

Step-by-step guide

Information about home modification for NDIS participants



Your step-by-step guide

The information in this booklet is about home modification, how it works and what to expect.

What are the main things you need to know?

It is important for you to understand your role and responsibilities as an NDIS participant, and to feel confident about the process of home modification.

The NDIS provides reasonable and necessary support to enable you to meet the goals you have set out in your NDIS Plan.

Funding for home modification focuses on your need to access your home and frequently used rooms for activities of daily living related to your goals.

For example, ramp installation, bathroom modification and other strategies may be necessary to improve independence and safety related to achieving a wide range of goals.

The NDIS funds fixtures and fittings such as taps, tiles, flooring, and bench tops at a standard grade level.

The arrangements regarding who will administer your funds and pay service providers and contractors may vary from person to person. Your NDIS Planner will talk to you about this.

You may choose to contribute funds of your own to upgrade the fixtures or fittings, or to extend the proposed home modification. If you decide to do so, you must agree on the scope and the fee payable before finalising the design plans.

Your role is to:

- Communicate with your Assessor about the kind of modification you need and want, how you would like it to look, and what you would like to achieve for yourself as a result
- Make choices between the available designs, fitting and fixtures
- Approve the final home modification design plans
- Enter into a building contract if you are the homeowner.

Home Modification Victoria provides services to NDIS participants whose Plan includes home modification.

3 steps to home modification:



1: Assessment



2: Design



3: Construction

Home Modification Victoria will assist you throughout your home modification by keeping you involved and informed along the way.

Home Modification Victoria understands the importance of achieving the home modification that is right for each person, balanced with the requirements of the NDIS.

We have many years of experience in assessment, design and completion of home modifications for people with a wide range of disabilities, so you can have confidence in our advice and services.

Your home modification will be unique to your needs.

Three main steps to home modification are explained in this booklet, along with answers to some frequently asked questions:

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Step 1: Assessment

The Home Modification Assessor will make an appointment to visit you at home to talk about your lifestyle, your disability and the goals in your NDIS Plan.

The Assessment visit will take around two hours. At this visit, you may like to have a family member or carer present.

The Assessor will look at your home and suggest any necessary changes to help improve your independence and meet your goals.

A Building Construction Professional will also visit. They will advise the Assessor on design and construction issues.

In consultation with you, the Assessor and the Building Construction Professional will discuss the preferred design for your home modification.

It is important that you have your say about what you wish to achieve, the changes you want, and how you would like things to look.

The Assessor and Building Construction Professional will identify the proposed home modifications that are reasonable, necessary and most likely to be funded by the NDIS.

What is the role of the Home Modification Assessor?

The Assessor is a qualified and experienced occupational therapist who specialises in home modification assessment. Their role is to:

- Explain the NDIS home modification support request process, how decisions are made and what you can reasonably expect to have funded
- Consult with you about your disability, your needs and the goals in your NDIS Plan
- Provide professional advice regarding the barriers to you achieving your goals
- Identify home modifications to assist you to achieve your goals
- In consultation with you and the Building Construction Professional, decide on the preferred design for your proposed home modification
- Provide the NDIS with a Home Modification Assessment Report, providing evidence, a plan and a cost estimation for reasonable and necessary modifications.

They will also discuss any building works or items that you want, but which are unlikely to be funded as reasonable and necessary modifications by the NDIS.

You may decide to pay for upgrades or additional work with your own funds. The details of this conversation will be included in the Assessment Report.

The Assessor will complete the Home Modification Assessment Report including the proposed home modification design, Building Construction Professional advice, project plan and cost estimate.

The Assessment Report will be submitted to the NDIS.

The proposals and cost estimations set out in the Assessment Report do not guarantee that the NDIS will necessarily approve the proposed design and costs.

The NDIS will finalise and approve funding for reasonable and necessary home modifications.

You will receive a copy of the Assessment Report and NDIS decision and funding details.

The Assessor will identify home modifications necessary to help you to achieve your goals.



Step 2: Design

The design of your home modification will ensure that the finished product meets your needs and complies with the relevant standards.

A registered designer will prepare the drawings and specifications.

You will be assisted to make design choices where possible, and to sign off on the final design plans.

Your Building Construction Professional will help you to visualise the finished project so you can approve the plans with confidence.

Once signed off, the design plans and specifications are final and form the basis for the building contract.



What is the role of the Building Construction Professional?

The Building Construction Professional is a qualified and experienced home modification specialist. Their role is to:

- Advise on design and construction issues at the Assessment meeting
- Recommend workable design options and prepare the preferred concept plan in consultation with you and the Assessor
- Prepare a project plan and quote for the proposed home modification.
- Coordinate design documentation in line with the National Construction Code and standards
- Oversee the building contract and engage and manage the work of contractors
- Ensure construction is done in compliance with the design plans and documentation
- Manage any variations to the original scope of work and contract
- Sign off on the completed project
- Be your contact person throughout the project.

Step 3: Construction

The construction stage involves a builder and sub-contractors completing the home modification under the guidance of the Building Construction Professional.

Before entering into a building contract, your Building Construction Professional will obtain final quotes from one or more builders from our panel of pre-qualified registered builders.

The builders will base their price offers on the documents provided in the tender, which includes a full description of the work, the price, the start and end dates, and any proposed exclusions or special conditions, and a number of other details.

The building contract

A building contract is an agreement between a registered builder and a homeowner to build the home modification at an agreed price.

When the builder is selected, a contract is prepared. Every project with a total value over \$10,000 must have a building contract.

Victoria has mandatory requirements for the content of all domestic building contracts over \$10,000.

Your Building Construction Professional will explain the building contract to ensure you understand it and feel confident to sign it.

Payment of service providers and contractors

The arrangements regarding who will administer the funds and arrange payment for service providers and contractors may vary from person to person. Your NDIS Planner will clarify this with you.

Cooling-off rights

Homeowners are generally allowed to withdraw from domestic building contracts within the first five days following their receipt of a copy of the executed contract.

If you have any concerns, please speak to your Building Construction Professional.

Insurances

There are many different types of insurance that the homeowner needs to be aware of, but the main ones are Domestic Building Insurance and Statutory Warranties.

Legislation requires builders to provide Domestic Building Insurance. This covers the homeowner – in case the builder dies, becomes insolvent or disappears – for incomplete work and the costs of rectifying any defective work or damage.

The law also specifies a set of Statutory Warranties for the benefit of owners, that apply to all domestic building. These safeguard the quality of workmanship and materials, ensuring the building is fit for its intended use and to live in.

Homeowners may also need to review their private house insurance policy to make sure it covers the cost of replacement of the modification.

Building and planning permits

A building permit will be needed for any work that includes structural changes or new foundations.

Only a registered building certifier can provide a building permit.

The Building Construction Professional will arrange any necessary building permits on your behalf, with your permission.

They will also ensure that your home modification complies with local planning requirements.

Completing construction

The Building Construction Professional will make sure your home modification is constructed according to the design plans.

The Building Construction Professional will sign off and report the project completion to the NDIS.

Upon completion of the project, the Building Construction Professional will provide the homeowner with any required certificates of compliance, such as electrical safety, plumbing, glazing and waterproofing.

A Certificate of Final Inspection will be provided by the building surveyor if your project required a building permit.

The homeowner or the NDIS delegate will make the final payment to the builder.

Your Building Construction Professional will make sure your home modification meets the required scope, quality and time frames.



Home modification FAQs

What does 'reasonable and necessary' mean?

Reasonable and necessary home modifications are those needed where, due to disability, a person can't reasonably access and utilise frequently used rooms and spaces using standard fixtures and fittings, or where their home is having a significant adverse impact on their living or care arrangements.

Can I choose to upgrade fittings or fixtures, or extend the modification recommended by the Assessor?

You may choose to contribute funds of your own to upgrade the fixtures or fittings or to extend the proposed modification.

Your Building Construction Professional will discuss this with you. The details and fees for any self-funded items will be noted in the Assessment Report, finalised before the design is signed off, and listed in the tender and building contract.

Can I choose my own builder?

You may recommend a builder, but they must be registered and prepared to respond to a tender. As required by law, Home Modification Victoria uses registered practitioners to undertake all work. We will assist you to select the right builder for your project.

For builder registration enquiries, you may call the Building Commission in Victoria on 9285 6400 or go to www.vba.vic.gov.au/.

Will I have to pay anything?

The funds allocated by the NDIS will cover the design and delivery of a reasonable and necessary home modification.

NDIS participants who have contracted for additional upgrades to fittings or fixtures, or an extension to the NDIS-funded modification, will be required to pay for these items.

Once the contract is signed, the costs are fixed and will not change unless you request and agree to variations on the contract.

How much are the deposit and other up-front payments?

The maximum deposit a builder may require is 5% if the contract price is \$20,000 or more, and 10% if the contract price is less than \$20,000.

This will be paid for by the NDIS where it applies to reasonable and necessary home modifications funded by the NDIS.

NDIS participants who have contracted for additional upgrades to fittings or fixtures, or an extension to the NDIS-funded modification, may be asked to pay for these up-front.

How do I know that the cost estimation is competitive?

Your Building Construction Professional uses pre-approved cost estimation schedules and sources for materials, and pre-approved contractors for home modification projects.

Service providers and contractors are selected based on their proven track record in the design and delivery of home modifications that are of good quality and value.

If you have concerns about the value for money of your home modification, please speak to your Building Construction Professional.

Can I change my mind about the design of my home modification?

It is expected that the design plans signed off by you at the end of the design stage are final.

The design plans are the basis of the tender and contract with the builder.

Any late variations to the contract will usually increase the cost and time taken to complete the work, and the NDIS will generally not pay for these.

Any changes you wish to make to the work and associated costs must be agreed in writing before the builder carries out the variation.

For any self-funded parts of the project, you will be required to pay for any unavoidable variations, such as ensuring the home is sufficiently structurally sound to enable the work to be completed.

The Building Construction Professional will consult closely with you regarding any variations to the contract.

Will I have to move out of my home during construction?

Participants will remain in their home where possible. If your Assessor anticipates that your home will be uninhabitable for a period of time, they will discuss suitable options with you, and include this information in the Home Modification Assessment Report. The NDIS may pay for the temporary relocation of eligible people.

How long will my home modification take?

Depending on the size of the project, your home modification may take, on average, three to six weeks or more to complete from the time the building contract is signed.

The time frames will be set out in the building contract.

Home Modification Victoria standards for quality and compliance

Home Modifications Victoria follows operational guidelines and practice standards to ensure quality and compliance. These include:

- Working in consultation with the NDIS participant in an open and inclusive way
- Using registered building and design practitioners to undertake work as required
- Undertaking all work in compliance with the National Construction Code and state-based laws and regulations
- Undertaking all work with reference to relevant standards including AS1428.1 as it applies to individual needs and project requirements
- Administering domestic building contracts as required by law.

For more details about quality and compliance, please go to www.homemodvic.com.au/.

How to make a complaint

If you have any concerns, at any time, please contact your Building Construction Professional at Home Modification Victoria immediately by phone or email.

We will act to fix the problem to your satisfaction as quickly as possible.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, we will refer you to the right government or industry complaint-handling body to take it further.

Please go to the Home Modifications Victoria website to view our full feedback and complaints policy, or call or email us:

P 1300 715 866

E info@homemodvic.com.au

Home Modification Victoria will ensure your home modification meets your needs.

Please call us if you have any questions.



Creating environments, transforming lives.

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Home Modification Assessment appointment details

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Home Modification Assessor: _____

Building Construction Professional: _____

Home Modification Victoria provides services to NDIS participants whose Plan includes home modification.

Our services cover:

- Specialist home modification assessment
- Building professional advice
- Project planning and cost estimation
- Design services
- Construction project management.

Home Modification Victoria is a service of Architecture & Access (Aust) Pty Ltd, which is:

- A registered provider for the NDIS
- An A-Plus member of the Australian Institute of Architects
- Pre-qualified as a consultant with the Government Construction Supplier Register (CSR) to supply OHS, architectural and project management services
- Staffed by registered independent assessors of the Livable Housing Design Guidelines.

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