

Submission No 76

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BY: LACA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

It is with regret that I am unable to attend the Melbourne meeting, my husband has a terminal illness that makes it impossible for me to attend meetings and social gatherings, unless I can obtain a sitter. My four hours respite is taken up with weekly shopping and other domestic matters.

Being disabled myself and being my husband's principal carer raises many practical issues that makes life so difficult. Issues such as:-

1. Being unable to take *'ME TIME'* to relax and just sit and watch the world go by.
2. Being unable to attend important hearings and meeting such as the above, this is particularly frustrating when you want your voice to be heard.
3. General access to places of work, commercial and social premises.
4. Access to self-service venues, e.g. obtaining fuel, fast food outlets, car parks, etc. I am able to drive because I am sitting down, but it is virtually impossible to obtain fuel if I am travelling on my own. The use of other public outlets are also difficult to use.
5. The lack of suitable sanitary bins in toilets for the disabled.
6. Height of toilets are usually too low for the disabled and aged and often have only one grab bar to assist in standing. My local hospital is a case in point.
7. Travelling on public transport is daunting and there is the added difficulty in obtaining tickets.
8. *'Apartments/Housing for Life'* Federal Government planning and standards are essential. Irrespective whether apartments or housing is private or government supply universal standard should apply on all building requirements.
9. Similarly, public buildings must be accessible to all and Federal Standards should apply throughout Australia.

Items 3-6 are particularly difficult to use if you are unable to walk or stand without assistance

Items 8-9 it is quite ridiculous that each State and Territory has its own set of building regulations. There has to be a universal regulation throughout Australia. Most houses come with fixed showers, these are difficult to use if you are disabled or aged a flexible hose shower is a must.

Building has to be standardised, e.g. I cannot access a consultants rooms with my scooter or wheelchair because there is not enough turning room to enter the door, and the lip at the door is too high, entry is often blocked by rubbish and recycling bins.

Access for the disabled to public buildings, etc. are often open whereas the normal entry is under cover, in inclement weather the disabled and aged have to brave the elements and if you have a powered scooter or wheelchair to be safe they should not be used in wet weather, so again often meetings and social events are not accessible.

These may seem minor issues, but they add stress to an often already stressful situation, most major issues can be overcome but it is the day to day living issues that are so important if equity is to be obtained.

The only glimmer of hope is technology which enables access to the world, without it many aged and disabled would be completely isolated, however, even this is restricted by cost and lack of affordable and accessible skills training.

Yours truly

Jo-An M. Partridge