

RECEIVED  
12 JAN 2009  
BY: LACA

TO: Committee Secretary, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs *M.R.*

CC: Mark Butler MP (Committee Member from SA)

SUBJECT: Parking for the Disabled [part of the draft Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards]

I am very concerned about Access for People with Disabilities which the previous Liberal Government, back in the year 2000, had asked the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) to update and clarify as part of a revised Disability Standards for Access to Premises. I made a submission to the ABCB on the matter in 2004.

One part of that document, which covers car parking bays for those with Disabled Person's Parking Permits, concerns 800,000 Australians who hold such a Permit. Legislation to cover car parking bays for the disabled first began in 1986. Revision of the legislation has taken 8 years so far. I feel strongly that it needs to be examined in depth as it may not be dealt with for another 22 years. I believe that it will be capable of achieving adequate results for Permit holders if this is done.

In my 55 minute meeting with Senator Minchin on this same subject in 2006, he agreed with the proposal that I put forward and wrote to the then Attorney-General on my behalf.

I have been campaigning for the Parking for the Disabled for 20 years. When I conducted my first campaign in 1989 there were 21,000 Permit holders in South Australia. When I conducted my campaign in 2003 there were 61,700 Permit holders. From my research in 2003 I was able to establish that there were 600,000 Permit holders nationally, at that time. I have recently been informed by Suzanne Waite of the Attorney-General's Department in Canberra that the current national figure is now 800,000. The increase is a result of us "baby boomers" heading towards our senior years as well as the modern life style of the community. This figure will continue to rise for some time.

There are, of course, a number of other people affected by this - the Carers, such as husbands, wives, mums, dads as well as family and friends, of the Disabled Permit holders who are directly affected by this inequitable situation.

Every human being has the right to be able to be as independent as they can!

This latest figure means that over 3.7% of the Australian population has a Disabled Parking Permit. The figure of 1% of parking spaces reserved for Disabled Parks for Permit holders was set in 1986. This has been the status quo since that time, even though the number of Permit holders has now quadrupled. Even back in 1997 the Australian Building Codes Board document RD 97/01 stated - "The current 1% is well below the number of permits issued as a percentage of the population and less than the percentage recommended in AS 2890.1".

Over the last 20 years I have been the organiser of the "CHECK OUT THE PERMIT NOT THE PERSON" campaign here in South Australia. This involved three TV Community Ads, Radio Ad and the distribution of 30,000 bumper stickers – all, thanks to the help of great sponsors. I believe in an education of the public approach to the problems that Disabled Permit holders have with their parks.

Kind regards,  
(Mrs) Jan Cocks

12/01/2009