



Media Release

SENATOR JAN MCLUCAS

Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers

11 April 2011

Livable Housing Australia

A new not-for-profit organisation will be established to encourage Australians constructing new homes to comply with design standards that make homes more accessible.

The National Dialogue on Universal Housing Design, a group bringing together government, the residential building industry and the community sector, today met to progress the *Livable Housing Design* guidelines.

Universal housing design means designing Australian homes to meet the changing needs of home occupants across their lifetime, including people with a disability and senior Australians.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Senator Jan McLucas, announced that a new not-for-profit organisation, Livable Housing Australia, will be established.

"Livable Housing Australia will promote greater understanding of the value of universal housing design within the community and promote Universal Housing Design practices throughout the residential building and property industry."

The organisation will also identify appropriate mechanisms to assist in achieving the milestones and targets in the *Livable Housing Design* guidelines and Strategic Plan.

Developed by the National Dialogue in 2010, the *Livable Housing Design* guidelines provide awareness within the residential design and construction industry and governments about the benefits of incorporating universal design principles into new housing.

The voluntary guidelines are intended to apply to all new homes, helping builders ensure homes are prepared for the changing needs of residents and visitors.

"Livable housing design aims to make homes easier and safer to use - for seniors, people with temporary injuries, and families with young children and people with a disability," Senator McLucas said.

"It will also add value to homes and make them easier to sell. There are returns for both homeowners and the broader community."

Leaders of the housing industry and disability sector have agreed to an aspirational target that all new homes will be built to reflect the new standards by 2020. They have also committed to a Strategic Plan which provides a pathway over the next decade to assist all National Dialogue members in working towards this target.

The Gillard Government has committed \$1 million to drive an innovative partnership with the building and property sectors to promote Livable Housing Design.

Senator McLucas commended members of the National Dialogue on their commitment to incorporating universal design principles into new housing in Australia.

"This is a great example of collaboration between the residential building industry and the disability sector."

The National Disability Strategy, endorsed in February 2011 at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting by Commonwealth, state and territory governments, includes a direction to improve provision of accessible and well designed housing with choice for people with disability about where they live.

The members of the National Dialogue include:

- Australian Government
- Australian Human Rights Commission
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian Network for Universal Housing Design
- COTA Australia
- Grocon
- Housing Industry Association
- Lend Lease
- Master Builders Australia
- National People with Disabilities and Carers Council
- Office of the Disability Council of NSW
- Property Council of Australia
- Real Estate Institute of Australia
- Stockland
- Victorian Building Commission