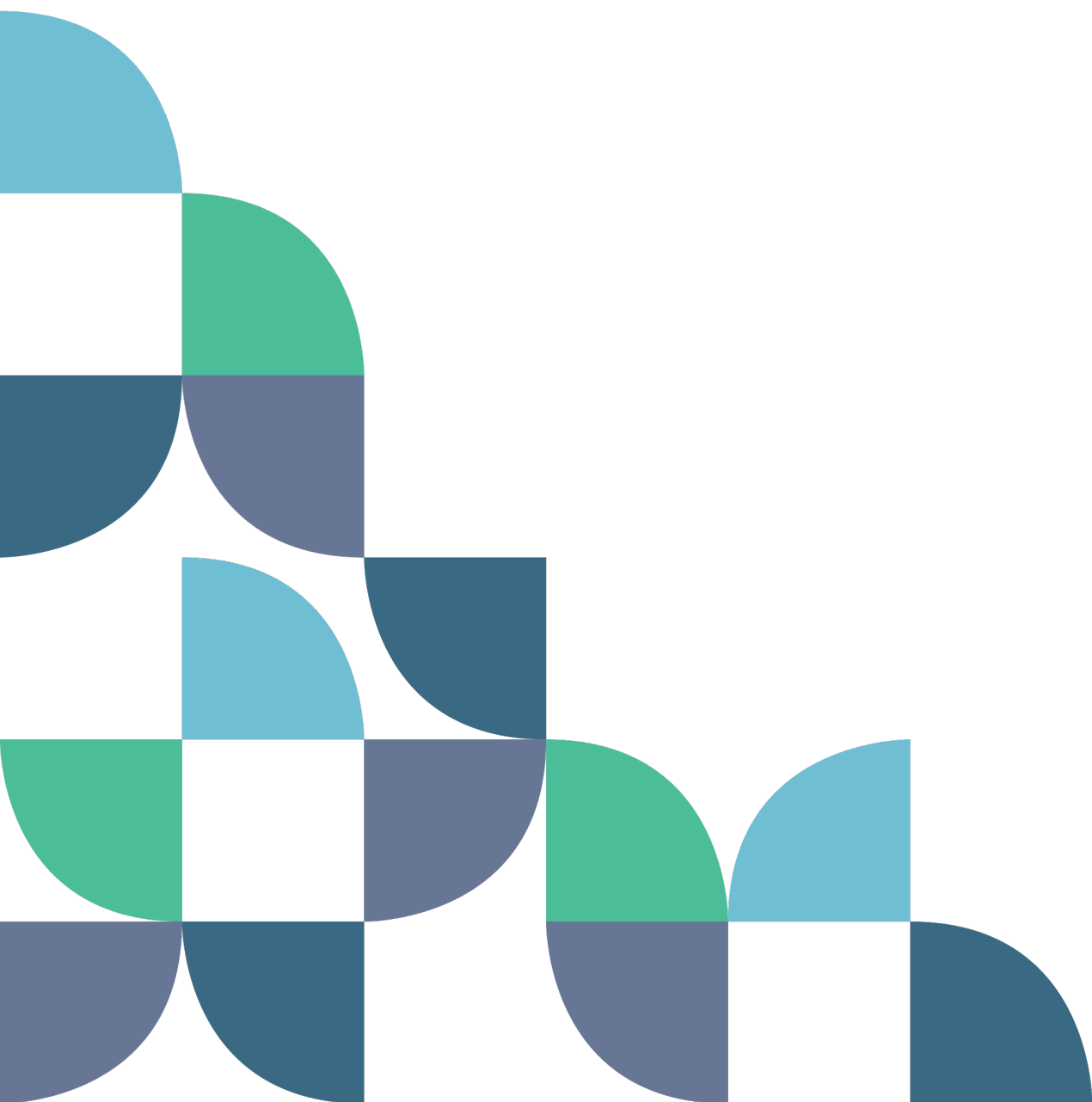


Livable Housing Design – NCC provisions for dwelling access

Director's Guidelines

September 2025 | Version 1.0





I, Brad Wagg, in my capacity as Delegate of the Director of Building Control, and acting pursuant to section 19(1)(a) of the *Building Act 2016*, hereby make the following Guideline.

Guideline title	Livable Housing Design – NCC provisions for dwelling access
Description	This Guideline provides assistance to Building Surveyors, Designers, Architects and Builders in Tasmania relating to step-free access under Part H8 of the NCC.
Version	1.0
Application	For the purposes of section 19(3) of the Act, this Guideline applies from 1 October 2025 until its revocation.
Date of Director's approval	4 September 2025

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Delegate of the Director of Building Control

Consumer Building and Occupational Services
Department of Justice

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Definitions and abbreviations

ABCB means the Australian Building Codes Board;

Act means the *Building Act 2016*;

Builder, in relation to building work or demolition work, means –

- a person engaged, to manage or carry out building work or demolition work, by the owner of premises where the work is to be performed; and
- if such a person does not exist, the owner of such premises;

Building Surveyor is a building services provider who is engaged by the owner of premises to perform or exercise, in respect of the premises, the functions or powers of a building surveyor under the Act;

NCC means the National Construction Code series published by the Australian Building Codes Board, as amended or substituted from time to time;

Regulations means the Building Regulations;

Standard means the ABCB Livable Housing Design Standard.

Document status

Section 19 of the Act stipulates the Director of Building Control may make or adopt guidelines. These Guidelines have been drafted in accordance with the Act.

This Guideline is intended as a reference for building professionals and landowners seeking clarification on the Standard. These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the NCC and the Standard. As this document is provided for guidance, this Guideline does not override the NCC.

Due to Part H8 being introduced in NCC 2022, Part H8 applies as per the NCC and the Director's Determination regarding the application of Part H8 (Livable Housing provisions) of the NCC. The introduction of Part H8 of the NCC is not affected by the non-adoption of any future NCC editions.

Background

These Guidelines provide guidance on step-free access paths under Part H8 and the Standard, which are applicable to Class 1a buildings only. Access path requirements for Class 2 buildings are covered by the Disability (Access to Premises Buildings) Standards.

The Livable Housing Design provisions are being introduced into the NCC to enable dwellings to better meet the current and changing needs of the community, including older people and people with mobility limitations.

The Livable Housing Design requirements introduced in NCC 2022 cover a range of building elements and design considerations, for example –

- Providing step-free access to the home;
- Making doorways and hallways easier to use for people with reduced mobility;
- Providing extra space in the bathroom and toilet to provide easier movement; and
- Wall reinforcing in the bathroom and toilet, to make it easier to install grabrails if needed in the future.

Some of the requirements such as door widths are straightforward, however, others may require more consideration, particularly where concessions may apply. This is the case with the provisions relating to step-free access to a dwelling which is the subject of this Guideline.

Scope

This Guideline provides practical recommendations for applying the requirements of Part H8 of the NCC and Part 1 of the Standard, which deals with dwelling access.

The Tasmanian Government implemented a phased approach to Part H8 of the NCC and the Standard. The requirements in relation to dwelling access in Part 1 of the Standard do not come into force until 1 October 2026.

The intention of a phased introduction is to allow building professionals and landowners adequate time to adjust to these measures. Reference to the Director's Determination regarding the application of Part H8 (Livable Housing provisions) of the NCC, should be made for further clarification.

Notwithstanding the above, nothing in this Guideline negates the requirement for all building work to be designed, approved and constructed in compliance with the Act and NCC.

Application

Application of Part H8 of the NCC and the Standard is the responsibility of Building Designers and Architects, Building Surveyors and Builders and requires input accordingly. For example –

- The Designer or Architect engaged to prepare the design of the building work is responsible for demonstrating how the requirements of Part H8 of the NCC and the Standard will be met. This will require accurate relative levels to be depicted on design documentation, including levels for associated building components. Designers and Architects, in consultation with the engaged Building Surveyor, if required, are responsible for determining if concessions are available under H8D2 (2) of the NCC.
- The Building Surveyor is responsible for reviewing all documentation submitted as part of an application for a Certificate of Likely Compliance, including provisions under Part H8 of the NCC and the Standard. The engaged Building Surveyor needs to be satisfied that any concessions being applied are valid.
- Builders are responsible for ensuring the building work is carried out in accordance with the Act, relevant permit or authorisation, and supporting documentation. The application of requirements under the Standard (step-free access for example), will require the builder to have a higher level of input when installing elements that were typically considered 'landscaping features' in the building industry.

The above matters highlight the importance of collaboration between building professionals at all stages of building work.

Explanatory note

Part H8 of the NCC only applies to new building work. There is no requirement to upgrade existing parts of a dwelling that are unchanged by the Certificate of Likely Compliance. Additionally, unlike requirements under the Disability (Access to Premise – Buildings) Standard 2010, there is no requirement to provide access to the ‘affected part’.

For further information regarding the application of Part H8, refer to the Director’s Determination regarding the application of Part H8 (Livable Housing provisions) of the NCC.

NCC dwelling access requirements

This part of the Guideline addresses Part H8D2(1) and H8D2(2) of the NCC, with additional guidance contained in explanatory notes.

Part H8D2, Volume 2 requires –

- (1) A Class 1a dwelling must comply with the ABCB Standard for Livable Housing Design.
- (2) Clause 1.1 of the ABCB Standard for Livable Housing Design need not be complied with if –
 - (a) step-free access via an appurtenant garage, carport or parking space in accordance with Clause 1.1(1)(b) or (c) is not provided; and
 - (b) one or more of the following conditions exist:
 - (i) The average slope of the ground on which the access path would be constructed exceeds a gradient of 1:14.
 - (ii) To provide an external step-free access path would necessitate construction of ramping that exceeds the length and gradient allowed by Clause 1.1(4).
 - (iii) There is insufficient space available on the site on which to construct a step-free access path complying with Clause 1.1.
 - (iv) Subject to (3), the difference in level, measured vertically from the pedestrian entry at the allotment boundary or parking space to the floor level at the entrance door on the nearest floor containing habitable rooms, would necessitate construction of ramping that exceeds the length and gradient allowed under Clause 1.1(4).
- (3) For the purposes of (2)(b)(iv), the difference in level must be measured from the floor level at the entrance door, or if there is an attached deck, balcony or the like that provides a step-free connection to the entrance door, from the lowest point of that deck, balcony or the like above the surface beneath;

- (4) Even if Clause 1.1 is not complied with, all other relevant provisions of the ABCB Standard for Livable Housing Design must still be complied with.

Explanatory note

Part 1.1 of the Standard requires a step-free access path to a dwelling with no step or other barrier from either the allotment boundary, a garage (or carport) or a car parking space within the allotment used exclusively by the occupants.

Under Part H8D2(2) of the NCC, the concessions mean that in some circumstances an access path under Part 1.1 of the Standard is not required. It is important to note that under H8D2(2), a concession may only be applied if both (a) and (b) are applicable, not just one or the other.

The concession only applies if step-free access via an appurtenant garage, carport or parking space is not provided, and either:

- The average slope of ground on which the access path would be constructed exceeds a gradient of 1 in 14; or
- In order to create an access path a ramp would need to be provided that exceeds the limitations in Part 1.1 (4) of the Standard, for example, if a ramp at 1 in 14 gradient exceeded 9 m in length, or 15 m in length at 1 in 20 gradient; or
- There is insufficient space available on the site to construct a step-free path to the dwelling; or
- Subject to H2D2(3), the difference in level, measured vertically from the pedestrian entry at the allotment boundary or parking space to the floor level at the entrance door on the nearest floor containing habitable rooms, would necessitate construction of ramping that exceeds the length and gradient allowed under Clause 1.1(4).

The concessions provided under Part H8D2(2) provide flexibility where it may be impossible to provide a step-free access path within the confines of the Standard. The application of this concession should be considered by the Building Designer or Architect and Building Surveyor at the conceptual design phase.

Where the concession is not available, the provisions of Clause 1.1 of the Livable Housing Design Standard apply.

ABCB Livable Housing Design Standard

This part of the Guideline steps through Part 1 of the Standard, with additional guidance contained in explanatory notes.

Clause 1.1 of the Standard requires –

- (1) A continuous path to a dwelling entrance door must be provided from –
 - (a) the pedestrian entry at the allotment boundary from the ground level of the adjoining land; or
 - (b) an appurtenant Class 10a garage or carport; or
 - (c) a car parking space within the allotment that is provided for the exclusive use of the occupants of the dwelling.
- (2) Access for the purposes of (1) must be –
 - (a) via a pathway that –
 - (i) has no steps; and
 - (ii) except for a step ramp provided under (5), has a maximum gradient of 1:14 in the direction of travel; and
 - (iii) if crossfall is provided, has a crossfall not more than 1:40; and
 - (iv) has a minimum width of 1000 mm; and
 - (v) if it incorporates a section suspended above finished ground level, is able to take loading forces in accordance with AS/NZS 1170.1; and
 - (vi) connects to a dwelling entrance door that complies with Section 2; or
 - (b) provided directly from an attached Class 10a garage or carport, via a door complying with the requirements of Section 2, other than Clause 2.3.

Explanatory note

The purpose of the above requirement is to provide a safe, continuous step-free pathway from the front boundary of the property, an associated class 10 or car parking space on the allotment to an entry door to the dwelling. Importantly, this can be any entry door, not specifically the 'front' door.

Prior to designing or determining compliance with Part 1.1 of the Standard, concession permissibility of Part H8D2(2) of the NCC may be considered.

The path of travel referred to in Clause 1.1(1) may be provided via an associated car parking space for the dwelling subject to that space meeting the requirements of Part 1.2 of the Standard.

- (3) For the purposes of (2), the following applies:
- (a) Any gates along the access path must have a minimum clear opening width of 820 mm, measured as if the gate were an entrance door.
 - (b) A deck or boardwalk-style path constructed in accordance with AS 1684 or NASH Standard – Residential and Low-rise Steel Framing would satisfy the requirements of (2)(a)(v).

Explanatory note

A gate may be located on the property boundary or at any point along the access path. However, poorly designed gates may be pinch points along the access path. Therefore, they must have the same opening width as a door under the Standard – 820mm clear opening.

Additional slip resistance consideration is required for ramps and landings. Part 11.2 of the ABCB Housing Provisions requires ramps and landings have a wet surface slip resistance rating of P5 or R12 to all surface, regardless of the material used. Any slip resistance surface treatment must be tested to AS 4586.

- (4) Where one or more ramps are used, the following applies:
- (a) The aggregate length of ramping (excluding landings) must not be more than
 - (i) 9 m for a 1:14 gradient; or
 - (ii) 15 m for a 1:20 gradient; or
 - (iii) a length determined by linear interpolation for ramps with a gradient between 1:14 and 1:20.
 - (b) The minimum width of the ramp must be maintained at 1000 mm between any handrails and/or kerbs (if provided) at each side of the ramp.
 - (c) At each end of a ramp there must be a landing that is –
 - (i) not less than 1200 mm long; and
 - (ii) at least as wide as the ramp to which it connects; and
 - (iii) level, or has a gradient not more than 1:40 if a gradient is necessary for drainage.
 - (d) A landing area required by Clause 2.3 may also be counted as a landing for the purposes of (c).

Explanatory note

Where a required access path contains more than one ramp, the overall length of ramping cannot exceed the lengths described under Clause 1.1(4)(a). The aggregate ramp length does not need to include any required landings.

Ramps are required to have a minimum width of 1000mm. Where there is a handrail or kerb incorporated in the ramp, the width must be between these elements.

Ramps must have a landing at each end. The required landing at the entry door may be used for this purpose. Landings require a minimum length of 1200mm and minimum width of 1000mm as above.

- (5) The access path may incorporate one step ramp having a –
- (a) height of not more than 190 mm; and
 - (b) gradient not more than 1:10; and
 - (c) width of at least 1000 mm or equivalent to that of the access path, whichever is the greater; and
 - (d) maximum length of 1900 mm.

Explanatory note

This allows a maximum compliant step riser height to be incorporated into the access path with maximum height and grade being provided. The reduced length is due to the relative steepness of the step ramp being 1:10.

Step ramps cannot reduce the width of the access path or ramp they form part of.

Clause 1.2 of the Standard requires –

- (1) Where one or more car parking spaces are connected to or form part of a required access path, at least one of the car parking spaces must have –
 - (a) a minimum unobstructed car parking space of 3200 mm wide x 5400 mm long; and
 - (b) a gradient not more than 1:33 for bitumen, or 1:40 for any other surface material.
- (2) For the purposes of (1), a required access path means an access path provided for the purposes of compliance with Clause 1.1.

Explanatory note

This provides flexibility to incorporate a car parking space – garage, carport, driveway or the like, to be included in the access path subject to meeting the physical requirements for area and grades.

Importantly, Clause 1.2 only applies to a car parking space provided for the exclusive use of the occupants of the dwelling. Additionally, this clause does not apply where no car parking spaces have been provided.

Document development history

Version	Application date	Amendment
1.0	23 September 2025	Original release

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