



Inquiry into Specialist Disability Accommodation service delivery through Housing ACT

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Caitlin Tough MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Disability, Carers and Community Services

Reference: HCSD

Hearing: 15 June 2026

In relation to: SDA - building standards

Question received: 21 June 2026

Answer Due: 29 June 2026

1. How do the SDA building design standards compare to construction code standards, and how has this changed since the introduction of SDA in the NDIS?

Ms Suzanne Orr MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The SDA Design Standard¹ is produced by the National Disability Insurance Agency and was published in October 2019 and applies to all new and new build refurbished SDA from 1 July 2021. It has 4 design categories as set out in the SDA Rules (2020): improved liveability, robust, fully accessible, and high physical support. The SDA Design Standard has been crafted to provide a home environment that maximises the capacity of the individual to live as independently as possible incorporating personal support features within contemporary housing practice. From 1 July 2021, an accredited SDA assessor must certify that a dwelling satisfies the SDA Design Standards of the nominated design category to enable enrolment with the NDIS.

The SDA Design Standard is a distinct housing requirement and should not be considered interchangeable with other construction code standards. The SDA Design Standard has not changed the National Construction Code or the Liveable Housing Australia Design Standard.

The National Construction Code² is Australia's primary set of technical design and construction provisions for buildings. The National Construction Code is produced and maintained by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) on behalf of the Australian Government and each state

¹ The SDA Design Standard can be accessed through the [NDIS website](https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/1868/download?attachment) or downloaded from the following link: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/media/1868/download?attachment>

² Information about the National Construction Code can be found here: <https://ncc.abcb.gov.au/>

and territory government. It sets the minimum required level for the safety, health, amenity, accessibility and sustainability of buildings.

The National Construction Code was amended in 2022 to include minimum accessibility standards for residential housing and apartments. The Livable Housing Design Standard 2022³ is an ABCB Standard that provides a set of technical provisions that if complied with enable dwellings to better meet the needs of the community, including older people and people with mobility limitations. It has been adapted from the 'Silver' level requirements of the Livable Housing Design Guidelines⁴ (fourth edition, 2017), which were first published by Livable Housing Australia. The Livable Housing Design Standard 2022 is not intended for use in designing specialist accommodation and may not accommodate the needs and abilities of all home occupants, but is considered to be of most widespread benefit and use in the majority of circumstances.

Under the ACT Disability Strategy First Action Plan, the ACT Government has committed to ensure all new Housing ACT builds meet or exceed the minimum accessibility standards under the National Construction Code.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration

Signature:



Date: 22/07/26

By the Minister for Disability, Carers and Community Services, Ms Suzanne Orr MLA

³ The Livable Housing Design Standard can be downloaded from the following link:

<https://www.abcb.gov.au/sites/default/files/resources/2023/Livable-Housing-Design-Standard-2022-1.3.pdf>

⁴ The Livable Housing Design Guidelines (fourth edition, 2017) can be accessed through the following website:

<https://accessinstitute.com.au/livable-housing-design/>