

**Open Letter to Minister Cook, Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade;  
Tourism; Commerce; Science**  
24 August 2022

Dear Minister,

**RE: LIFTING ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR NEW HOMES IN THE NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CODE (NCC) UPDATE 2022**

In Western Australia, one in five people live with a disability and our ageing population is continuing to grow. Despite this, we continue to accept that a significant proportion of our population must either reside in homes that they cannot easily enter, move around in, or be forced to move into alternative accommodation.

This is increasingly complicated by the shortage of affordable housing options available and by the high cost of retrofitted modifications.

Making homes more accessible will benefit all Western Australian households. The changes will be of significant benefit to the aged and people, and carers of those, with a disability. The changes will enable people to stay in their homes throughout their life course, allowing people to age in place, host visitors with a disability and provide easier access for parents.

We know that the cost and inconvenience of retrofitting homes is more costly than incorporating the standards at the time of initial build and often does not produce the best outcomes for residents. Delaying the standards merely translates to expensive modifications later.

We acknowledge the concerns around the challenges facing the current housing construction market, including labour and supply shortages and inflationary impacts. However, these changes have been anticipated for several years and the majority of the states are proceeding with the changes despite market conditions. We believe that Western Australians should have the same right to accessible housing as those living in other jurisdictions. National consistency of standards is also critical for industry certainty and attracting investment.

This week, you have a chance to make a difference to the lives of people with disability and we urge you as Minister to support the adoption of the Liveable Housing Design Guideline (silver standard) for new homes at the Building Ministers Meeting on the 26 August 2022.

**We call on you to adopt the updated accessibility requirements for residential buildings in the NCC 2022 update and to commit to a 12-month transition period to ensure time for industry training and education.**

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue with you in more detail and look forward to your response.

Signed,

**Michelle Mackenzie**  
CEO,  
Shelter WA



**Brendan Cullinan**  
CEO, People with Disabilities WA



**Louise Giolitto**  
CEO, WA Council of Social Service



**Sandy Anghie** RAlA  
State President,  
WA Australian Institute of  
Architects



**Michelle Blakeley**  
Chair, My Home



**Christine Allen**  
CEO, Council on the Ageing WA



**Coralie Flatters**  
WA State Manager,  
National Disability Services



**Tim Naughtin**  
Campaign Director



**Paul Coates**  
CEO, Carers WA



**Gaëlle Guillou**  
CEO – Midlas



**Leanne Pearman and Su-Hsien Lee**  
Co-CEOs, WA Individualised Services



**Joanne Ende**  
CEO, Explorability Inc.



**Jane Chilcott**  
CEO, Linkwest



**Jocelyn Young**  
Interim CEO, Connect Groups



**Tina Williams**  
CEO, Volunteering WA



**Eloise May**  
Team Leader/ Senior  
Coordinator



**John Bouffler**  
Executive Director, Community  
Employers WA



**Mary Butterworth**  
CEO, Developmental Disability WA



**CC: Hon Don Punch MLA, Minister for Disability Services**