



Introduction: Hello readers! Welcome to our newsletter. The topic for this edition relates to 'adaptable' housing. As our community ages, the long term planning for independent living is paramount. Unfortunately some people end up having to move house as the cost of providing renovations for accessibility is costly.

You may have already heard of 'accessible' housing which is housing that is especially designed or renovated to accommodate people with a disability or to meet their unique needs. 'Adaptable' housing is about planning for the future so that as someone ages and potentially needs an 'accessible' home (or 'visitable' home), there are minimal changes or costs necessary and will avoid any unnecessary move to either nursing homes or other accessible accommodation. An adaptable home can still look very stylish and not much different from a normal home but has built in options for alterations for later use.

The Australian Building Commission states:

"Accessibility features that are included in initial design cost around \$870 for the average home. Renovating a similar home to add the same access features would cost around \$19,400 – 22 times the cost of including them up front."

Practical and accessible homes for all Victorians – Government media release 2009

In an Australian first, the Brumby Government will introduce a package of measures to encourage Victorians to *Build for Life*. A new community awareness campaign and regulatory measures will allow one in five Victorians who have a disability or are over the age of 60 to build accessible features into new homes.

Planning Minister Justin Madden and Community Services and Senior Victorians Minister Lisa Neville launched the *Build For Life* campaign at a Parkville Gardens home showcasing some of the accessible features available.

"The Brumby Government is taking action to make new homes more sustainable and accessible for all Victorian families," Mr Madden said. "A well designed house with accessible features means it can meet the changing needs of families, from raising small children, to welcoming aging parents, or living with a disability. The *Build for Life* awareness campaign will inform builders, designers and consumers of accessible design elements to be built into new homes. The Brumby Government is also taking action to boost the supply of accessible housing by consulting on the proposed regulatory impact that will consider mandatory accessibility features for all new homes."

A draft regulatory impact statement will be released for public comment later in the year and will investigate implementing minimum mandatory requirements for four accessible features into Victoria's building regulations:

- A clear path from the street to a level entry;
- Wider doorways and halls;
- A toilet suitable for people with limited mobility on entry level; and
- Reinforced bathroom walls so grab rails can be fitted inexpensively if they are needed in the future.

"More than 19 per cent of Victoria's population is aged over 60, by 2020 this will rise to almost 23 per cent of Victorians will be over the age of 60," Ms Neville said. "With only 4 per cent homes currently accessible, there is a definite need to make accessible homes part of

mainstream design. Providing accessible housing is a way of helping people live with dignity and independence, whether they are aged or have a temporary or permanent disability. The Brumby Government will consult broadly with the community and building sector on how best to incorporate accessible building options into all Victorian residential homes. These accessible features will be 'no cost, low cost', and have a lifetime of benefits. We want the houses we build today to meet our needs in the future."

Useful links:

www.buildforlife.com.au

www.mba.org.au

Adaptable homes:

Adaptable design features make the home flexible enough to accommodate whatever comes along in life. A teenager with a temporary injury, accommodation for a family member with a serious illness, or catering for frail relatives to visit and stay with you. As we age and become less mobile, we are dependent on many things but the main preference is to keep living in our own home, environment and community.

Benefits for adaptable design include:

- Minimal costs incurred to install 'accessible' features when and if you ever need them
- Creating a safer home
- Catering for temporary illnesses or injuries
- More family friendly options
- Not have to leave your home unnecessarily (presuming you are able to remain reasonably independent of course)
- Enjoying your independence, neighbours and your familiar community services and supports
- Adding value to your property.

Twelve top tips for consideration for designing an adaptable home:

1. Having a level entry to the front door and via the garage door and increasing the vertical clearance in the garage in case you need a wheelchair rack on the roof of the car one day
2. Building a post box that can be accessed through a car window
3. Include extra studs in wall cavities to accommodate the future installation of grab rails in the toilet and shower recess (and potentially adding a folding shower seat)
4. Making wider passageways and doorways (with 'D' shaped handles)
5. Creating a spacious bathroom with a 'walk in' (or wheel in) shower option with frameless glass divider and knee space under the basin
6. Installing lever action mixer taps
7. Lowering the height of the windows so that people who don't go out much can look out
8. Installing dual action light switches (if you go into the bedroom and turn on the light, get into bed and turn the light off from your bedside) same applies for entry from garage and other parts of the house.
9. Power points located at waist height instead of in skirting boards (to save bending)
10. Placing electrical goods and pantries at an accessible height and include recessed kickboards
11. Option to remove cupboards to provide knee space under sink or preparation areas
12. Building raised garden beds (great for children too).

If you are keen on living in a two storey house, adaptability features could include:

- Having a study or room on the lower level that could be converted to a bedroom
- Having an adaptable laundry or bathroom option available on the ground floor (with all the considerations as mentioned before)
- Ensuring that any stairs are wider than normal with handrails each side
- If there is a 180° turn on stairs - provide a landing (no 'winders' - wedge shaped steps)
- Extra reinforcements in walls in case you need a stair lift to be installed.

Building an adaptable home makes social, economic and strategic sense.

Other peoples news:

2010 Disability Sport & Recreation Festival - *Able and Active*

The inaugural Disability Sport and Recreation Festival – “Able and Active” will bring together a range of community organisations which focus on sport and recreation opportunities, equity and health issues for Victorian's with disability, in an exhibition-style, free public event. Hosted by Wheelchair Sports Victoria and proudly supported by the State Government Victoria, City of Melbourne and Federation Square, the Festival will be held on International Day of People with Disability on Friday 3rd December 2010. The festival is a unique, interactive event promoting healthy, physically active lifestyles through inclusive and accessible sport and recreation. Held at Federation Square in Melbourne, the Festival will be a great opportunity for the sector to unite around common goals of “participation and equity for health” and will provide a one-stop-shop for consumers of disability sport and recreation, their carers, family and friends.

The Festival will include the following events on the day:

- Annual Sports Awards Breakfast (7.00am-9.00am), Zinc at Federation Square
- Community Exhibition (featuring more than 25 organisations and ‘come and try’ sport and recreation activities) (9.00-2.00am), Federation Square forecourt areas
- Mini-Conference (10.00am-12.00pm), BMW Edge
- Corporate Wheelchair Basketball Challenge (12.00pm-1.30pm), Federation Square forecourt

For more information or to register your interest in participating, please visit the festival website at www.dsrf.org.au or email info@wsv.org.au

Scoring the Equaliser Mini-Conference

“Scoring the Equaliser” is the first Mini-Conference of the disability sport and recreation sector, hosted by Wheelchair Sports Victoria and supported by the State Government Victoria, City of Melbourne and Federation Square. “Scoring the Equaliser Mini-Conference is part of the Disability Sport and Recreation Festival – ‘Able and Active’ to be held at Federation Square Melbourne on December 3rd 2010 to celebrate International Day of People with Disability. Calls for abstracts have now closed and many high quality abstracts were submitted. The conference timetable will be released shortly and the public is encouraged to register to attend as delegates via email to info@wsv.org.au

Any feedback or contributions are most welcome.

Volunteers wanted for the 2010 Disability Sport & Recreation Festival

Volunteer opportunities are now available to assist with the delivery of the inaugural 2010 Disability Sport & Recreation Festival.

To celebrate International Day of People with Disability on Friday 3rd December, Wheelchair Sports Victoria is hosting the inaugural Disability Sport and Recreation Festival - *Able and Active* at Federation Square.

Supported by State Government of Victoria, City of Melbourne and Federation Square, the Festival will incorporate several events including:

- Annual Sports Awards Breakfast at Zinc
- Free, public exhibition with over 25 organisations showcasing the range of community sport and recreation programs and services available to Victorians with disability
- Free, 'come and try' interactive sport & recreation activities for the community
- Disability Sport & Recreation Conference '*Scoring the Equaliser*'
- Corporate Wheelchair Basketball Challenge

Volunteering opportunities are currently available for individuals and organisations that want to assist at one or more of the events at the Festival. The following volunteer opportunities are available:

- Event assistants (all events)
- Photographers
- Videographer
- Ushers (Awards Breakfast & Mini-Conference)
- Journalist/ Media reporting
- Research assistants
- Marketing collation (2 weeks prior to the festival)
- Operations coordinator

If you or someone you know would like to volunteer at the 2010 Disability Sport & Recreation Festival, please contact Wheelchair Sports Victoria on 9473 0133 or email info@wsv.org.au

National Amputee week

This week is National Amputee Awareness Week, running from 4 October to 11 October. Contact Limbs 4 Life Inc. on free call 1300 78 2231 or email info@limbs4life.com for more information and a flier advertising Amputee Awareness Week for any amputees you may know. Please forward to your networks.

Reminder for the Disability Family Fun Day at Lethbridge

Attend a free disability family fun day to be held on Sunday, 24th October between 11 and 3pm at Lethbridge Sports and Recreation Complex, Stephenson Street. For bookings call Kaylene 5281 7553.

Archived newsletters are available from our website: www.disabilityconsultants.com.au/news/

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