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AS 1428.1 Supplement 1—1993

Design for access and mobility

Part 1: General requirements for access—Buildings—Commentary

(Supplement to AS 1428.1—1993)

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This Australian Standard was prepared by Committee ME/64, Access for People with Disabilities. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 2 September 1993 and published on 15 November 1993.

The following interests are represented on Committee ME/64:

Access Australia

ACROD

Aged Care Australia

Australian Chamber of Manufactures

Australian Council on the Ageing

Australian National Council of and for the Blind

Australian Uniform Building Regulations Coordinating Council

Building Owners and Managers Association of Australia

Department of Administrative Services—Australian Construction Services

Department of Housing, New South Wales

Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning, Queensland

Department of the Premier and Cabinet, South Australia

Disability Advisory Council of Australia

Housing Industry Association Australia

National Committee Independent Living Centres

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Design for access and mobility

Part 1: General requirements for access—Buildings—Commentary

(Supplement to AS 1428.1—1993)

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PREFACE

This Commentary has been prepared by the Standards Australia Committee on Access for People with Disabilities and contains explanations and additional background material that will assist in the interpretation of AS 1428.1—1993, *Design for access and mobility*, Part 1: *General requirements for access—Buildings*.

The paragraph numbering in this Commentary is directly related to the clause numbering in the Standard and differs only in that the numbers are prefixed by the letter 'C'. Clauses on which there is no commentary are excluded. Figure numbers, however, relate only to this Commentary, i.e. Figure C1 does not relate to Figure 1 in AS 1428.1. The same applies to Appendix A, which as it is not prefixed by 'C', does not relate to Appendix A in the Standard. Any deviations from this convention are noted in the text.

This edition is technically identical to the 1990 edition and has been reissued in order that the paragraph numbers complement the altered clause numbers in the 1993 edition of AS 1428.1.

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STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

Design for access and mobility

Part 1: General requirements for access—Buildings—Commentary (Supplement 1 to AS 1428.1—1993)

COMMENTS ON PREFACE

Development of design data

The dimensional details in this Standard are based on the physical access capabilities and needs of adult people with disabilities as determined by empirical testing of people with disabilities aged 18 to 60 years.

In the research commissioned by the Australian Uniform Building Regulations Coordinating Council, the capabilities and needs of people with vision impairment and other ambulant people with disabilities, manual wheelchair users and electric wheelchair users were studied. Design data were then developed to suit the physical access needs of at least 80% of the most able in the disability group most affected by the particular design feature under consideration.

Application of the 80% rule

Although there are a variety of aids available to assist people with disabilities to act independently, at the present time it is impossible to design all access and mobility features so that all people with disabilities can achieve access independently. A complicating factor is that many people with disabilities find some available aids too expensive, too heavy or too much of a nuisance and prefer to do without them.

Thus, in selecting a design feature as suitable for use by people with disabilities, a decision had to be made concerning which types of disability and what degree of incapacity were to be accommodated in design.

It was eventually agreed by all state building authorities, and by most groups and associations of persons with disabilities, that it would be practical and reasonable to satisfy the needs of 80% of the most able vision-impaired people, other ambulant people with disabilities, and wheelchair users in the age range 18 to 60 years, so that they could achieve independent access to buildings available for public use.

Thus, from the field test results that identified the actual capabilities of these groups of people with disabilities to access a variety of built features, it was possible to select those building elements and dimensional details that allowed 80% of each group independent access. Similarly, it was possible to select the dimensional details of a wheelchair that could be at least as large as 80% of wheelchairs currently in use. The decision to specify in the Standard the physical access needs of at least 80% of the most able people in a disability group, and the adoption of the so-called A80 wheelchair to set spatial requirements, is considered a reasonable compromise. It means, in practice, that at least 80% of any disabled group mentioned above and at least 80% of the combined groups, will be able to achieve independent access with reasonable ease and safety. The less able in each group, and users of wheelchairs that are larger than the A80 wheelchair, could experience difficulties and may, in some circumstances, require the help of an assistant to achieve access.

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