



FACT SHEET

ACCESSIBILITY

Nearly all new buildings and some new and upgraded parts of existing ones must comply with access standards and regulations to ensure information and services are provided in a non-discriminatory accessible manner. This can include considering the needs of people with movement, hearing, sight and behavioural difficulties, depending on your situation and building type.

What does the law say?

AS1428 Design for Access and Mobility is the primary Standard for design requirements for buildings encompassing the specific needs of people with disabilities, including movement, vision impairment and hearing impairment. Sections referenced in the NCC (National Construction Code - previously Building Code of Australia) are legally enforceable, other sections are enhanced and additional recommendations. There are also separate Standards for car parking, provision of goods and services and other items that effect a tourism business building, grounds and operations.

I have an existing building. Do I need to upgrade to the most recent standards?

Existing buildings do not require upgrade unless you are doing building or development work that triggers an NCC assessment. A building certifier or council may be able to advise whether, when an existing building is being altered or added to, the new work will trigger the requirement to upgrade for accessibility.

Even if your project doesn't trigger an assessment, we recommend you consider compliance with applicable codes where possible from a risk management perspective.

What are some of the areas covered by the NCC that need compliance?

- Car parking
- Accessible paths of travel, entrances and doorways, circulation spaces
- Walkways, ramps and landings, stairways and handrails.
- Switches
- Toilets and washroom facilities for people with disabilities or with ambulant disabilities
- Wheelchair seating spaces
- Surface finishes, slopes and colours
- Tactile indicators
- Braille signage

Create a truly engaging experience that is accessible to people of varied abilities and ages

Beyond standards, there is enjoyment. A truly engaging experience needs to cater to its intended audience - be welcoming, entertaining and interesting, enticing and memorable. Each stage of the visitor experience needs to be examined as a separate part and part of the whole, and an assessment made as to whether the experience could be better for the brand, place and target market (including age ranges and abilities as well as other demographics). You could consider:

- Shelving and displays that cater to a greater range of reach distances
- Readability of shelf signage
- Keep things simple - display available and purchasable items in clear sight, that clearly indicate what is touchable and encourage people to touch those items but not others
- Surface finishes that lead visitors through the space
- Allow people to see and be seen - use contrasting colours, good lighting, create views across spaces, open space
- Unobtrusively reduce risks - increased slip resistance to floors, additional grab rails where appropriate, remove trip hazards, etc
- Minimise glare and unwanted noise
- Reduce clutter
- Clear signage
- More colour in buildings and planting
- Arrange the furniture and fixtures in a way that creates a point of interest or an invitation to interact
- Hide doors to private or staff only space with neutral colours or integration with artwork or cupboards
- Reduce the number of doors that need to be opened
- Create a distinctive place that is identifiable and not repetitive or uniform

Learn more?

Get advice from your local Council or a Private Certifier

Download the Upgrading Existing Buildings Guide from the NCC

Contact [S2 Architects](#) and let's just start with a coffee.