

## Media Release

**The Hon Lindsay  
Tanner MP**  
Minister for Finance and  
Deregulation

**The Hon Bill Shorten  
MP**  
Parliamentary Secretary  
for Disabilities

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### **Dealing with Government Online to Become Easier for Australians with Disabilities**

Australians with disabilities will soon find it easier to access government information online.

Minister for Finance and Deregulation Lindsay Tanner and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities Bill Shorten said the Rudd Government had endorsed new website accessibility standards, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

“This is an important step in making democracy more open, accessible and accountable for all Australians,” Lindsay Tanner said.

“It will encourage and enable people living with disabilities to more fully interact with, and get services from government online.”

The new standard replaces WCAG 1.0, a mandated requirement for agencies since 2000.

“The Australian government is progressively implementing new online technologies and looking to connect with more people online,” Lindsay Tanner said.

“These new standards will improve the ability of people with a broad range of disabilities to take up those opportunities and engage with the Government via the Internet.”

Lindsay Tanner said the standards contained in WCAG 2.0 were in line with internationally recognised best-practice and stipulated that all government websites adhere to these new standards by 2015.

Mr Shorten said that unequal access to information would reinforce the 2nd class status of people with disability within Australia.

“People with disability still face too many barriers that stop them participating in work, education and other areas,” Mr Shorten said.

“This initiative will help ensure that people with disability are not left behind by the rapid growth of the Internet.”

Australian Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Mr Graeme Innes AM welcomed the government’s decision.

“Accessibility is not only important to people born with a disability, but will become important to a great many of us who will develop various disabilities as we get older,” Mr Innes said.

“So, whether my computer speaks to me because I can't see the screen, or I use a mouth stick to press the keys, these new standards will ensure government information will be easier to access.”

The Rudd Government is developing a National Transition Strategy for the move to WCAG 2.0 which will form part of the National Disability Strategy to be released later this year.

The National Disability Strategy will outline how the Rudd Government intends to improve the inclusion of people with disability in the social, economic and cultural life of Australia and deliver better outcomes for them.

Information about the guidelines and upcoming National Transition Strategy will be made available on the Web Publishing Guide: <http://webpublishing.agimo.gov.au/>

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