

B11 Accessibility and adaptability

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B11 Accessibility and adaptability

1. Maximising accessibility and adaptability

Background

New developments and the spaces around them should be accessible and useable to all people. Developments should be designed and constructed beyond their initial or first use to ensure that buildings are durable and capable of adaptability in the future. The 'whole of building approach' should consider how the building design, finishes and materials used in the construction phase affect the amenity and safety of future occupants of the building. This approach maximises the liveability and longevity of the buildings by ensuring that adaptability and accessibility is integral to the design and construction of the development.

For example, houses could be designed with reinforced shower walls will allow for future installation of grab rails. Wider doorways can facilitate easier movement of less able occupants. Lever taps and door handles are designed for easier use by both young children and older people. Similar principles can apply to commercial and industrial developments. Designing flexibility into a building will increase the lifespan and marketability of the development.

Principles

There are a number of principles of universal design which, when considered in the planning and design stage, add very little to the cost of the development but make a great deal of difference to the overall useability of the development. These principles can be applicable to both external and internal areas. (The principles go beyond the requirements of the Australian Standard for Adaptable Housing (AS 4299-1995)). Locating public services in areas of high activity

Principle 1 – Equitable use: The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Principle 2 – Flexibility in use: The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Principle 3 – Simple and intuitive use: Use of the design is easy to understand regardless of the individual's experience, knowledge, language skills or current concentration levels.

Principle 4 – Perceptible information: The design communicates useable information effectively to the user regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Principle 5 – Tolerance for error: The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Principle 6 – Low physical effort: The design can be used effectively and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.

Principle 7 – Size and space for approach and use: Appropriate size is provided for approach, manipulation and use regardless of users body size, posture or mobility.

Controls

Dwellings

1. The Australian Network for Universal Housing Design recommends the following minimum criteria for inclusion in a universally designed home: All areas intended to be used at night should allow appropriate levels of visibility.
 - i. Easy access: People of all ages and abilities are able to gain easy access to the dwelling from the front boundary or car park to the entrance of the dwelling.
 - ii. At least one level entrance: The dwelling includes at least one level entrance to enable all home occupants to enter and exit the dwelling with ease.
 - iii. Bathroom, living space and bedroom on the entrance level: The level entry to the dwelling provides a living space, bathroom and toilet, and a bedroom space or space capable of accommodating a bedroom space.
 - iv. Bathrooms designed for easy adaption: The bathroom provides a hobless shower and accommodates more generous internal circulation spaces to enable future adaptation.

- v. Reinforcement of bathroom walls: Walls in the bathroom and shower are reinforced to enable future installation of grab rails, if required by home occupants.
- vi. Kitchen access: The kitchen design enables all home occupants to easily manoeuvre within the kitchen area and between fixed kitchen benches.
- vii. Easy access to doors and corridors: The internal passages and doorways within the dwelling facilitate ease of movement between rooms and accommodate the circulation needs of all home occupants.
- viii. Consistent installation of switches, power outlets and window controls: Light switches, power outlets and other operational devices are installed at a consistent height to ensure ease of access for all home occupants.
- ix. Easy operable door, tap and window controls: Door and window operating hardware is easy to manipulate and can be operated by the home occupants regardless of age or ability.
- x. Slip resistance of floor surfaces: Kitchens, bathrooms and laundries feature flooring which provides slip resistance in both wet and dry conditions.

Development involving frequent public use

2. It is more important that development which involves frequent public use conforms to the principles of Universal Design, wherever practical, as it is this form of development where equity of access is most critical. This type of development includes (but is not limited to):
 - i. Public halls
 - ii. Entertainment facilities
 - iii. Function centres, restaurants, registered clubs and the like
 - iv. Large retail centres (including bulky goods development)
 - v. Large office buildings

Development applications for any of the above uses should address the principles of Universal Design in the Statement of Environmental Effects.

Lifting the bar

The following represent some ways in which applicants can demonstrate additional commitment to the principles expressed in this chapter. Demonstration of this commitment may lead to Council considering variation of development controls.

- Adopt high quality building design that is visually attractive, innovative and improves sustainability outcomes through its design, including the management of vegetation and landscape, water, land and waste in accordance with this DCP.
- Address impacts on sensitive adjacent land uses through careful site planning, building design and landscape treatment.
- Reduce the use of timber from old growth forests, rainforests and forests/plantations which do not have certified environmentally responsible forest management practices. Applicants need to demonstrate that a significant percentage of the timber and composite timber products used in the building and construction works has Forest Stewardship Council Certification (see www.fsc.org), utilises reused or recycled timber or is specified using the Friends of the Earth 'Good Wood Guide' 9th Edition.

2. Adult change facilities

Objectives

Objectives for including accessible change facilities in development involving frequent public use are:

- a) To provide adult change facilities in buildings that receive a high volume of public use to acknowledge the growing need of change facilities for people with a significant disability.
- b) Demonstrate that large scale public buildings have been planned and designed to meet the needs of people with a complex or profound disability.

Controls

1. Accessible Adult Change Facilities, designed in accordance with Section F 2.9 of the National Construction Code (NCC) or similar, must be provided in the following new or redeveloped development types:

- i. Shopping Centres with a design capacity of greater than 3,000 people.
 - ii. Multi-tenanted specialised retail premises (bulky goods developments) that are of a scale that they are considered a retail destination. In the context of this part of the DCP, a 'retail destination' is a site that offers products for sale and hire that is of a size, scale and attraction, where an extensive amount of pedestrian and vehicle traffic is likely to be received throughout the entire site, and customers have the ability to make multiple shops within the precinct.
 - iii. Major Recreation Facilities (i.e. sports stadiums, theme parks).
 - iv. Large Entertainment facilities with an internal floor area of no less than 5,000m², except where a lower design capacity is set by the NCC.
 - v. Large Clubs and Pubs with an internal floor area of no less than 5,000m², including any alfresco areas, terraces, play areas and other associated facilities attached to the club or pub.
2. Designs for adult change facilities must include a ceiling-mounted hoist and an adult sized change table.
3. Adult change facilities must be provided separately and not replace a standard accessible toilet.
4. Consideration may be given where an adult change facility is currently servicing a precinct and is suitably accessible to any new or redeveloped developments.