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Our reference:  
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30 November 2016

Ms Liz Reid  
President  
Physical Disability Australia  
4/36 Holland Street  
Toowong QLD 4066

Dear Ms Reid

Re: Media release – 23 November 2016

I refer to the media release from Physical Disability Australia of 23 November 2016 calling for Standards Australia to reopen consultation on the proposed technical specification for motorised wheelchairs.

I am hoping we could meet to discuss the issues raised in the media release.

Austroads, the association of Australian and New Zealand road transport and traffic agencies, has had input into the proposed specifications which form part of a project to improve the safety of users of motorised wheelchairs and motorised mobility scooters (herein referred to collectively as motorised wheelchairs).

The Austroads project aims to improve the information available at the point of sale so that prospective purchasers of motorised wheelchairs are better informed and can purchase a wheelchair that is fit for purpose.

Motorised wheelchairs that meet the technical specification will be issued with a label. A yellow label will indicate that the device is suitable for use on public infrastructure, such as roads, footpaths and shared paths. If a device meets additional requirements it may be eligible for a blue coloured label, indicating that in addition to being able to access public infrastructure, the device is also likely able to access passenger transport conveyances.

The proposed system intends to make it easy for people purchasing a device to determine where it can be used by simply looking for the relevant label. The system will also mean that unscrupulous retailers/distributors who sell non-compliant devices may be prosecuted under Australian Consumer Law for selling devices that are not fit for purpose.

The introduction of dynamic and static stability tests in the technical specification will help to ensure safety on ramps. These stability requirements and the proposed dimensional limits are based on the *Austroads Guide to Road Design: Pedestrian and Cyclist Paths* and the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT)*.

The Australian Road Rules model law currently stipulates that a motorised wheelchair must not have a tare mass that exceeds 110kg and must not be capable of exceeding 10km/h if it is to be used on road-related areas. As such, the proposed maximum speed of 10km/h is not a change from what is currently permitted. The draft technical specifications propose that the maximum tare mass be increased to 170kg, with a maximum gross mass of 300kg for devices that are intended to access public transport. This is consistent with the requirements under DSAPT for ramps and lifts to have a minimum 300kg safe working load.

The intent of the project is not to restrict choice for motorised wheelchair users, but rather, to implement an effective labelling scheme for compliant devices to help users identify devices that are fit

for their intended purpose of use, and therefore improve their safety. People will be able to apply for a dispensation if they have a complex disability or need that makes it difficult for them to obtain a device that meets the proposed technical specification.

I am based in Brisbane. As the Austroads project manager responsible for this project, I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss the issues you have raised in your media statement. Please contact me on 3066 1531 if you have any questions or would like to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely



**Michael Skinner**  
**Manager (Licensing)**  
**Transport Regulation Branch**  
**Department of Transport and Main Roads**