact the Committee Chair, Mr Mark Dreyfus QC, MP on (02) 6277 4305 (Canberra) or in his electorate on (03) 9769 1955. Or Mr Dreyfus' media adviser, Tim Lisle-Williams on 0431 178 280.

For background information, including the full terms of reference, please visit the inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/laca or contact the Committee Secretariat on ph (02) 6277 2358 or fax (02) 6277 4427.