

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Legal and Constitutional Affairs
P.O. Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

RECEIVED SM
13 MAR 2009
BY: LACA

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Inquiry into the draft Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards

National Seniors Australia operates for the social and economic benefit of its 280,000 members and has a strong track record in representing the interests of seniors across Australia in a broad range of community, business and government forums. For some time National Seniors has been raising access and equity issues with all levels of government on behalf of our members, particularly those members with a disability.

National Seniors is concerned that there are significant inconsistencies in the current access to premises arrangements which inadvertently deny disabled members in our community equal access to public buildings. For this reason we are strongly supportive of the views put forward by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) in its submission to the inquiry.

Specifically, we would like to draw your attention to the following recommendations:

- Recommendation 15: That the original proposals in the 2004 draft Premises Standards in relation to access to the common areas of Class 2 buildings (apartment blocks) be included in the final Premises Standards.
- Recommendation 16: That the issue of classification of Class 2 buildings being used primarily as short term serviced apartments be referred to the ABCB for consideration.

National Seniors strongly supports the above recommendations facilitating independent living in Class 2 buildings amongst people with a disability and we urge the Committee to make amendments to the Premises Standards in favour of these views. We believe that improvements in public building design which incorporate greater access to public facilities also has wide ranging benefits to the broader community, including older Australians.

Yours sincerely,

Michael O'Neill
Chief Executive Officer
13 March 2009

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