

## **Submission to the Disability Discrimination Act**

### **Disabled Parking**

With Australia's increasing aged population the need for disabled parking at shopping centres, entertainment facilities, libraries, public car parks etc is increasing.

Regrettably the number of disabled parking spaces appears is not increasing.

#### **Several issues arise when discussing disabled parking.**

1. **Availability** close to entrances.
2. **Ratio** of disabled spaces to other spaces. There needs to be a definite ratio defined in law otherwise only a token effort is made by some developers.
3. **Confusion** of disabled parking spaces with pram parking spaces for parents with small children. Many aged persons just see the marking on the bitumen and the wider space and assume that it is a disabled space. Some of the confusion arises because the markings are quite often painted in the same colours. I have seen disabled spaces marked in white, yellow and blue depending on the car park operator.
4. **Enforcement.** Many parking facilities offer no control of whether the right entitlement to use disabled parks is enforced hence at times the spaces are miss used.

### **Recommendations**

- **Positioning.** The configuration of most car parking at shopping centre, etc is in rows leading away from the building. As disabled parks are wider than the average car parking space, why not place disabled parking spaces on the end of the rows closest to the building. By placing one or two disabled parking spaces on the end of the each row facing each other, there would be less inconvenience of trying to find areas in which to place these wider car parking spaces as the car parking space on the opposite of the row will be of equal width. Using this configuration as the standard layout, then persons requiring disabled parking would then know exactly where to look for suitable parking.
- **Priority positioning.** Disabled spaces need to remain at the entrances of facilities and not be moved too far away. Many aged persons or limited mobility persons are unable to walk distances and require close parking.
- **Markings.** The disabled parking markings on the ground surface need to be consistent in design and colour. A colour, which is solely used for this purpose.
- **Repositioning of Pram Parks.** Pram parking does **not** need to be at the entrance to facilities. It can be further away, helping to reducing the incidence of confusion with the disabled parking spaces. Pram parking symbols need to be painted in a colour distinctive to pram parking and solely used for that purpose.
- **Ratio** of disabled parks to normal parks needs to be defined within the act. Developers need to consult with the local

community through the local Council to assess the need for a greater number of parks in some areas with above average population of aged or disabled persons. But above all, there needs to be a reasonable and workable ratio of disabled parking in car parking areas.

- **Uneven Ground.** Disabled parks need to be on flat ground to enable safe transfer of wheelchair confined persons and person using walking frames and aids.
- **Enforcement.** Councils and Police should be granted the power to enforce parking regulations in car parks, whether private or public, if there are reports of miss use of the car parks by persons without permits. Someone has to take the issue of enforcement seriously as it causes great inconvenience to people who need these disabled parking spaces the most.

I hope that my thoughts on this issue will be of assistance to the Review with regard to this matter.

Sincerely

Helen Mikolaj  
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