

H12. DURING A TENANCY - PROPERTY MODIFICATIONS

Content:	Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation Policies and Procedures
Version:	2.0
Section:	Housing
Applies To:	Board, Management and Staff of all IAC Services
Date:	October 2015 (Review October 2018)

Background and Purpose

The IAC's Housing policies articulate our aims, goals and philosophies in providing housing services for Aboriginal tenants and their families. They explain how the Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation works with its staff and other agencies to ensure that our tenants are afforded the best and most appropriate services and that we meet all of the requirements of the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Office of Community Housing.

Modifications to assist elderly or disabled tenants

Tenants who have an identified need may have their property modified. For example, they may need grip rails in the bathroom or ramp access for a wheelchair. If it is not economically viable for the property to be modified, or the layout of the home prohibits the required modifications, we may look to relocate tenants.

The IAC will modify its dwellings to suit people with disabilities if it is economically viable to do so. We aim to assist applicants and tenants with disabilities to live safely and comfortably and will make modifications at no cost to the applicant or tenant.

Tenants who have an identified need may have their home modified. They are usually tenants or approved applicants who:

- are elderly
- have major health issues
- have a disability, or
- care for someone who is elderly or who has a disability

If it is not economically viable for the home to be modified, the IAC will attempt to assist the tenant to find other suitable accommodation with the IAC or with other housing providers.

The IAC will also identify properties that have been modified, or properties that can be suitably modified for applicants who require disability modifications.

Modifications to assist elderly or disabled tenants (cont)

Helping people to live safely and independently in their home, with or without support, improves their quality of life. It gives them the option of staying at home rather than living in a nursing home or other care institution. An important factor in the decision to modify a home is the need for the client to demonstrate that they are able to sustain a successful tenancy.

As the IAC gains new homes, we will endeavour to ensure that some of them are suitable for people with disabilities, or can be easily modified if required.

Modifications will be in response to an approved applicant or tenant's need. An Occupational Therapist will need to visit the tenant's home and to provide a report. Where the IAC considers the modifications are not major, a medical certificate or written recommendation from a doctor or other health care professional will be sufficient. We will review the recommendations and consider how much work is involved in making modifications.

If only minor modifications are required, we will authorise the work. Minor modifications involve non-structural changes such as:

- adding grip rails
- installing a hand held shower set
- changing to lever style taps

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Modifications to assist elderly or disabled tenants (cont)

Major modifications involve structural changes:

- widening door ways
- providing ramp access, and
- modifying the kitchen, bathroom or laundry

If major modifications are needed we will meet with the tenant in their home. The Occupational Therapist, an IAC staff member and the client will discuss the needs and available options.

If modifications to the property are economically viable we will organise for the work to be done.

Factors that will be considered will be:

- long term value of the property
- costs of alternative approaches
- cost/benefit of relocating the tenant
- competing priorities for funds

We will make sure the modifications meet both the current and the likely future requirements of the tenant. If the modifications are not economically viable we will attempt to assist the tenant to find other suitable accommodation with the IAC or with other housing providers.

COMPLIANCE

This policy complies with:

- NSW Housing Act 2001
- NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010

REFERENCES

This policy should be read with:

- **Housing NSW** "During a Tenancy Policy"
- **National Regulatory Code** - 1. Tenant and housing services and 2. Housing Assets