



# Disability Modifications Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Aboriginal Community Housing (Vic) Limited (ACHVL) 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. ACHVL 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 ACHVL 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 ACHVL operations to:

- provide appropriate adaptations to allow for independent living
- ensure consistency through the development of a national approach
- improve internal communication between departments
- improve tools and training for all ACHVL 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 Victorian 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
- ACHVL 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
HR	Housing Representative
AM	Asset Manager
OT	Occupational Therapist
GP	General Practitioner

### 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 ACHVL will formally assess all requests for disability modifications. Requests should be lodged through their Housing Representative.

Housing Representatives 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. ACHVL 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 ACHVL's discretion.

Completed requests will be assessed by ACHVL's Asset Manager. As part of the assessment, Housing Representatives of the ACHVL 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, ACHVL will not unreasonably deny such a request.

### 3.3. DETERMINATION OF APPROPRIATE ADAPTIONS

The Asset Manager will make a determination for appropriate adaptations 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 ACHVL 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 Representative, tenant and/or health care professional
- alternative strategies, including re-housing the tenant in more appropriate housing
- the likelihood of further adaptations 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 ACHVL they believe is incorrect, unfair or unlawful. Clients who wish to appeal a decision made by ACHVL can do so using the ACHVL Appeals Process.

## 5. Related legislation, industry frameworks and standards, ACHVL policy and procedures

### 5.1. EXTERNAL LEGISLATION AND FRAMEWORKS

<a href="#">Australian Standard AS 4299-1995, Adaptable housing</a>
<a href="#">Regulatory Code</a> (VIC)
Scope
<a href="#">National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)</a>
<a href="#">Department of Social Services (Australian Government)</a>
<a href="#">NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission</a>
<a href="#">Disability Services Commissioner</a>
<a href="#">DHHS (Vic) Client Services Charter</a>
<a href="#">Department of Social Services (Australian Government)</a>
<a href="#">DHHS (Vic) Better Regulatory Practice Framework</a>
<a href="#">Department of Social Services (Australian Government)</a>
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute - <a href="#">Regulatory frameworks and their utility for the not-for-profit housing sector</a>

## 6. Monitoring and review

This policy should be periodically reviewed and revised by the board of ACHVL. Revisions should be made as and when required. The period between reviews must not exceed two years. The date for review of this policy is on or before March 2024. Training will be provided to each ACHVL representative and the board as a component of their induction.



## ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY HOUSING (VIC) LTD.

### Review history

Document reference	Date and version	Reason for review	Review frequency	Owner	Approver
	Version 1.0, March 2022	New policy	Every two years	National Manager Operations	National Manager Operations Managing Director

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