



User friendly housing for older Australians a step closer

Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) has welcomed the Victorian Government's move to amend building regulations to allow for more practical and accessible housing.

ACSA CEO Greg Mundy said the proposed changes were long over due.

"ACSA and the Council on the Ageing (COTA) have been strong advocates for modified building standards for many years," Mr Mundy said.

"Victoria is to be congratulated for leading the country in developing standards which will improve the lives of older people and those with a disability.

"However, because the ageing of Australia's population is set to become an issue of unprecedented significance, standards for accessible housing must be adopted nationally.

"Universal design standards providing for building features which assist with access, mobility and safety amount to common sense.

"The costs associated with making all accommodation user friendly for families throughout their lives, are small in comparison with the huge range of benefits. They are also likely to be recouped when people sell their homes, especially given the dramatically increasing numbers of older Australians.

"Something as simple as wider halls and doorways and reinforced bathroom walls to allow for hand rails to be attached, can make all the difference to the lives of older, and disabled people or in fact for young families. A safe living environment is a boon for a more active and enjoyable life.

"Indeed it is also in keeping with the Federal Government's agenda of encouraging older Australians to stay living at home for longer.

"If the Federal Government is genuine in its commitment, a national policy to amend the Building Code of Australia to ensure a safe and accessible environment is a natural step and one which should be undertaken as soon as possible."

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