



ACT Planning &  
Land Authority

# Access and Mobility General Code



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## Introduction

The importance of providing equitable access is acknowledged in the Statement of Strategic Directions of the Territory Plan, which specifies that the needs of the people with disabilities to be recognised in all facets of urban planning, including in particular the assessment of development proposals and design and operation of transport and access systems.

The Access and Mobility General Code (the A & M General Code) has been prepared under section 55(5) of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* (P & D Act), which sets out the requirements for the provision of access to buildings and public places in the ACT. The A & M General Code applies to defined development types and or planning and design issues in the ACT. Section 55(5) of the P & D Act stipulates that any development proposal that requires compliance with the A & M General Code, needs to satisfy applicable policies, rules and criteria of the A & M General Code. The A & M General Code has been prepared to be consistent with other parts in the Territory Plan and may contain mandatory and non-mandatory Rules and Criteria.

After development approval has been given for a particular development, the lessee needs to obtain building approval before construction work can begin and therefore the building plan needs to comply with the access requirements at the building approval stage. The *Building Act 2004* regulates the approval and carrying out of building work in the ACT. Building approval may be given to certain developments, which are exempted from requiring a development approval.

The *Building Act 2004* requires building work to be carried out only in a way that will result in compliance with the Building Code of Australia (BCA), except for certain minor exempt work. The BCA requires access to be provided to certain buildings and to certain facilities within buildings. The BCA also references Australian Standards, such as *AS1428.1 – Design for Access and Mobility – General Requirements for Access – New Buildings* and *AS1428.4 - Design for Access and Mobility – Tactile Indicators*. Both the BCA and Australian Standards prescribe the minimum standards to provide equitable access for people with disabilities. However, the BCA is a performance-based document, so it does not mandate compliance with those Australian Standards. Rather, the BCA provides that compliance with certain such standards is deemed-to-satisfy the BCA's requirements.

Currently the A & M General Code covers a much wider scope of development than the BCA and therefore does not necessarily correlate with all provisions of the BCA. In some cases, the A & M General Code and BCA cover the same subject matter and therefore considered to be overlapping with the Australian Standards. The Commonwealth Government has prepared the Access to Premises Standards under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. When approved, the Access to Premises Standards will be incorporated into the BCA through amended Australian Standards. Once the reviewed access standards are approved, the Territory Plan will be reviewed in order to better align the access requirements with other Australian jurisdictions and remove any duplication from the Territory Plan. This reviewed A & M General Code will be an interim document until the Territory Plan is reviewed again for the purpose of development assessment in relation to access provisions.

### **Aim of the A & M General Code**

The A & M General Code aims to provide as far as is reasonable, non-discriminatory, equitable and dignified access for people regardless of disability, to buildings, services and facilities that are designed to have general access.

### **Why access and mobility is important**

Demographic research makes it clear that the prevalence of disabilities in the population is increasing and the ageing Australian population faces increasing mobility challenges. Accessible environments make life safer and promote ease of use for everyone. To adequately reflect the needs and diversity of the community now and in the future it is essential to work towards an accessible built environment that includes a range of housing options.

Housing options will include accessible housing for particular groups especially the aged and people with disabilities. The adaptable housing where a unit has a number of essential accessible features and or other features that can be adapted at minimal cost to make it fully accessible for people who are aged or with disability.

### **Other relevant law**

The A & M General Code is designed to complement the provisions of Commonwealth and Territory legislation relating to access and mobility. Human rights legislation at Federal and Territory levels makes it unlawful to discriminate against individuals due to specified characteristics. These laws include the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwth) (DDA), the *Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT) (ACTDA), and the *Human Rights Commission Act 2005* (ACT). There is also a requirement in the *Building Act 2004* (ACT) to comply with the access and egress requirements of the BCA. However, meeting BCA does not necessarily mean that a development proposal has met all the obligations of the DDA. The DDA and ACTDA both cover direct and indirect discrimination.

The A & M General Code applies to new work and any major extensions or alterations that are subject to a development application but the DDA applies to all existing and proposed places and facilities. The ACTDA aims to protect the rights of people in the ACT. It makes it unlawful for a person to be treated unfavourably because of specified personal attributes, including disability, in relation to access to various areas and premises where public access is permitted.

Section 19 of the DDA deals specifically with access and states the following: It is unlawful for a person to discriminate against another person –

- a) by refusing to allow the other person access to, or the use of, any premises that the community or a section of the community is entitled or allowed to enter or use (whether for payment or not); or
- b) in the terms or conditions on which the discriminator is prepared to allow the other person access to, or the use of, any such premises; or
- c) in relation to the provision of means of access to such premises; or
- d) by refusing to allow the other person the use of any facilities in such premises that the public or a section of the public is entitled or allowed to use (whether for payment or not); or
- e) by requiring the other person to leave such premises or cease to use such facilities.

The DDA considers all places that can be used by the public, or a section of the public. The definition includes schools, universities, shopping centres, publicly accessible facilities, shops, car parks, parks and recreational facilities, theatres, museums and more. It also includes access to aircraft, public transport vehicles and vessels regardless of a requirement for entrance fees.

The DDA aims to eliminate bias against people with disabilities and protect their rights to equality as a community member. The disability legislation is essentially complaints-based and therefore the responsibility lies with the building owner, the ACT Planning and Land Authority, designers, developers and building certifiers to consider the DDA principles. Under the ACTDA, a person who believes they have been discriminated against can make a formal written complaint to the Discrimination Commissioner, located in the ACT Human Rights Commission. The Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) is administered by the Federal Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (the Commission). Unresolved complaints may be referred to the Commission or the Federal Court.

There is some guidance for the DDA principles in the Draft Access to Premises Standards and proposed draft amendments to Australian Standards. The A & M General Code only refers to the legislation, but the development application needs to demonstrate that the proposal complies with the A & M General Code but at the same time relevant DDA principles are considered.

**The A & M General Code will be reviewed as the BCA is amended when the Draft Access to Premises Code is approved.** More information on the Draft Access to Premises Code can be found on <http://www.abcb.gov.au/go/whatweredoing/workprogram/projectsae/access>.

### **Structure of the A & M General Code**

The code is divided into two parts:

- a) Part A contains the general controls that apply to all development applications where this code is triggered. These controls are in addition to any relevant controls contained in Part B.
- b) Part B contains the specific controls that relate to particular types of development where access to buildings and facilities is necessary.

The controls in this Code are expressed either as Rules, which are generally quantitative, or as qualitative Criteria.

### **Using the A & M General Code**

The following website contains detailed information on the Territory Plan, including the use of assessment codes in the planning and development process and the relevance to different Development Applications.

[http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/publications\\_forms/info\\_packs/development\\_application\\_information\\_pack](http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/publications_forms/info_packs/development_application_information_pack)

## Application of the Code

This Code applies to all new developments and major alterations and or extensions to existing buildings (if the work affects more than 50% of the floor area of the whole of an existing building) across all zones in the ACT. **Table 1** identifies the developments that are required to comply with this Code.

**Table 1: Development required to meet the Access and Mobility General Code**

|                             |   |                                   |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Airport                     | Hazardous waste facility  | Religious associated use          |
| Animal care facility        | Health facility   | Residential care accommodation    |
| Aquatic recreation facility | Hospital  | Restaurant                        |
| Boarding house              | Hotel   | Retail plant nursery              |
| Bulky goods retailing       | Indoor entertainment facility   | Retirement Village                |
| Business agency             | Indoor recreation facility  | Road                              |
| Car park                    | Land management facility  | Rural Produce Retailing           |
| Caravan park/camping ground | Light industry  | Rural Supply retailing            |
| Cemetery                    | Liquid fuel depot   | Scientific research establishment |
| Child care centre           | Mint  | Serviced apartment                |
| Civic administration        | Mobile home park  | Service station                   |
| Club                        | Motel   | Special dwelling                  |
| Community activity centre   | Multi-unit housing (refer to Residential Zones – Multi Unit Housing Development Code) | Store                             |
| Community theatre           | Municipal depot   | Supermarket                       |
| Corrections facility        | Offensive industry  | Supportive housing                |
| Craft workshop              | Office  | Take-away food shop               |
| Cultural facility           | Outdoor recreation facility   | Tourist facility                  |
| Department Store            | Overnight camping area  | Tourist resort                    |
| Drink establishment         | Parkland  | Transport depot                   |
| Drive-in cinema             | Pedestrian plaza  | Vehicle sales                     |
| Educational establishment   | Personal services   | Veterinary hospital               |
| Emergency services facility | Place of assembly   | Warehouse                         |
| Financial establishment     | Place of worship  | Water based recreation            |
| Freight transport facility  | Plant and equipment hire establishment  | Zoological facility               |
| Funeral parlour             | Playing field   |                                   |
| General industry            | Produce market  |                                   |
| Group or organised camp     | Public agency   |                                   |
| Guest house                 | Public transport facility   |                                   |
| Hazardous industry          | Railway use   |                                   |

Note 1: All spaces affected by a DA need to be considered when addressing accessibility, including spaces in and around the above-mentioned development types.

Note 2: Development that includes assisted care may need special requirements.



## Part A - General Development Controls

### Objectives:

- f) Ensure that non-discriminatory and equitable access is provided to all members of the community to buildings, services and facilities
- g) Ensure access is achieved through pedestrian networks, including footpaths, public arcades, underpasses and overpasses
- h) Provide access to all public open spaces including parks, reserves and shopping centres, where topographically possible

### Element 1: Parking

#### Intent:

- i) To ensure car parking is provided to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

| Rules   | Criteria   |
|---|--|
| <b>1.1 Car Parking</b>  |  |
| R1<br>j) Designated accessible car parking spaces meet the requirements of <i>AS2890.1</i> and <i>Parking and Vehicular Access General Code</i> .   | C1<br>Car parking is provided at designated locations to meet the needs of people with disabilities.                         |
| R2<br>Car parking spaces provided for people with disabilities must have vertical clearance for the entire width of the space and the adjacent shared area of not less than 2.5m described in Figure 2.7 of the <i>AS2890.6</i> . | C2<br>Adequate space is provided to allow a roof-mounted wheelchair to be unloaded either front – in or reverse-in position. |

## Element 2: External Access to Entrances

### Intent:

- a) To ensure safe and convenient access is provided to entrances of buildings and public spaces for people with a disability, or with impaired mobility

| Rules  | Criteria   |
|--|--|
| <b>2.1 Continuous Accessible Path of Travel and Walkways</b>   |  |
| <p>R3</p> <p>A continuous accessible path of travel is provided that complies with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) <i>AS 1428.1 - Design For Access and Mobility</i>;</li> <li>ii) <i>AS 1428.4</i> – Tactile ground surface indicators for the orientation of people with vision impairment to highlight hazards or provide direction;</li> <li>iii) <i>AS 4586</i> – Slip Resistant Classification of New Pedestrian Surface Materials for external paving and ground surfaces; and</li> <li>iv) designed so that the placement of facilities does not intrude into the continuous accessible path of travel.</li> <li>v) Walkways and glass adjacent to walkways to comply with <i>AS1428.1</i> and <i>AS1428.2</i></li> </ul> | <p>C3</p> <p>Continuous accessible path of travel is provided for owners, occupants, employees and visitors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to all areas and all required facilities of the building;</li> <li>b) from property boundary, designated accessible parking spaces, passenger drop off points and public spaces to entrances of buildings;</li> <li>c) to connect buildings, facilities and spaces that are on the same block or part of the same complex unless topographically impossible; and</li> <li>d) to minimise distances travelled between elements of buildings and facilities.</li> <li>e) Walkways are of an appropriate scale and if clear glass is used adjacent to walkways, are identified by appropriate luminance contrast.</li> </ul> |
| <b>2.2 Lighting</b>  |  |
| <p>R4</p> <p>Internal lighting along the whole of the continuous accessible path of travel designed to meet <i>AS1680.0</i>.</p>   | <p>C4</p> <p>This is a mandatory requirement. There is no applicable criterion.</p>  |
| <p>R5</p> <p>External lighting along the whole of the continuous accessible path of travel meets <i>AS1158.3.1</i> and the <i>ACT Crime Prevention and Environmental Design General Code</i>.</p>  | <p>C5</p> <p>This is a mandatory requirement. There is no applicable criterion.</p>  |
| <b>2.3 Way finding</b>   |  |
| <p>R6</p> <p>Where installed directional signage or other wayfinding methods, e.g. tactile indicators, to be in accordance with <i>AS1428.1</i> and <i>AS1428.4</i> and must identify the continuous accessible path of travel, accessible parts of buildings and all accessible facilities. Details to meet <i>AS1428.1</i> and <i>AS1428.4</i>.</p>  | <p>C6</p> <p>This is a mandatory requirement. There is no applicable criterion.</p>  |

| Rules                              | Criteria  |
|------------------------------------|---|
| R7<br>There is no applicable rule. | C7<br>For illuminated signs, the luminance of the symbols to be at least 30% in contrast to the background. |

### Element 3: Entry and doorways

**Intent:**

- e) To provide for a built form that provides safe and convenient entry to, and egress from buildings and to floors within buildings.

| Rules  | Criteria  |
|--|---|
| <b>3.1 Doorways and Doors</b>  |   |
| R8<br>Doorways and doors are designed to meet <i>AS 1428.1- Design for Access and Mobility</i> for:<br>f) pedestrian entrances and exits;<br>g) public circulation areas; and<br>any common use areas. | C8<br>This is a mandatory requirement. There is no applicable criterion.                                    |
| R9<br>There is no applicable rule.   | C9<br>Automatic doors for public entrances should be installed in high use commercial and public buildings. |

### Element 4: Circulation

**Intent:** To provide for design elements that are safe and convenient for circulation within and entry to buildings.

Stairways, Stairway lifts, Passenger lifts, Ramps, Handrails and Grab rails are provided in accordance with appropriate Australian Standards (**refer to Appendix A**).

### Element 5: Toilets

**Intent:** To provide access and use of sanitary facilities.

Sanitary facilities and associated signage are designed and provided to meet the purpose of the buildings and appropriate Australian Standards (**refer to Appendix A**).

### Element 6: Facilities

**Intent:** To provide access to other appropriate facilities such as street furniture and ATM.

Street furniture (seating, drinking fountains, litterbins and the like) and ATM facilities are designed and provided in accordance with appropriate Australian Standards (**refer to Appendix A**).

## Part B - Additional Specific Controls

### Objectives:

The objectives for Part B are:

- h) To provide for adaptable dwellings that recognise the diverse needs of the community, particularly people with disabilities and older people
- i) To provide convenient access to, and within facilities that meet the needs of all users
- j) To ensure safe and efficient and convenient parking facilities for vehicles of all users.

## Adaptable Housing

### Element 1: Built Form

#### Intent:

- k) To provide for the appropriate design, location and choice of sizes of adaptable dwellings within multi-unit developments and places of shared accommodation.

| Rules  | Criteria  |
|--|---|
| <b>1.1 Building Design</b>   |   |
| R10<br>Where dwellings are required to be adaptable, the dwellings must be designed in accordance with <i>AS4299 Class C (Adaptable Housing)</i> | C10<br>This is a mandatory requirement. There is no applicable criterion.   |
| R11<br>There is no applicable rule.  | C11<br>In multi-unit residential complexes, adaptable dwellings are required to be distributed in the development and be representative sample of sizes provided. |

### Element 2: Parking

#### Intent:

- l) To provide for adequate and convenient parking for owners, residents, tenants and visitors to adaptable dwellings

| Rules   | Criteria   |
|---|--|
| <b>2.1 Car Parking</b>  |  |
| R12<br>Minimum of one accessible car parking space for each adaptable dwelling is designed in accordance with <i>AS2890.6</i> . | C12<br>Accessible car spaces are to be located in close proximity to the entrance of the adaptable units, and if a lift or stair platform lift is provided to serve adaptable units in multi-unit buildings. |

| Rules                               | Criteria  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| R13<br>There is no applicable rule. | C13<br>Where there is a change in grade between the carparking and the adaptable unit, a lift or access ramp is to be provided from any basement or internal car parking for the adaptable units or visitors to the floor level of any adaptable dwelling. Access ramp to comply with AS1428.1. |

### Element 3: Access to common use areas

#### Intent:

- m) To provide for convenient access for owners, residents, tenants and visitors to common use areas in adaptable dwellings

| Rules   | Criteria  |
|---|---|
| <b>3.1 Entries</b>  |   |
| R14<br>Common use areas including shared corridors in multi unit developments to meet AS1428.1. | C14<br>This is a mandatory requirement. There are no Criteria |

### Element 4: Circulation

#### Intent:

To provide appropriate access within developments for people with disabilities or to provide design options for easy adaptation.

| <b>4.1 Lifts</b>  |   |
|---|---|
| R15<br>Passenger lifts meet AS1735.12 - <i>Lifts, Escalators and Moving Walks – Facilities for Persons with Disabilities</i> where they are provided as part of a multi-unit housing development, which includes adaptable dwellings. | C15<br>Where a multi-storey –multi unit development proposal does not incorporate a lift, the building is designed to be capable of having lift access for future use as adaptable units. |

## Special Purpose Developments

### Element 1: Access

#### Intent:

To provide access to people with disabilities or special needs to all parts of the developments.

| 1.1 Special Purpose Developments    |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| R16<br>There is no applicable rule. | C16<br>Access in a special purpose development for older people with disabilities to be in accordance with <i>AS4299 – Adaptable Housing – Class C</i> and access is provided to, and within, 100% of units within the development.  |
| R17<br>There is no applicable rule. | C17<br>For places of shared accommodation for people with disabilities:<br><br>n) Where developments have a gross floor area not exceeding 300m <sup>2</sup> , and no more than 12 person capacity – provide 1 accessible room<br><br>o) Where developments have a gross floor area exceeding 300m <sup>2</sup> provide accessible rooms at the following rates:<br><br>i) Less than 49 person capacity – 2 rooms<br><br>ii) More than 49, but less than 99 – 4 rooms<br><br>iii) More than 99 persons – 6 rooms.<br><br>Note – capacity based on no more than average of 2 people per room. |

## Fixed Seating Venue

### Element 1: Built Form

#### Intent:

- p) To provide for appropriate seating for people with disabilities and limited mobility at venues with fixed or temporary seating, for example entertainment and sporting venues

Seating arrangements to meet with appropriate Australian Standards (**refer to Appendix A**).

### Element 2: Hearing Augmentation Facilities

#### Intent:

- q) To provide for appropriate design of hearing augmentation facilities to assist people with hearing impediments

Hearing Augmentation Facilities, Emergency Warning Systems and Public Phones are provided according to appropriate Australian Standards (**refer to Appendix A**).

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Summary of Standards that are relevant to this code

The BCA makes reference to some of the Australian Standards applicable to the design of equitable access. The BCA indicates which edition of Australian Standards it refers to. The BCA does not always refer to the most recent version of a standard. However, under the Code, the most up to date Australian Standards applied by the code are applicable to relevant development proposals. At the time of the preparation of this Code the following standards apply:

- a) AS1158.3.1 Road lighting – Pedestrian area (Category P) lighting – Performance and installation design requirements
- b) AS1428.1 Design for Access and Mobility – *General Requirements for Access – New Building Work*
- c) AS1428.2 Design for Access and Mobility - *Enhanced and Additional Requirements – Buildings and Facilities*
- d) AS1428.3 Design for Access and Mobility - *Requirements for Children Adolescents with Physical Disabilities*
- e) AS1428.4 Design for Access Mobility - *Tactile Indicators*
- f) AS 1680.0 Interior Lighting – *Safe Movement*
- g) AS1735.7 Lifts, Escalators and Moving Walks – *Stairway Lifts*
- h) AS1735.12 Lifts, Escalators and Moving Walks – *Facilities for Persons With Disabilities*
- i) AS1735.14 Lifts for people with limited mobility – *Restricted use – low rise platforms*
- j) AS1735.15 Lifts, escalators and moving walks – *Low-rise passenger lifts – Non-automatically controlled*
- k) AS1735.16 Lifts, escalators and moving walks – *Lifts for persons with limited mobility – Restricted use- Automatically controlled*
- l) AS2890.1 Parking Facilities: Part 1 – *Off Street Car Parking*
- m) AS2890.6 Parking facilities: Part 6 – *Off-street parking for people with disabilities*
- n) AS2899 Public Information Symbol Signs - Part 1 *General Information Signs*
- o) AS3769 Automatic Teller Machines – *User access*
- p) AS4299 *Adaptable Housing*
- q) AS4428.4 Fire Detection, warning, control and intercom systems- Control and indicating equipment - *Intercommunication systems for emergency purposes*
- r) AS4586 *Slip Resistance Classification of New Pedestrian Surface materials*

## Appendix B

### Glossary of Terms

**Accessible** means having features to enable use by people with disability including those who rely upon a wheelchair.

**Accessibility** - The key contributions to the accessibility of a place are providing a continuous accessible path of travel, ensuring access is available to all required buildings, facilities and services and having an appreciation of how people with disabilities access and use facilities.

**Adaptability** refers to the means of designing a building that enables easy adaptation to make it fully comply with access standards.

**Adaptable housing** is housing specifically designed to enable easy modification and is recognised as a common sense approach to housing design as it involves considering a broad range of user requirements. Adaptable housing promotes convenience and safety and is based on the principle that homes should be accessible to all (children, older people and people with disabilities), making dwellings more suitable for people at all stages of their lives. This is also referred to as "Housing for Life".

**Barrier** is an object (either physical or perceived) that obstructs or impedes, for example, a physical barrier may be a step that some people are not physically capable of traversing. A perceived impediment to access may be, for example, only an impression that a ramp is too steep to negotiate. Furthermore, a lack of understanding of people's access needs can result in physical designs that pose barriers for some people. A door may or may not be considered a barrier depending on the extent to which it obstructs or impedes access.

**BCA** refers to the Building Code of Australia published by the Australian Building Codes Board.

**Continuous Accessible Path of Travel** is an uninterrupted path of travel to and within a place (whether a building or not). For non-ambulatory people, the accessible path should not incorporate any steps, humps, stairways, revolving doors, escalators or other impediments, which prevent the path being utilised by people with disabilities.

**Disability** refers to a physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or neurological impairment or a combination of those impairments or reduced capacity of a person for learning, communication or mobility or physical disfigurement, or the presence of disease causing organism.

**Facilities** include, reception counters, gateways and checkouts, public telephones, drinking fountains, vending machines, automatic teller machines, bus shelters, viewing platforms, fishing platforms, public BBQ's, post boxes, outdoor furniture including tables and seating, refuse receptacles and playground equipment.

**Places of shared accommodation** are boarding houses, guest houses, lodging house or hostels; residential parts of a hotel or motel; residential part of a school; residential part of a health care facility; and specific purpose accommodation, such as supportive housing.

**Special purpose developments** for the purpose of this code, buildings that are specifically designed for people with disabilities belonging to different age groups such as children, adolescents and older people.

**Visitability** to be visitable by people who use wheelchairs, in that there must be at least one wheelchair accessible entry and path of travel from the block boundary to the living area and to a toilet that is either accessible or visitable.

**Visitable housing unit** means a housing unit which has at least one wheelchair accessible entry with an accessible path of travel from the block boundary to the living area and to a toilet that is either accessible or visitable.