

Business and Building Owners

2012 Access Fact Sheet 5

This Fact Sheet is provided to assist business and building owners to understand their responsibilities under the relevant Standards.

All business and building owners in Australia must provide equitable, dignified access to their buildings, services, facilities, and communication, information, and employment systems. This includes both public and private buildings. This is required under Australian law and Standards have been developed that outline these requirements.

Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010

The *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010*, came into force across Australia in May, 2011. They affect the requirements for access to new buildings and buildings undergoing significant upgrade. The Standards were introduced in line with an updated Building Code of Australia (BCA).

The aim of these Standards is to provide the building and design industry with detailed information regarding the required access provisions associated with the design and construction of new buildings and upgrade to existing buildings.

The new Standards aim to improve access to buildings for everyone and include a range of requirements as follows:

- increases in the minimum number of accessible entrances and doorways to buildings
- increases in the minimum circulation space required in lifts, accessible toilets and at doorways
- provision of signage in relation to

accessible facilities i.e. entrances, toilets and hearing systems/augmentation to assist people with hearing impairment

- the need for passing and turning spaces on passageways in some situations
- increases in the areas covered by hearing systems and rooms with a built in PA system
- the types of lifts and access features within lifts
- the number and distribution of accessible spaces in cinema and theatres
- access to certain common areas in new apartment blocks
- accessible facilities in some specified new or upgraded holiday accommodation such as bed and breakfasts or cabins in holiday parks
- increases to the number of accessible units in hotels and motels.
- access into certain public swimming pools
- increases in the number and location of unisex accessible toilets

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- ambulant accessible toilet cubicles in standard toilets.

In general, the Premises Standards and new BCA requirements apply to any new public buildings or existing building upgrades for which an application for building approval is made after 1 May 2011.

The Standards also apply to a range of people including property developers and property owners, building designers, builders, project managers, and property lessees. Therefore they are subject to the provisions of the Standards.

Building owners

If you own a building, all relevant sections of the Standards apply.

In general, if you are the building owner and are constructing a new building or are undertaking building upgrade work on an existing building, for which you require and have obtained a building approval, you must ensure that the works comply with the Standards. This includes ensuring that all new work complies with the Standards, as well as provision of a

path of travel from the building entry to any new upgraded area of an existing building. This is called 'the affected part'.

There are however some concessions for a building owner who is upgrading an existing building.

If there is an existing passenger lift in the building, depending on the size, it may not require major upgrade. Similarly, if there is an existing unisex accessible toilet in the building, depending on its size, it may not require significant upgrade. The Standards detail the specific requirements in relation to these concessions.

You also should be aware that there are some elements in buildings like fixtures and fittings that are not covered by the Premises Standards e.g. customer service counters and fitting rooms. However, as required by the *Disability Discrimination Act, 1992*, these must also be accessible to everyone, therefore consideration should be given to this if they are being upgraded. You will need to consider the height, size and location to ensure a person using a wheelchair or other mobility aid like a pram or stroller can easily use these.

Further information

Further information in relation to the *Disability (Access to Premises) Buildings Standards 2012* go to: <http://www.ag.gov.au/premisesstandards>

For further information in relation to the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* go to http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/dda_guide/dda_guide.htm

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