



Australian Network for  
Universal Housing Design



Centre for  
**Universal Design**  
Australia

# Universal design in housing in Australia: *An example of people power*

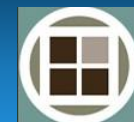
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# Background

In Australia:

- National Construction Code (NCC) sets building standard
- States use NCC in their Building Acts
- Some States choose to vary from NCC



# Background

The NCC now requires all new housing to have:

- Step-free path from the boundary or carpark
- One step-free entry
- Doorways 820mm clearance
- Corridors 1000mm clearance
- Toilet with 900mm X 1200mm in front
- Step-free hobless shower
- Reinforcement bathroom and toilet walls



# Steps to regulation

- **2007** Australia signs UNCRPD
- **2010** Voluntary Livable Housing Design guidelines
- **2015** Voluntary guidelines fail
- **2017** Government considers regulation in NCC
- **2019** UN Report says “regulate access in all new housing”
- **2021** Government agrees to regulation in NCC
- **2022** States decide to implement



*Lengthy, complex and difficult process*



# What advocates found

- Undue influence of the housing industry
- Disregard for the voice of user-stakeholders
- Entrenched flaws in the government processes



# 3 Lessons for advocates

Ordinary people held those responsible by:

1. Forming powerful coalitions
2. Using independent academic research
3. Challenging flawed processes



# Story to now

- Independent review into the government process
- User-stakeholders consulted on implementation
- 6 Jurisdictions get ready to implement from 2023
- 2 Jurisdictions resisting



# References

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3. Ward M. **Universal design in housing: Reporting on Australia’s obligations to the UNCRPD**. Paper presented at: Proceedings of the 4th Australian Universal Design Conference, Melbourne, Australia, 2021.





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