



Advocacy Position Statement

Accessible accommodation

What we believe:

- People with disability should have the opportunity to choose where they live and who they live with.
- Finding a place to live that's physically accessible in a wheelchair is essential when returning into the community after your injury and indeed throughout life.
- Suitable accommodation is essential to supporting and enabling an individual to get an education, participate fully in the workforce, enjoy, and contribute to their community, uphold their privacy, maintain health, and to be safe and secure.¹
- All levels of Government should play a role in the provision of adequate accessible accommodation for both residents and visitors.
- A variety of approaches and models is required to deliver sufficient, suitable, and contemporary accessible accommodation for people with spinal cord damage and other physical disabilities.
- Whilst the development of accessible accommodation can be encouraged and stimulated by Government, it is the private sector that is primarily responsible for the delivery of accessible accommodation.
- Disability discrimination means any distinction, exclusion, or restriction based on disability which has the effect of impairing the enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The denial of reasonable accommodation is discrimination based on disability.²


The current situation:

- There is a significant shortage of affordable, and suitably located accessible housing across Australia.
- There are few existing housing options for people with disability with high and complex support needs.
- Young people with disability live in nursing homes because there are limited housing options that meet their needs.
- The NDIS has an annual recurrent budget of \$700 Million for Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), designed to support housing for 28,000 Australians.³
- Finding an accessible house to buy or rent is difficult because there is a shortage, and because property advertisements often don't say if a house is accessible or not. It is expensive and difficult to retrofit housing to make it accessible, and many private landlords offering rental properties are reluctant to allow modifications.

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 2.

² *Ibid*

³ NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation: Pathway to a mature market. Report by pwc and Summer Foundation August 2017.

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- There are few incentives for developers to build new accessible housing. In regional and rural areas, there are even fewer accessible housing options, and many people with disability must move away from their families to find appropriate housing. It is also difficult to buy a house because finance options for people with disability are not flexible.
 - Efforts to increase availability of accessible accommodation should extend to holiday accommodation also, including efforts to increase number and quality of accessible accommodation options, and improving the discoverability of accessible holiday accommodation.

Spinal Life Australia will:

- Continue to advocate to the State Government to play its role legislatively to mandate for residential accommodation to meet Liveable Housing Design Guidelines (at a minimum silver level, but preferably gold standard).
- Advocating for increased funding supports for establishment of SDA housing in Queensland.
- Support members to commence or continue conversations with their local Governments about stimulating local SDA projects.
- Investigate the roles for Spinal Life Australia in providing, enabling, or supporting the provision of accessible accommodation for people with disability.
- Aim to influence hotel and accommodation peak industry bodies to better understand how to improve the accessibility of their properties and how to make their accessible properties more discoverable by people with disability.