



## New inquiry on Disability Access Standards

The House Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee is to review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Australian Government's draft *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards* (standards).

The draft standards were developed by the Australian Building Codes Board and the Australian Human Rights Commission to make public buildings more accessible for people with mobility, vision and hearing impairments. Current legislative obligations to provide non-discriminatory access to public buildings are enforced on an ad hoc basis driven by individual complaints. The new standards aim to provide a platform for systemic improvements in disability access by clarifying building requirements for owners, managers and developers.

In announcing the inquiry today, the Chair of the Committee, Mark Dreyfus QC MP, invited interested organisations and individuals to comment on the draft standards. 'These standards will further protect and promote the full participation of people with disabilities in the community and have important implications for the development of buildings that are accessible to the public.

"Submissions to the inquiry will inform the Committee in its assessment of the draft standards. I encourage relevant disability and building industry representative bodies, state, territory and local government organisations, people with disability and other members of the public to examine the draft standards, consider how it impacts on their interests, and make a submission to our inquiry", Mr Dreyfus said.

The Committee has been asked to inquire and report on the following terms of reference:

1. The appropriateness and effectiveness of the proposed Premises Standards in achieving their objects.
2. 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.
3. Whether the Premises Standards will have an unjustifiable impact on any particular sector or group within a sector.
4. Any related matters

Submissions addressing the terms of reference should be emailed or posted to the Committee by 13 February 2009. Public hearings for the inquiry are likely to be conducted in March 2009.

**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.apf.gov.au/laca](http://www.apf.gov.au/laca) or contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 2358.