



ACHL Disability Modifications Policy (Version 1.1)

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1. Introduction

Aboriginal Community Housing Limited (ACHL) houses many clients with a disability or mobility impairments and is committed to ensuring the accommodation in which they are housed is appropriate for their needs. ACHL understands that a client’s needs can change over time and seeks to support residents with a disability or mobility need affecting their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, to live independently in their home and enjoy a good quality of life.

2. Aim

The Disability Modifications Policy aims to ensure consistent property practices. It includes standards and principles for the management of non-standard fixtures and terminology, definitions and reporting to be applied across ACHL nationally in the application of our integrated business systems and tools.

Disability modifications cover a number of items, which include but are not limited to;

- Grab rails
- Suitable access options

- Flick mixer tapware
- Switch mechanisms
- Level access showers

This policy will support ACHL operations to;

- provide appropriate adaptations to allow for independent living
- ensure consistency through the development of a national approach
- improve internal communication between departments of ACHL
- improve tools and training for all ACHL staff working in operational environments
- enhance the ability of asset maintenance and housing teams to communicate effectively with tenants
- reduce maintenance costs
- ensure consistent use of terminology across jurisdictions

3. Principles

These principles guide the overall management of all disability modifications. This standardised approach ensures the organisation can apply a national standard within each jurisdiction, including compliance with National and State based regulations, industry standards, contractual obligations, legislation and organisation policies and procedures.

Principles for managing non-standard fixtures include, but are not limited to:

- Assessment and evidence of needs
- Determination of appropriate adaptations
- ACHL Asset Standards Guidelines applied

The organisation uses this policy as a governing document to support the process of handling non-standard fixtures effectively and efficiently and with clear communication, ensuring the delivery of safe, clean and habitable properties to future tenants.

3.1. Abbreviations and definitions

Term/ Abbrev.	Meaning
HO	Housing Officer
FSO	Field Services Officer.
SM	State Manager
SAM	State Asset Manager
OT	Occupational Therapist
GP	General Practitioner
AMD	Asset Maintenance Department

3.2. Assessment and Evidence of need

Tenants (or a registered householder) can make requests for adaptations and modifications to better meet their needs and ACHL will formally assess all requests for disability modifications. Requests should be lodged with the Client Service Centre or through their Housing Officer and/or using the aids & modifications request application form.

Housing Officers can assist tenants to make requests where appropriate. The tenant will need to demonstrate that the request is for mobility, health or safety reasons and obtain the relevant supporting material. ACHL will

support tenants and/or householders, where possible, to access funding for major works such as widening of doorways, air conditioning systems or accessible facilities.

Requests made on the standard form must be accompanied by an Occupational Therapist's (OT) report and/or a letter from the clients GP, specialist, or other healthcare professional. In some cases, minor requests such as grab rails may be considered without an OT's report or supporting documentation, at ACHL's discretion.

Completed requests will be assessed by ACHL Asset Maintenance Department. As part of the assessment, Field Services Officers (FSOs) may need to inspect the property to assess the building for the modifications requested.

Should a tenant or registered householder wish to install adaptations, either permanent or temporary in nature, for facilitating independent living in their home, ACHL will not unreasonably deny such a request.

3.3. Determination of Appropriate Adaptions

The FSO will make a recommendation for appropriate adaptions based on;

- the circumstances of and the evidence supplied by the tenant and/or householder
- a sound knowledge of building regulations and asset maintenance
- the total cost of the required upgrade
- whether ACHL has authority to make modifications to the property, dependant on the program and/or contract under which the property is managed
- the cost-effectiveness of the upgrade in relation to the economic life of the dwelling
- consultation with the housing officer, tenant and/or health care professional
- alternative strategies, including re-housing the tenant in more appropriate housing
- the likelihood of further adaptions or modifications being needed by the client in the near future

A response will be provided to the client in writing, within 10 business days of receipt of the request.

4. Resolution of disputes

Tenants and/or householders have a right to appeal any decision made by ACHL they believe is incorrect, unfair or unlawful. Clients who wish to appeal a decision made by ACHL can do so using the ACHL Appeals Process.

5. Related legislation, industry frameworks and standards, CHL policy and procedures

5.1. Standards

National Community Housing Standards: Standard 1.2; Establishing and Maintaining Tenancies; Section 3 – Tenants Rights and Participation
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Department of Human Services Standards: Section 1 - Empowerment

Australian Standard AS 4299-1995, Adaptable housing https://www.saiglobal.com/PDFTemp/Previews/OSH/As/as4000/4200/4299.pdf
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5.2. Legislation

Housing Assistance Act 1996 (COM)

Housing Act. 1983 (VIC)

Housing Act 2003 (QLD)

Related legislation, industry frameworks and standards, CHL policy and procedures (cont.)

Queensland Human Rights Act 2019
Department of Community Services (ACT) https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/disability_act/national-standards-for-disability-services
NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/legislation-rules-policies
Disability Services Commissioner https://www.odsc.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation/

5.3. Residential Tenancy Acts

Residential Tenancies Act. 1997 (VIC)
Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW)
Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA)
Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (TAS)
Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA)
Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 (QLD)

5.4. Codes, frameworks and agreements

The National Affordable Housing Agreement
OOH, Homelessness Assistance Program Guidelines and Conditions Funding 2006-2009 (VIC)
Consumer Charter for Community Managed Housing and Homelessness Services
Western Australian Community Housing Regulatory Framework – Performance Outcome 1 – Tenant and housing services
National Regulatory Code
Victorian Regulatory Framework
The Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter Act 2006 (VIC)
Victoria https://www.vic.gov.au/property-planning/building-construction/building-regulations-codes.html
Queensland http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/construction/BuildingPlumbing/Building/Pages/BuildingAccessPeopleDisability.aspx
Western Australia https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/corporate/disability-access-and-inclusion
South Australia https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/planning-and-property/land-and-property-development/building-rules-regulations-and-information/the-building-code-of-australia
Tasmania https://www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/technical-regulation/building-standards/building-practitioners/disability-access

Related legislation, industry frameworks and standards, CHL policy and procedures

New South Wales https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Housing/Housing-for-Seniors-or-People-with-a-Disability
DHHS (Vic) Client Services Charter https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/client-services-charter
Department of Social Services (Australian Government) https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/programmes-services/disability-employment-services

5.5. Industry Framework

Scope https://www.scopeaust.org.au/quality-framework/
NDIS https://www.ndis.gov.au/specialist-disability-accommodation
Department of Social Services (Australian Government) https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/programs-services/for-people-with-disability/ndis-quality-and-safeguarding-framework

5.6. Regulations

DHHS (Vic) Better Regulatory Practice Framework https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/better-regulatory-practice-framework
Department of Social Services (Australian Government) https://www.dss.gov.au/housing-support
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute <i>Regulatory frameworks and their utility for the not-for-profit housing sector</i> https://www.ahuri.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/2824/AHURI_Positioning_Paper_No127_Regulatory-frameworks-and-their-utility-for-the-not-for-profit-housing-sector.pdf

5.7. ACHL related policies and processes

ACHL Housing and Homelessness Policies and Procedures
ACHL Customer Promise
ACHL Tenancy Manual

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