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### Media Release – 23 November 2016

**“Standards Australia must reopen consultation on their proposed technical specification standard for powered wheelchairs and actively solicit feedback from Australian users of powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters”,** says Physical Disability Australia (PDA) president, Liz Reid.

The draft technical specification (to be SA TS 3695.3:201X) seeks to impose unrealistic and confining restrictions on the allowable size, weight and performance of powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters for use on “road related areas” such as public footpaths, parks and car parks and carriage in public transport vehicles (including commercial aircraft). Furthermore, its mandating of “blue labels” as an indicator of compliance with the specification opens the door to widespread denial of service to users of older or privately imported compliant equipment by public transport operators. If adopted, this technical specification would set Australia apart from most other developed countries that impose no such restrictive standards.

The proposed maximum powered wheelchair and mobility scooter dimensions (850mm (750mm at the wheels) width, 1500mm height, 1500mm length and 300 kg maximum gross mass) appear to have been arrived at without reference to the current equipment being used by Australians with physical disability, much of which is stock-standard, globally marketed and imported from countries like the United States that do not impose such arbitrary restrictions on equipment specifications. Due to the complex and diverse natures of physical disability, many users of powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters rely on, and safely use, equipment that exceeds these dimensions. If the proposed specification standard and labelling is adopted, endorsed and enforced by the Australian Government, many Australians may find themselves unable to participate in social and economic life. It would be an act of discrimination against already marginalised members of the community.

PDA also objects to imposition of a 10kph maximum speed limit on these devices as no such limitation is imposed on other users of road related areas such as pedestrians and cyclists who are free to responsibly travel at significantly higher speeds.

We call upon the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, the Hon Greg Hunt MP to intervene in the approval of the proposed technical specification. It is a solution in search of a problem that would restrict Australians’ access to the powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters that best meets their needs. Furthermore, we ask that he direct Standards Australia to genuinely consult users of such equipment so they are not unreasonably denied access to the devices they need to move freely about their communities and their country.

**Please direct all media inquiries to Simon Burchill on 1800 PDA ORG (1800 732 674)**

Handwritten signature of Liz Reid in black ink.

Liz Reid  
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Physical Disability Australia

Handwritten signature of Simon Burchill in black ink.

Simon Burchill  
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