



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **MS AUSTRALIA PRAISES ACCESSIBLE HOUSING PLAN**

November 5, 2010

**A policy to modify all Victorian domestic building regulations to allow better access for people with limited mobility was ‘a great step forward’, MS Australia announced today.**

The move, announced by the Labor Party yesterday as part of its ‘A Fairer Victoria’ strategy, had significant input from the Victorian Universal Housing Alliance, a collaboration of 80 organisations including MS Australia.

National MS Advocates Co-ordinator Mr Robert Pask said the proposed regulations would apply to all new dwellings and to major renovations. They would require builders to include:

- A clear path from the street or carpark to entry level.
- Wider doorways and halls
- A toilet suitable for people with limited mobility on every level
- Reinforced bathroom walls to allow grab rails to be fitted inexpensively
- An entry-level lipless shower

“Victoria is leading the country with this proposal, which will mean that all new buildings, including high-rise apartments, will be more accessible than our current stock in our state,” Mr Pask said.

“It is not only people with disabilities who will benefit from this forward-thinking initiative. We are an ageing population and if this plan goes ahead it’s likely that at some stage most people will have reason to be thankful that it did.

“These new features will add only about \$850 to the cost of the average building project, but the benefits to all Victorians will be priceless.”

Mr Pask said a recent study showed that that half of people with MS had modified their home, at an average cost of \$12,800. About 85% of costs are met by the individuals and their families. The new modifications would reduce these costs considerably in the future.

“We urge all Victorians, including the building industry and homeowners to get behind this policy,” Mr Pask said.

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