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Mark Dreyfus QC MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Dreyfus

Mark

COMMONWEALTH INQUIRY INTO THE DRAFT DISABILITY (ACCESS TO PREMISES - BUILDINGS) STANDARDS

Thank you for your letter of 19 January 2009 regarding the Commonwealth inquiry into the draft Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards.

Victoria welcomes the Commonwealth's commitment to ensuring improved building access for people with disability, a major issue for one in five Australians. We are pleased that decisive action has been taken to resolve accessibility issues related to building law. This inquiry provides a critical way forward for implementing the changes required to align the Building Code of Australia (BCA) with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The draft Premises Standards are an important step towards providing adequate access to buildings beyond private dwellings.

Victoria does not intend to provide a formal submission to the inquiry. However, I wish to highlight that the absence of Class 2 buildings in the draft Premises Standards may compromise overall policy effectiveness. I note that Class 2 buildings, which were included in the 2004 draft Premises Standards, are excluded from the revised draft Premises Standards (dated 2009). Excluding Class 2 buildings undermines the potential for achieving national consistency in providing for the needs of those living in, or visiting, medium density housing and apartment buildings.

As our ageing population grows, this issue will become more urgent, especially in high and medium density dwellings. I would therefore urge you to consider the need to incorporate Class 2 buildings in any redraft of the Premises Standards arising out of the public consultation process.



I look forward to the outcome of public consultations on the draft Premises Standards, and to working with you and your Federal Government colleagues to address the need for a more accessible built environment into the future. Victoria would welcome continued national leadership on this issue.

Yours sincerely

HON JOHN BRUMBY MP
Premier of Victoria

- cc. Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, and the Hon Robert McClelland MP, Commonwealth Attorney-General.
- cc. The Hon Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services.
- cc. The Hon Justin Madden MLC, Minister for Planning.
- cc. The Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Community Services (Disabilities).