Human rights and disabilities
Student resources: Information Sheet 4

1. A local council built footpath ramps, altered stair areas, widened some path areas, and relocated post boxes and traffic signs to create a clear passage and access to three local shops. A ramp was also installed at the front door of a bank to enable a local customer to independently conduct her financial transactions. Traffic lights with audible signals have been installed by state governments to assist pedestrians unable to see visual signals.

2. An airline made a new rule about passengers in wheelchairs. Those who could not wheel themselves from the check-in counter to the plane would now need to buy an extra ticket for a carer. After protests, the airline changed the rule so that it only applied to such passengers over 130 kg, or who needed help to care for themselves on board. Other groups, such as elderly people or children travelling alone would not need the extra ticket.

3. A refugee from overseas, who had lost both legs in an accident, was sent to live in a first-floor flat with no lift. When he complained, he was told to go into the company’s office, by train, to sort things out. There was no lift at the station. He had to climb the stairs on his stumps. The bus was just as difficult, and taxis were too expensive. The company said he had agreed to living in the flat because his mother lived there, and also said that they had offered him a separate flat on the ground floor somewhere else. The refugee said that this was not true and that he and his mother really needed a ground-floor flat together.

4. Ninety-seven per cent of school-aged disabled children attend school – mostly mainstream schools. Schools have made arrangements to make this possible, such as rearranging furniture in a college canteen to enable a student easier access. (The new arrangements meant improved traffic flow for everyone.) A spokeswoman from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare said that this high level of participation was a very positive thing. Sixty-three per cent of these children, however, did experience some difficulty, for example, with fitting in socially, in communicating or in learning.