

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Application

The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide information concerning the requirements for an accessible built environment that enables independent, equitable and inclusive access for people with disabilities.

These Guidelines apply to:

- buildings within Sydney Olympic Park, residential and non-residential
- parkland, public transport and public domain infrastructure within Sydney Olympic Park, and
- temporary events (see also the Sydney Olympic Park Authority Access Guidelines, Temporary Overlay for Events).

These Guidelines are intended to provide guidance to Government agencies, architects, venue operators, event operators, designers and others who are involved in the design, construction, fit-out, planning and operations of facilities and venues within Sydney Olympic Park.

These Guidelines can also provide valuable information to Local Councils and other stakeholders. The Guidelines are based on the relevant Australian Standards, which are current as at October 2007 and cover specific requirements under the headings of access and circulation, amenities and communications. The Guidelines do not attempt to cover all key areas outlined under the DDA.

The Guidelines have been adapted and developed from the [Access Guidelines, September 1999](#) prepared by the Olympic Co-ordination Authority for use in the design and building of facilities and venues for the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Olympic and Paralympic Games were widely acknowledged as resounding successes in terms of the provision of equitable access and facilities for persons with disabilities.

The Sydney Olympic Park Authority, established 1 July, 2001 is the organisation responsible for managing, promoting and developing Sydney Olympic Park. The Authority aims to make Sydney Olympic Park Sydney's premier destination for entertainment, leisure, business events, tourism and high-quality residential and commercial environments.

This document is not intended to be a stand-alone document and should be used in conjunction with relevant Building Codes and Standards.



In some cases, guidelines for the operation of facilities and venues and the management of events in these facilities may also be required since these are part of, and may have a significant effect on, the provision of full and inclusive accessibility. By way of example, there is little point in building a facility that is accessible if staff are unaware how the hearing loop works, or they have no knowledge of the access requirements for different disability groups.

1.2 People with a Disability and Relevant Legislation

The Federal Government, through the Australian Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) acknowledges the right of all individuals to equitable access. The New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (ADA) was amended in 1994 to comply with the DDA.

The Sydney Olympic Park Authority's Disability Action Plan requires the Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA), in any proposed development, to take into account provisions for persons with a disability.

Under the DDA, the definition of 'disability' is as broad as possible.

It includes:

- physical disabilities
- intellectual disabilities
- psychiatric disabilities
- sensory disabilities
- neurological disabilities
- learning disabilities
- physical disfigurement
- the presence in the body of disease causing organisms.

The DDA also sets out provisions for the rights of all peoples, including in the area of access to premises, public transport and infrastructure, communication and access to government laws and programs.

A significant proportion of the Australian population has a disability and this proportion is increasing. In 2003, 3.9 million people had a disability in Australia, or 20% of the total population. This figure has recently risen to 56%, or over half of Australians who were aged 65 years and over. Whilst the degree and type of disability varies with individual circumstances, people with disabilities may experience the following:

- loss of sight (even when wearing glasses or contact lenses)
- loss of hearing
- speech difficulties in their own languages
- blackouts, fits or loss of consciousness
- difficulty in maintaining stamina during long waiting periods

- slowness at learning or understanding
- difficulty making decisions
- incomplete use of arms or legs
- difficulty in gripping or holding small objects
- incomplete use of feet or legs
- difficulty maintaining orientation in unfamiliar surroundings.

As a consequence, people with disabilities face barriers with everyday activities, such as hearing what is said, reading small print, climbing stairs, prolonged standing, walking long distances, or understanding signage. The impact on the life of the person can be a major difficulty.

For too long, disability has been viewed as the problem of the individual and not a matter of the relationship between the individual and his or her environment. Physical and social barriers can be largely overcome by taking access requirements into account in policy development, communications, infrastructure, pathways of travel and service provision.

These Guidelines are intended to be a dynamic document that is updated on a regular basis (approximately every five years or in the event of major changes to supporting codes). It provides a useful tool in the planning and design of facilities, venues, buildings and event management that maximise access for people with disabilities and the general community as a whole.

The New South Wales Government endorses people's right to access. Access is a basic human right, and a fundamental pillar of social justice. Social justice is about the acceptance of people as individuals and about access to fair and equal opportunity to participate fully in community life.

Access is not only about buildings. A truly accessible environment is one in which a person with a disability can freely express their independence, and one in which any impediment to integration is removed. It involves the seamless blending of numerous key components, such as communication, transport, employment, education, external pathways, community awareness, housing and buildings.



Special access provisions should not be necessary if the environment is built to adequately reflect the diversity and needs of the community. Good design should seamlessly provide access for all. Access should be a fundamental part of good design rather than something that is provided at a later stage to solve problems.

For every decision that is made in regard to planning and design, the question of how this will impact on a person with a disability and what can be done to cater for these impacts should be asked.

Accessible environments will benefit not only people with a disability, but also other members of the community who may be challenged in terms of access. This may include:

- parents with prams and seniors who may find it difficult to negotiate steps or steep gradients, or who may have difficulty with balance if they are required to remain standing for a long time or walk for long distances
- people who may have a temporary disability through accident or illness
- tourists and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who may find it difficult to read signs or understand information provided
- small children who have difficulty climbing steps or understanding information provided.

1.3 Definition of Disability and Handicap

Disability has too long been viewed as a problem of the individual and not the relationship of that individual with her or his environment. Disability is a functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, intellectual, emotional or sensory impairments. Handicap is a loss or limitation of opportunity to take part in the life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical or social barriers.

A disability can also arise if a person has AIDS, hepatitis, diabetes, asthma, autism, dyslexia or a mental illness. Additionally, it includes a disability that presently exists, previously existed but no longer exists (for example, a person who has had a back injury), or may exist in the future (for example a person who is HIV-positive). See the broad definition of a disability at Section 1.1.

1.4 Language of Disability

The use of correct terminology is important when referring to a person with a disability. The language should reflect an approach that focuses on ability rather than disability. For instance, it is inappropriate to refer to someone as a cripple, or to not talk directly to them (an example of a lack of inclusion).



Terms such as person / customer / client with a disability should be used, thereby putting the person first, not the disability. Disability Awareness Training should be offered to inform staff attitudes towards addressing the needs of people with disabilities. Strategies should be developed to prevent possible discrimination by staff against people with disabilities by:

- issuing formal policy statements to staff on anti-discrimination law
- providing formal training
- establishing an effective complaints handling procedure.

In addition, facilities should be described as `accessible' rather than `disabled', thereby reflecting their purpose, which is to be accessible.

1.5 Disability Discrimination Legislation

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) makes it unlawful for service providers to discriminate against people because they have a disability. Essentially this makes it the responsibility of the service provider to provide non-discriminatory services. This means that in most situations, people with disabilities must be able to use services to the same extent and with the same independence and dignity as other people. The DDA is administered by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The DDA allows individuals to lay complaints (in the first instance) to the Australian Human Rights Commission and subsequently to the Federal Court (in the event that conciliation through the Australian Human Rights Commission fails) if they think that they have been unfairly treated because of their disability. The Act applies to new as well as existing buildings and accommodation. The New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977(ADA) was amended in 1994 to comply with the DDA, and people who have a disability can lodge a complaint under either State or Federal legislation.

The DDA does not require the provision of access to be made if this will cause major difficulties or unreasonable costs to a person or organisation. This is called `unjustifiable hardship'.

But before it can be claimed that providing access will cause an unjustifiable hardship, a person or organisation needs to:

- thoroughly consider how access might be provided
- discuss this directly with the person involved
- consult relevant sources of advice.



It is up to the person or organisation to show that providing access will cause an unjustifiable hardship.

1.6 Australian Standards

These Access Guidelines are based upon the current AS 1428 Design for access and mobility which has four parts (several new parts are proposed for publication in the near future). In addition, other Standards and reference material have been condensed and combined in order to produce guidelines that reflect principles of best practice.

By way of background, Australian Standards are prepared by committees made up of experts from industry, governments, user groups and other sectors.

The requirements or recommendations contained in published Standards are a consensus of the views of representative interests and also take account of comments received from other sources. They reflect the latest scientific and industry experience. The requirements outlined in Australian Standards are generally mandatory and throughout this document, terminology will reflect that through the use of the word 'shall'.

Designers are required to comply with the technical requirements of the Standards. Australian Standards are kept under continuous review after publication and are updated regularly to take account of changing technology. The following Standards were used in developing this document. Where a referenced Australian Standard is updated or added then the most recent version shall replace the various standards as listed below.

AS 1428 Design for access and mobility

AS 1428 Part 1-2001: General requirements for access – New building work. This Standard specifies the design requirements applicable to new building work, excluding work to private residences, to provide access for people with disabilities. Particular attention is given to continuous pathways of travel and circulation spaces suitable for use by people who use wheelchairs, and access and facilities for people with ambulatory disabilities and for people with sensory disabilities.

AS 1428 Part 2-1992: Enhanced and additional requirements. Buildings and facilities. This standard is currently undergoing revision to become Interior Fit-out of Buildings and will include circulation space required at counters, tables and other work surfaces. The extra dimensions of the current Part 2 relating to the permanent building structure will be considered for inclusion in future updates of Part 1.

AS 1428 Part 3-1992: Requirements for children and adolescents with physical disabilities. This Standard provides advice about dimensional and circulation space requirements based on the anthropometrics of children aged 3 to 18 years.

While this standard may be used as a reference when designing buildings and specialist facilities specifically for this age group, it should be noted that individuals vary significantly and circulation spaces and general public facilities are to be designed to meet the requirements of AS 1428 Parts 1 and 2.

AS 1428 Part 4-2002: Tactile indicators. This Standard specifies requirements to ensure the safe and dignified mobility of people who are blind or have low vision. It includes tactile ground surface indicators to warn of hazards and provide directional information through contact by foot or cane with the ground, road or floor surfaces.

AS 2890 Car parking

AS 2890 Part 1-1993. This is the standard for off-street parking, which refers to parking spaces for people with disabilities in clause 2.4.5 and AS 2890 Part 5-1993 is for on street parking.

Part 1 was updated in 2004 and indicated that AS 2890 Part 6 is to be published in the near future to detail the requirements for off-street parking for people with disabilities. The current draft DR 04021, which includes dimensions for off-street parking spaces to accommodate vehicles fitted with side and rear entry ramps and lifts, is widely in use. While not currently published as a legislated Standard it provides dimensions and details suitable for Australian consumers that are not currently available elsewhere.

AS 1735 Lifts, escalators and moving walks.

AS 1735-1999 Part 12 This is the standard for lift facilities for persons with disabilities.

AS 1735 Part 7 This standard covers stairway lifts and Parts 14 and 15 cover low-rise restricted use lifts.

AS 4586 Slip resistance classification of pedestrian surface materials. People with ambulatory disabilities using crutches or walking sticks are at risk of falling and injuring themselves, and slip resistant surfaces are essential, particularly where floor or ground surfaces may be wet.

AS 4299-1995 Adaptable housing. This Standard presents the objectives and the principles of adaptable housing and provides guidelines on adaptable housing for those involved in designing or building new dwellings or renovations. It is referenced by most

Councils and local government authorities, particularly in conjunction with SEPP Seniors Living developments.

Note: Compliance with Australian Standards shall include any notes to clauses.

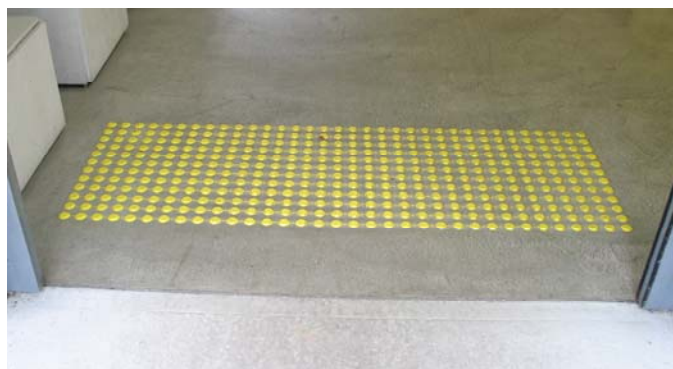
1.7 Building Code of Australia

A number of changes will be made to the Building Code of Australia (BCA), which will enable it to form part of a new National Disability Standard on Access to Premises under the DDA. The changes aim to ensure that premises that the public are entitled or allowed to enter or use and relevant areas for staff are accessible, whilst also providing certainty for building owners and developers regarding their obligations under the DDA and the BCA.

The BCA currently applies only to new buildings or those buildings undergoing significant refurbishment or changes. The DDA is a general law about eliminating discrimination against people with disabilities.

1.8 Achieving Access

Access encompasses both routes of physical movement and the community within a space or across distance. Provision of a path of continuous access is the fundamental requirement for an accessible environment. Accessible environments adequately reflect the diversity and varying needs of the community.



An accessible path of travel is required to provide an uninterrupted path of travel to or within a building providing access to all facilities.

An accessible path should not contain any barrier that would prevent it from being safely and confidently negotiated by people with disabilities. An accessible path must provide for users with intellectual, physical, sensory and mobility disabilities.

Step by step assessment of the path for each user category is necessary. The shortest route, well identified, conserves energy. Assessment should be made at the design stage, checked at each stage of construction and monitored in perpetuity. A well-designed total concept can be dislocated by decisions made in isolation during construction, operation or maintenance. An environment is generally not accessible to some people who use wheelchairs unless a toilet for their use is provided within the environment.

In the design of an accessible environment, there are extensive planning links that revolve around a combination of elements. For example, in an access pathway in an external environment, there are many considerations, such as surface material and impermeability, pathway width, cross fall, passing areas, gradients, transition between different surfaces and an absence of barriers such as bins and signs.

This document cannot outline all the linkages in respect of any one item; however, it provides the overall requirements that are necessary in providing an accessible outcome. Complex issues also arise when various service providers are involved in linked tasks, such as the provision of transport services. As such there is a need to factor in collaborative and co-operative planning approaches in any design proposal.