



DISABILITY  
COUNCIL NSW

Official **Adviser** to the NSW Government

Director, Codes & Approved Pathways  
NSW Department of Planning  
GPO Box 39, Sydney NSW 2001

By electronic submission to Lynne Sheridan, Director Codes and Approval Pathways:  
[codes@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:codes@planning.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms Sheridan

### **Draft Medium Density Design Guide and Medium Density Housing Code**

The Disability Council NSW welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the NSW Department of Planning on the draft Medium Density Design Guide and the Medium Density Housing Code.

#### About the Disability Council NSW

The Disability Council NSW (the Council) is established under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW). The Council's main responsibilities under the Act are to:

- Monitor the implementation of Government policy
- Advise the Minister on emerging issues relating to people with disability, and about the content and implementation of the State Disability Inclusion Plan and disability inclusion action plans
- Advise public authorities about the content and implementation of disability inclusion action plans
- Promote the inclusion of people with disability in the community and promote community awareness of matters concerning the interests of people with disability and their families
- Consult with similar councils and bodies, and people with disability, and
- Conduct research about matters relating to people with disability.

The Council is funded by the NSW Government through the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and is supported by a secretariat team within FACS.

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## Recommendations

That the Department:

1. Puts mechanisms in place to increase the supply of accessible, affordable, appropriate, safe, secure and well located housing stock in both the public and private sectors
2. Complies with section 4.5 of its Disability Inclusion Action Plan, ensuring that “A process is in place for systematically reviewing and incorporating access and inclusion into the policy development process”
3. Works towards amending relevant codes to require all new housing to be built to the Silver Standard of Liveable Housing Design<sup>1</sup>.

## Introduction

Accessible housing is one of the Council’s four priority areas for 2016-2018. The Council’s concerns include:

- the lack of supply of accessible, affordable and appropriate housing for people with disability, and
- the lack of accommodation models that enable people with disability, particularly those with complex support needs, to have – in line with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD) and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (DIA) – choice and control in living where and with whom they wish to live.

## Accessible, affordable and appropriate housing stock

The Council is concerned about the lack of supply of accessible housing stock with real choice of dwelling types to meet the diverse housing needs of people with disability. Council wishes to encourage and endorse the state planning laws that encourage and facilitate the construction of accessible, innovative and inclusive housing types suitable for people with low income to meet these gaps in demand.

The Council believes that medium-density housing has the potential to increase the supply of accessible housing stock in suitable locations that are easily accessible to public transport, jobs, recreation and community support networks for people with disability to live independently.

The Council congratulates the Department on ensuring that the aims of the draft Medium Density Design Guide and Medium Density Housing Code are consistent with the housing objectives of the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020* and the DIA, which requires that government agencies develop Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) to enhance the inclusion of people with disability in NSW.

## Design Quality Principles

The Council fully supports the nine overarching Design Quality Principles with 26 Elements to satisfy the criteria for different housing types in the draft documents. These models are fit for purpose along with the timely inclusion of the planning instrument and tools to guide preparation of complying development proposal and for the consent authority to assess the development application with consistent standards and achieving time efficiency in processing the applications.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://livablehousingaustralia.org.au/library/help/Livable\\_Housing\\_Design\\_Guidelines\\_Web1.pdf](http://livablehousingaustralia.org.au/library/help/Livable_Housing_Design_Guidelines_Web1.pdf)

The Council wishes to focus specifically on Design Quality Principle 8: adopting Universal Design Principles to achieve housing diversity and social interaction of every resident with other residents within any dwelling type in the low medium density housing.

Having consulted with stakeholders, the Council firmly supports the incorporation of Universal Design (UD) into building codes, and believes that building codes should be amended to better incorporate Universal Design Principles and require all new housing to be built to the Silver Standard of Liveable Housing Design.

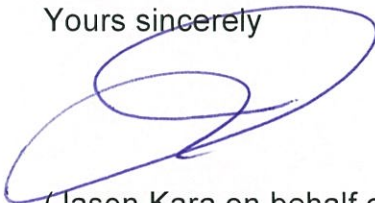
Universal Design enables people to continue living in the same home as they age by ensuring the dwellings are able to change with the needs of the occupants. Universally designed dwellings are safer and easier to enter, to move around within, and to live in. Council agrees strongly that the draft documents encourage building professionals like architects, builders, engineers, developers, housing investors and local council development assessors to put universal design theory into best practice. These drafts provide NSW the ability to deliver more accessible, affordable housing without excluding people with disability. In the longer term, it would greatly reduce the need to retrofit dwellings to meet individual needs.

The Council strongly agrees with the proposed application of Universal Design (UD) in the draft documents for the four different dwelling types:

- 3.1 2 dwellings - side by side or one in front of the other on a single lot  
100% Silver Level Liveable Housing Design, published by LHA
- 3.2 Terrace Houses- more than 2 dwellings, each has a frontage to the street  
100% Silver Level, Liveable Housing Design, published by LHA
- 3.3 Multi-dwellings & Master Planned Communities, no dwelling on top or below  
100% Silver Level, Liveable Housing Design, published by LHA
- 3.4 Manor Houses & Dual Occupancies - side by side or on top of each other  
20% Silver Level, Liveable Housing Design, published by LHA  
At least one ground floor to provide Platinum Level, Liveable Housing Design,  
published by LHA

The Disability Council endorses the Universal Design Principles and encourages the adoption of the Liveable Housing Design Silver Level as a minimum standard, inspired by Liveable Housing Australia's goal to achieve Silver Level compliance for all new dwellings in Australia by 2020.

Yours sincerely



(Jason Kara on behalf of) **Mark Tonga**  
**Chair, Disability Council NSW**

**22 December 2016**

