

## WHEELCHAIR VICTORY

# Iata wants better flight lo

Fiona Chisholm

THE International Air Transport Association (Iata) is tightening up regulations for disabled facilities, thanks to a Constantia couple's determined fight to bring a little relief to wheelchair-bound passengers on flights.

Iata is to inform its 240 members worldwide they must comply with the requirements "to enable people with disabilities to enter, manoeuvre within as necessary and leave the toilet by means of the aircraft's onboard wheelchair".

Failure to do so will mean the wheelchair logo cannot be used.

"It's just what we asked for," said Norwegians Are Hovstad and his wife Wenche, who have conducted a long campaign to correct the situation for wheelchair-bound passengers who cannot use an airline toilet even with the small, on-board chair.

It has caused much embarrassment to Are, who was injured in a skiing accident. He has had to wait while air stewards bring blankets to screen him from other passengers so he can use a bottle.

"We are overjoyed at the letter received on January 14 from Thomas S Windmuller, Corporate Secretary and Senior Vice President, Member and Government Relations," said Wenche.

"By going straight to the top, rather than approach the different airlines, we've had results. We are impressed that Iata has taken it so seriously, and has consulted its members and made them aware that they do have a problem if they do not adhere to rules and regulations."

In June 2012 before the Paralympics, the Hovstads wrote to Tony Taylor, Director General and CEO of the International Air Transport Association at Iata's twin head offices in Canada and Switzerland.



**DISABLED RIGHTS:** Are and Wenche Hovstad have been fighting a global campaign for the rights of the disabled.

Picture: JEFFREY ABRAHAMS

They pointed out that internationally-recognised wheelchair-friendly logos were being placed on toilet doors

without the airlines meeting the regulated standards.

"Some carriers might be complying but our experience

on international flights with SAA, British Airways, KLM and Turkish airlines was that the loos were not wheelchair

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