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Make every new home accessible, advocates tell Productivity Commission

Rights & Inclusion Australia (R&IA) has asked the Productivity Commission to make accessible homes a mainstream supply outcome of best-practice housing regulation, in its submission to the Commission's Housing Supply Regulation inquiry.

One in five Australians has a disability, and there is a 60% chance that a new home will be occupied by a person with disability at some point in its life. Yet none of the four best-practice principles in the Commission's Interim Report of 27 July 2026 mentions accessibility.

"The Commission wants more homes, built faster. But it shouldn't be at any cost. We want those homes to work for the people who will live in them – which includes accessible design features. The simplest and cheapest answer has been clear all along: make every new mainstream home accessible when it is built."

R&IA director Allan Hunter

Independent estimates put the cost of meeting minimum accessibility requirements at about \$5,400 for a new house and \$7,700 for an apartment – around 1% of the build cost and far cheaper than retrofitting. Building industry claims of \$44,000 a home combine energy efficiency and other costs – the accessibility requirements account for closer to \$10,500. England has required a visitable baseline in almost every new home since 2015; in London, 34% achieve M4(2) *accessible and adaptable* (LHA Gold equivalent)

In Australia, NSW and WA have not adopted the national accessible housing standard, and state variations and exemptions results in too few accessible homes, built to inconsistent standards.

R&IA asks the Commission to acknowledge that everyone has a right to a roof over their head, and to add a fifth principle: that all new homes are accessible. R&IA also requests accessibility checks in fast-track planning pathways, annual targets for accessible homes, a Commission inquiry into accessible housing, and support for an ACCC review of the SDA new build program.

E N D S

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About R&IA: Rights & Inclusion Australia Inc. is a not-for-profit national organisation advocating for the rights of people with disability, with a focus on effective implementation of the UN CRPD, mainstream accessible housing, building standards and First Nation people with disability.