



Vale Ralph Green. After a long illness, co-founder Ralph Green died peacefully at home, December 2016.

## PROJECT UPDATES

Current 'Accessibility in the Built Environment' projects include:

- Training with local government Disability Advisory Committees
- Research with University academics, focusing on (in)accessibility of existing housing
- Lecturing and tutoring with various Universities
- Continuing Professional Development with Built Environment Professional Organisations

along with residential alterations and additions in various metropolitan Melbourne locations.

## TEAM NEWS

VDD Studio, under the lead of Saumya (Kaushik), has recently made a submission to the Australian Parliament's NDS Inclusive and Accessible Communities Senate Inquiry, and is currently working on a submission contributing to the forthcoming UN's Special Rapporteur Report on The right to housing of persons with disabilities.

## CALENDAR

### May 2017

- 12-14 Renewable Energy and Conservation Perth, Australia
- 18-20 The Global Human Rights Forum Belgrade, Serbia
- 23-24 Interdisciplinary Research In Humanitarian Technology Pathankot, India

### June 2017

- 7-9 Disaster Management 2017 Seville, Spain
- 13-15 Timber Structures 2017 New Forest, United Kingdom
- 23-25 Green Composite Materials, Hong Kong
- 27-29 Sustainable Development and Planning 2017 Bristol, UK

### July 2017

- 3-6 Tourism, Ethics and Global Citizenship Apeldoorn, Netherlands
- 18-20 Water Pollution and Treatment, Rome

## THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN

*This is the first article in a series that focuses on Universal Design, its history and application to our everyday lives.*

In the mid 1980s Ronald L Mace coined the term "universal design" to describe the concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life.

Ron contracted polio at the age of nine and in subsequent years at school and university began to see, and experience firsthand, the barriers that people with disability face daily.

After some years in conventional architectural practice, he became involved in the effort to produce the first building code for accessibility in the USA. This code became mandatory in North Carolina (USA) in 1973 and served as a model for other states. Ron's pioneering work in accessible design was instrumental in the passage of national USA legislation prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities, the (USA) Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s in the USA and elsewhere inspired the subsequent Disability Rights Movement that greatly influenced the legislation of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s in many countries. These new laws prohibited discrimination against people with disability and provided access to education, places of public accommodation, telecommunications, and transportation.

*Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.*

—Ron Mace

### Principle 1: Equitable Use.

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

#### GUIDELINES

- 1a. Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- 1b. Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- 1c. Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- 1d. Make the design appealing to all users.

The (USA) Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 mandated the removal of what was perceived to be the most significant obstacle to employment for people with disabilities: the physical design of the buildings and facilities they had to use while at work.

By the mid 1980s people with disability in the USA had begun to gain significant access to buildings, programs and services. Unfortunately the access was not always equal or appropriate. In many cases, this access was via separate building features and components. The features were often stigmatizing and weren't integrated into the overall design scheme of a product or feature of a building or environment.

Legislation from this early period concentrated on specifically addressing the accessibility needs of people with disability, often resulting in 'minimum standards', compliance-oriented design responses targetting the supposed needs of a narrowly defined cohort of people with disability, namely (full-time) wheelchair users and 'blind' persons, ie some 1-3% of the total population. In contrast, Universal Design considers ALL users.

#### Further Information:

*The Center for Universal Design  
Institute for Human Centered Design*

*If you would like to discuss collaboration possibilities across the areas of accessibility, research or architecture for any of your projects, please contact our office.*