Developing the conditions to support a universal design approach

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR ALL

Michael Small

Areas to be covered

➤ Conditions supporting a universal design approach

➤ Work with Local Government in Tasmania

➤ International organisations and initiatives

Conditions supporting a universal design approach

Supporting conditions

➤ A regulatory and policy environment that encourages or at the least does not hinder a universal design approach

➤ Closer links between the planning and building approval processes

➤ Design professionals who understand the importance of a universal design approach

➤ Champions with knowledge and capacity to promote a universal design approach

Supporting conditions

➤ Developers and owners who see the value of a universal design approach

➤ Local government that adopts a universal design approach to its own projects and encourages private initiatives

➤ Building approval professionals who are flexible and supportive

1. A regulatory and policy environment that encourages or at the least does not hinder a universal design approach

➤Article 4

➤To undertake or promote research and development of universally designed goods, services, equipment and facilities … to promote their availability and use, and to promote universal design in the development of standards and guidelines;

Australian *National Disability Strategy*

➤ Government policies and practices developed under the Strategy are to reflect and reinforce the:

  ➤ Universal approach—products, services, environments and communities are accessible and usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for specialised modification

Australian *National Disability Strategy*

"A key first step in removing these barriers is to incorporate universal design into the design and build of community resources, from parks to houses, to shopping centres and sporting arenas"

"As the population ages, the incidence of disability will increase, and universal design will become even more important"

Australian *National Disability Strategy*

Actions include:

"1.5 All levels of government develop approaches to increase the provision of universal design in public and private housing in both new builds and modification of existing stock"

"1.6 Improve community awareness of the benefits of universal design"

Tasmanian *Disability Framework for Action*

➤ *Accessible island 2018–2021*:

"Universal design should be at the forefront of new developments"

"We will:

…

1.8 Promote the universal design principles in procurement for public and social housing"

Access must be provided, to the degree necessary, to enable:

(a) people to:

    (i)   approach the building from the road boundary and from any *accessible* car-parking spaces associated with the building; and

    (ii)   approach the building from any *accessible* associated building; and

    (iii) access work and public spaces, accommodation and facilities for personal hygiene; and …

Mandatory requirements of NCC

Suitable sanitary facilities for personal hygiene must be provided in a convenient location within or associated with a building, to the degree necessary, appropriate to:

    (a) the function or use of the building; and

    (b) the number and gender of the occupants; and

    (c) the disability or other particular needs of the occupants

Supporting best practice

Australian Building Codes Board

INSTITUTE OF TRAINING

Voluntary best practice

- The Premises Standards and BCA contain the minimum requirements for access

- Some project briefs may require a higher standard

- Best practice and innovation is still possible and encouraged

2. Closer links between the planning and building approval process

Planning and building approvals

➤ Planning decisions can affect future ability to achieve best outcome

  ➤ Location on allotment

  ➤ Connectedness to broader community

  ➤ Potential for achieving best outcome at building approval stage

  ➤ Approving existing building change-in-use

➤ The earlier designers and developers consider use of a building from a universal design perspective the better

UK Design and Access Statements

➤ At planning stage, developments have to provide a Design and Access Statement (DAS)

➤ A DAS must explain:

  ➤ the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development,

  ➤ the approach to access and how relevant policies have been taken into account,

  ➤ any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues, and

  ➤ how the outcome of this consultation has informed the proposed development

UK - Material change-in-use

➤ Material change-in-use requires planning approval

➤ Planning authority has discretion to refuse approval at the application stage because of the likelihood of not being able to meet Part M requirements

➤ City of London has an 'access team' that provides advice to the planning team during the planning application phase

3. Design professionals who understand the principles and importance of the universal design approach being integral to a project at the very earliest of stages

Design professionals

➤ By integrating a universal design approach throughout training

➤ By developing and providing universal design courses

➤ By encouraging them to develop a Design and Access Statement to guide design development

➤ By developing resources to assist them to inform their clients of the value of a universal design approach

4. Champions with knowledge and capacity to promote the universal design approach

Champions

➤ Build capacity and provide resources to:

    ➤ Members of disability and aged advisory committees

    ➤ Building professionals

    ➤ Academics and policy makers

    ➤ Medical, physio and occupational therapy professionals

➤ Find common ground with:

    ➤ Developers and employers

    ➤ Politicians

5. Developers and owners who see the value of a universal design approach

Developers and owners

➤ Encourage mind-set changes, eg, family parking spaces

➤ Economic value of future proofing their assets and attracting customers

➤ Reduces potential for complaints in relation to aspects not covered by Premises Standards

6. Local government that adopts a universal design approach to its own projects and encourages private initiatives

Local government

➤ Local government can show leadership: examples in Canada and USA

➤ Focus on changing expectations of community

➤ Establish closer links between the planning and building phases of a project

➤ Avoid 'accessible islands in an inaccessible sea'

7. Building approval professionals who are flexible and supportive

Flexible and supportive

➤ Develop confidence to focus on performance rather than compliance

➤ Provide guidance and resources

➤ Establish a mechanism to support timely decision making - Architectural Access Board in Massachusetts which meets weekly and charges $50 for a ruling

Work with Local Government in Tasmania

Tasmanian initiatives

➤ Director of Building Control support

➤ Workshops on universal design approach

➤ Valuing an Inclusive Built Environment (VIBE)

➤ Focusing on creating the conditions that support a universal design approach

Work on Council controlled projects

➤ Working on a checklist for Council projects:

   ➤ which includes a broader scope and level of accessibility

   ➤ focusing on community needs rather than simple compliance

➤ Inclusion Lens encourages:

   ➤ focus on inclusion from the earliest stages of a project, and

   ➤ consultative approach

➤ Build capacity of community champions

Inclusion checklist

➤ For use by council project managers and Disability/Aged Advisory committees

➤ Based on WA Disability Services Commission "Access and Inclusion checklist"

➤ Covers council projects and includes:

   ➤ Mandatory requirements for buildings

   ➤ Non-mandatory elements of buildings

   ➤ Good practice inclusive design for buildings and public space

Inclusion Lens

➤ Process for encouraging a process similar to the DAS:

   ➤ Closer links between the planning and building phase of projects

   ➤ Articulating inclusive design objectives

   ➤ Involving community knowledge and experience at the earliest stages of projects

   ➤ Assessing if outcome meets objectives

Build capacity of community champions

➤ Provide resources including checklist

➤ Provide opportunities to develop knowledge and skills

➤ Involve community members in council project development

International and national initiatives

Canada

➤ Accessible Canada Bill 2018

  ➤ Accessibility Standards Association

  ➤ Accessibility Commissioner

  ➤ Chief Accessibility Officer – advising Minister on emerging and systemic issues

United States of America

➤ **Centre for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access** (IDeA) http://idea.ap.buffalo.edu

> ➤ The IDeA Center is dedicated to making environments and products more usable, safer and healthier in response to the needs of an increasingly diverse population

Ireland

➤ **Centre for Excellence in Universal Design** http://universaldesign.ie

➤ Statutory body responsible for promoting a universal design approach in the built environment, goods and services

➤ Guideline series 'Building for Everyone'

United Kingdom

➤ **Centre for Accessible Environments** https://cae.org.uk

➤ Leading authority on inclusive design and management

➤ Provides consultancy, training, advice and guidance services to developers, designers and construction organisations