

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

There are regulations regarding external access to public buildings, but once inside what particular provision is made for their use by people with disabilities (PWD) of all ages, including elderly patrons? My experience has always been in public libraries – both professionally and privately – and I have a continuing interest.

Photos, especially in ads, often show modern, attractive library interiors, but I have yet to see one that provides a welcoming environment for PWD. Sufficient space, for example, not only for wheelchairs to manoeuvre easily but also to enable parking next to friends at desks, which would ideally be of adequate height, as well as individual upright seating that has backs and arms, as well as provision for a walking stick, crutches, or similar assistance products.

One of the first indications is signage.

What brought all this to mind was the recent re-opening of the Bribie Island Library after renovation. So many problems were evident, as well as a lack of consultation. After three or four weeks of general complaints from patrons, I contacted the council director responsible about the unacceptable changes to the provision of services for PWD and the elderly.

All good wishes

Mrs Val Watson

Banksia Beach, Qld

FROM THE CEO

Mrs Watson

Thanks for getting in touch regarding this important issue.

Libraries in Australia use 'People Places' as an important planning tool to assist in the development of public library buildings: http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/people_places_0.pdf.

Pages 73–75 cover the points about accessibility in your letter.

Of course, it's up to each council and library to make decisions about their new buildings, but the guidance exists to make sure libraries are easily accessible by all.

Kind regards

Sue McKerracher

ALIA CEO



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