

Accessible Product Design Alliance

POSITION STATEMENT

Summary

Products and packaging should be designed to be accessible for all consumers, regardless of their level of ability. Inaccessible products and packaging can cause day to day frustration for people without disability, but for those who have a chronic condition or a disability these products and packaging can become impossible. Inaccessible products and packaging can cause unnecessary physical pain and discomfort, stress and frustration and impact a person's independence. With the population ageing, and the increasing prevalence of people with chronic conditions and disability, accessible products and packaging should be at the forefront of design.

Key points

Accessible design is a process that aims to make products and packaging easier to use for all consumers, regardless of their level of ability.

Up to 20% of the population have impairments that limit their ability to open, use and enjoy standard consumer products. These impairments include poor vision, issues with mobility and limited strength and dexterity. Those affected include older people, people with disability and people with chronic conditions such as arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions, chronic pain, neurological conditions, movement disorders and other related degenerative disorders.

In addition, population ageing and the increasing prevalence of chronic conditions means that more and more people are being significantly affected by accessibility issues¹. Those affected include:

- More than four million Australians (18% of population)² and one million New Zealanders (24% of population) have a disability³.
- Older people, including 3.8 million Australians⁴ and 700,000 New Zealanders⁵ aged 65 years or over.

People without impairments also struggle with difficult to use products and packaging.^{6,7} Inaccessible products and packaging can cause unnecessary physical pain or discomfort, stress and frustration, and can undermine a person's health, independence and self-esteem. In some cases people may injure themselves from using sharp objects to open packaging to access products.

Measures to improve the availability of accessible products and packaging offer new opportunities for government and industry to support inclusivity and independence for people with disability as well as a more positive consumer experience for all.

The Accessible Product Design Alliance has been established to advocate to government and industry to improve access to products and packaging that are easy to use for consumers with physical and other impairments. The objectives of the Alliance are to support the development of more inclusive product and packaging design through awareness raising, research, and the adoption by government and industry of systemic changes to policy and standards that incorporate accessible design principles.





5 million

Australians with **disabling chronic conditions**



5 million

Australians and New Zealanders with **disability**



4.5 million

Australians and New Zealanders **aged 65+**



50%
people have **injured** themselves opening packaging

89%
people experience **frustration** when opening packaging



65%
people have had to **wait** for someone to open packaging for them

44%
people **struggle** with packaging every day



¹ Yoxall, Alaster, Victor Gonzalez, Joshua Best, Elena M. Rodriguez-Falcon, and Jennifer Rowson. 2019. "As You Like It: Understanding The Relationship Between Packing Design And Accessibility". Packaging Technology And Science 32 (10): 496-507. doi:10.1002/pts.2466.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019) 'People with disability in Australia 2019: in brief' <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia-in-brief/contents/how-many-people-have-disability>

³ Stats NZ (2014) 'One in four New Zealanders identified as disabled' <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/one-in-four-new-zealanders-identified-as-disabled>

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) 'Older Australia at a glance' <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/older-people/older-australia-at-a-glance/contents/demographics-of-older-australians/australia-s-changing-age-and-gender-profile>

⁵ Environmental Health Intelligence New Zealand (2018) 'Age profile' <https://ehinz.ac.nz/indicators/population-vulnerability/age-profile/>

⁶ Catalyst Research 'Packaging Survey Australia Malaysia New Zealand' (2013, DTI (1997a)

⁷ Consumer Safety Research (2014) 'Domestic Accidents Related to Packaging' Vol. I. DTI, London and Browne, Kate