

Submission: Stage 2 Rental Law Reform

QDN

QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY NETWORK
NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Submitted to:
Renting in Queensland
Housing and Homelessness Services
Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

May 29, 2023

About Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN)

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) is an organisation of, for, and with people with disability. The organisation's motto is "nothing about us without us." QDN operates a state-wide network of over 2,000 members and supporters who provide information, feedback, and views from a consumer perspective to inform systemic disability policy and disability advocacy.

QDN value statement

QDN believes that:

- All people with disability have a right to a place in the community and have contributions to make to community. This is as empowered, free citizens who are as valued, present, participating and welcomed as members of any dynamic and diverse society.
- The place of people with disability in the community is not just about people with disability having a house in the community. Core to this is that they are welcomed in the community as ordinary citizens where they are genuinely given opportunities to contribute and actively participate. People with disability need to be in communities where their individuality, their talents, and their lived experiences of disability are recognised and acknowledged.
- Culturally and historically, people with disability are not afforded the same value, opportunities or access to community life.
- Any inclusion in community for people with disability is conditional and vulnerable to withdrawal.
- Many people with disability in Queensland are excluded from the most basic experiences of ordinary lives.
- Current exclusionary practices are unacceptable and must be challenged.
- These issues affect not only people with disability but the whole community.
- The responsibility is shared. It lies within government (federal, state, and local) and the community at large, to ensure that people with disability have a place and are resourced to belong in community.

Introduction

QDN welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Queensland government on the proposed Stage 2 Rental Law Reforms and acknowledge the commitment from government to ensuring that Queenslanders in private rental accommodation are afforded increased protections in the current housing crisis. The options paper addressed some key concerns and continues the important work of Stage 1 Rental Law Reform.

Limiting Rent Increases

The issue of limiting increases in rental properties has not been included for consideration under the proposed Rental Law reforms. The National housing crisis currently being experienced has seen Queensland particularly hard hit with just under half of the communities experiencing acute rental stress in Queensland ([Everybody's Home. \(May 2019\)](#)). Rents in Queensland are increasing at three

times the rate of inflation, to an average of \$104 per week ([SQM Research – Property – Weekly Rents – 4000](#) [September 2021-2022]). People with disability are more likely to be on income support through the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and have limited income to meet increasing rent demands. Queenslanders make up 32% nationally of those reliant on the DSP for income support.

QDN urges the Queensland government to reconsider measures to limit how much rents can increase in a twelve month period to one increase per year at the amount of the Consumer Price Index. This maintains a fair return to investors, while offering some protection to tenants from substantial increases that put them at risk of housing insecurity and/or homelessness. While some people with disability are afforded housing supports through the NDIS and/or Community or Public housing, the majority of people live in private rentals and lack a flexible income to accommodate significant rent increases.

Installing modifications

In anticipation of the announcement of Stage 2 Rental Law Reform, QDN partnered with the Real Estate Institute of Queensland (REIQ) to proactively begin a co-design process with key stakeholders and people with disability to propose a shared position on installing modifications in rental properties for safety and accessibility. In July 2022, QDN and the REIQ jointly hosted a roundtable with stakeholders including Community Housing Industry Association, Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, Communitify Queensland (Home Assist), Tenants Queensland, Property Investment Professionals of Australia, Bricks & Mortar Media, Occupational Therapists and people with disability to discuss this issue and explore a range of considerations to inform any new proposed legislation. The intent was to reach an agreed position that would ensure a more straightforward process for people with disability that ensures people can make minor modifications for the purpose of safety and accessibility, that also acknowledged the interests of property owners.

QDN and the REIQ acknowledge the competing interests in relation to the installation of minor modifications and have worked hard to reach a proposal and position that is acceptable to both parties. The proposal has undergone a rigorous process of feedback with key stakeholders, including people with disability and practical expertise drawn from the property management sector, and has resulted in the proposed framework at [Attachment 1](#).

Making minor personalisation changes

The majority of Queenslanders with disability rent a home in the private market. The ability to have both stable rent, informal connections in community, access to services and transport infrastructure are essential to the wellbeing of people with disability. While the ability to make minor personalisation changes to a rental property are not critical to safety and accessibility minor modifications, the ability to make a house a home promotes a broader sense of belonging and enhanced inclusion in community which can result in better outcomes for people with disability.

QDN supports option **3. Limit discretion** in the options paper that specifies a list of changes that a renter can make to their home without a property owners' permission, including those indicated in the paper. QDN welcomes the specification that the onus is on the property owner to dispute, not the tenant, however, recommends that the timeframe for lodging an application with the Tribunal be shortened from 28 days to 14 days in line with other dispute processes.

Balancing privacy and access

Access

QDN supports proposed changes to increase the rights of privacy for tenants in relation to access of a property. QDN welcomes the proposal to limit physical entry to a property if a tenant supports virtual inspections. Many people with disability are still at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and limit their interactions with external people where possible. Extending the notice period from 24 hours to 72 hours is also welcomed, which can be particularly important to ensure that people with disability can arrange to have a support person present when the property is accessed.

Privacy

QDN supports additional protections to ensure tenants information collected as part of the application process is securely stored or destroyed once a tenancy application is successful or unsuccessful. This is particularly pertinent given the increasing number of cybersecurity issues in relation to data breaches. This includes support for people to show required documentation for sighting, rather than provide a copy to an agent/lessor.

QDN welcomes the proposal that rental application forms used in Queensland must include information that educates people about unlawful discrimination under Anti-discrimination laws and the Human Rights Act. This legislation is essential to ensuring protections and safeguards for people with disability in relation to the private rental market and broader inclusion. We also welcome the prohibition of requests for prospective renters to provide:

- Information on previous legal action and tenancy disputes with a lessor or agent.
- Information on prior bond disputes and bond disbursements.
- Financial statements that list purchases
- Information about protected attributes defined by Anti-Discrimination laws.

QDN also supports a choice for renters in relation to using an online or third party platform for rental applications. Many people with disability are excluded from access to digital devices, cannot afford to be connected and/or lack the skills to use digital devices (Australian Digital Inclusion Index). Providing alternate means of access for those who need it, such as the ability to submit a paper application form, is essential to real inclusion.

Improving the rental bond process

QDN support Option 3 of the Options paper which would amend existing laws in relation to bonds to:

- require rental property owners or managers to prove their rental bond claims and renter's liability, and
- protect renters' interest in the bond refund if they use commercial bond products.

In addition to these changes QDN recommends that bond contributors should not be required to be applicants to QCAT in order to claim their bond against an agent or lessor. The bond return process should assume the bond funds be returned to the tenant unless an evidenced claim is provided by the property manager. The process is complex and some people with disability require support to

engage in a claims process and/or be represented at a QCAT hearing. This places unnecessary burden on a person to engage paid supports and/or advocacy to initiate a process.

Fairer fees and charges

QDN supports Option 3 of the proposed reforms under fairer fees and charges. The majority of people with disability are on a fixed income through the Disability Support Pension and need certainty and security in relation to the costs involved in a tenancy. QDN supports the option that renters are provided with a fee free method of paying rent, so that additional charges are not ongoing in relation to payments. QDN also supports legislated time limits to provide tenants with utilities (water) bills if they are required to pay them. Utility costs for renters should also be limited to consumption over a reasonable quantity (comparative to other households and premises of a similar nature).

QDN supports the limiting of fees which can be charged for ending a tenancy agreement early (break lease fees), particularly the exemption if a renter is ending the agreement to access more affordable rental accommodation in the private rental market or to accept an offer of social housing, or that they will experience excessive hardship if they are required to pay the reletting costs. This will ensure that those people with disability who are most vulnerable have some protection from ongoing costs if they are needing to break a lease. However, the option does not specify how a renter can provide evidence of hardship and should not place additional burden on a tenant, particularly if someone is on the Disability Support Pension.

Removing Notices to Leave for the End of a Fixed Term

QDN urges the Queensland government to reconsider a lessor's ability to end a tenancy due to the "End of a Fixed Term" which was considered in Stage 1 Rental Reform process and allows for an eviction with no reason at the end of a fixed term. This undermines the rights of tenants to raise issues during a tenancy for fear of not having a lease renewed at the end of their fixed term agreement. This would help create more stable and sustainable homes for people with disability and protect and support longer term tenures and community inclusion.

Attachment 1.

REIQ & QDN RESPONSE TO STAGE 2 RENTAL LAW REFORM OPTIONS PAPER

The Real Estate Institute of Queensland (**REIQ**) as the peak industry body for the real estate profession in Queensland has recently collaborated with Queenslanders with Disability Network (**QDN**), being Queensland's organisation advocating for the rights of persons with disability.

The REIQ and QDN acknowledge the importance of ensuring homes for Queensland tenants living with disability are accessible and adaptable to meet their diverse needs, while still ensuring the rights of the property owner are not diminished.

By virtue of its advocacy work with the Queensland Government, the REIQ is aware of an intention to legislate minor modification in residential properties in Queensland within the next 12 months. The REIQ, nor to its knowledge other relevant stakeholders, have not yet been invited to consult on such regulation.

As a proactive measure in July 2022, the REIQ and QDN jointly hosted a roundtable with a number of stakeholders including Community Housing Industry Association, Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, Communitify Queensland, Tenants Queensland, Property Investment Professionals of Australia, Bricks & Mortar Media and People with disability, to discuss this issue and explore a range of considerations that may inform regulation. The purpose of the roundtable was to formulate a central idea of what such regulation should encompass.

To this end, the REIQ and QDN have developed a framework for acceptable minor modification regulation for residential properties in Queensland, based on the lived experience of persons living with disability, as well as practical expertise drawn from the property management sector (please refer to Schedule 1).

Defining Minor and Complex Modifications

A key principle that was generally agreed between stakeholders, was that parameters should be set and defined as to what modifications should be considered *minor* or *complex*.

'Minor' modifications were considered to be modifications that could be carried out by a person without needing to be suitably qualified, insured or contracted.

'Complex' modifications were considered to be modifications that would require a suitably qualified and insured contractor to perform (such as works that entailed electrical work, plumbing, carpentry, tiling, structural changes).

The proposed framework intends to provide a matrix of what modifications for each section of a residential property could be considered minor or complex.

Considering Consent or Notification

It was generally agreed by stakeholders that:

- modifications classified as minor should be within the tenant's discretion to carry out, or have carried out, without the consent of the property owner albeit that notification should still be given; and
- modifications classified as complex should only be carried out with the property owner's consent.

Risk management is an important consideration of when consent should be given for a particular modification. If a modification has the potential of causing a risk of damage to the property or injury to a person, then it is our view that the consent of the owner should be obtained so that a suitably qualified and insured contractor can be engaged. Such considerations are particularised in the matrix.

We consider it is also important that prior to requesting changes, a tenant should seek advice from an occupational therapist who specialises in home modification assessments, to ensure the changes requested will adequately meet the needs of the person living with disability.

Minor modifications in other States and Territories

The other States and Territories of Australia have varying regulation with respect to this issue. Modifications for the purpose of accessibility are defined and regulated in some States however not all.

In New South Wales, tenants can make changes to residential properties only if the property owner consents to the modification or legislation permits it¹. If a request is considered minor, then the landlord must not unreasonably withhold consent.

Minor modifications are strictly defined and set out with respect to certain items. The property owner may also impose a condition that such changes can only be carried out if installed or altered by a person appropriately qualified to install a fixture, or carry out alterations, additions, or renovations².

In Victoria³, tenants can make changes to their residence without the property owners' consent for:

- non-permanent window film for insulation, reduced heat transfer or privacy;
- a wireless doorbell;
- curtains (but the renter must not throw out the original curtains);
- adhesive child safety locks on drawers and doors;
- pressure mounted child safety gates; and
- a lock on a letterbox.

There are a number of other alterations tenants may make without permission, only if the property is not listed on the Victoria Heritage Register.

Otherwise, if the tenant wishes to make an alteration, they must request permission from the property owner. There are also certain alterations that a property owner cannot unreasonably refuse. A

¹ Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW), s66

² Residential Tenancies Regulation 2019 (NSW), s22

³ Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic), s64

property owner may also request additional security deposit to cover the cost of undoing changes at the end of the tenancy. The length of tenancy can also determine whether consent is needed for certain alterations.

Tenants must have the written agreement of the property owner (and the owners corporation if there is one) before they make any modifications required for persons with disability. Property owners cannot refuse disability-related modifications without good reason.

In South Australia⁴, tenants can't alter a property without the consent of the property owner. There are some restrictions on circumstances where a property owner will need a good reason to refuse consent. Unless otherwise agreed, alterations must be removed by the tenant at the end of the tenancy.

Properties owned by the South Australian Housing Trust are managed and can be modified by Housing SA to meet the needs of persons living with a disability. Housing SA prescribes a series of eligibility criteria including:

- the modifications are for the tenant, or another occupant approved by Housing SA in line with the Visitors, other occupants and overcrowding policy;
- the modifications are essential and there's no other reasonable alternative;
- the disability impacts on the person's ability to access and use the property, or their independence would be compromised without the modifications, and they would need additional services, for example increased home based services, hospitalisation;
- the need for the modifications is verified by an appropriately qualified, registered and relevant health professional, for example a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, general practitioner;
- the property is suitable for the modifications, for example it can be structurally modified, it isn't listed for a future redevelopment; and
- the modifications aren't the responsibility of another agency, for example National Disability Insurance Agency, Commonwealth-funded aged care services.

There are also requirements specified for minor or major modifications.

In Western Australia, a tenant may make alterations to a property only if stipulated in their tenancy agreement and if they have obtained any consent required under the term of the agreement. If the term requires the consent of the property owner, they must not withhold consent unreasonably⁵.

If a tenant is a person living with disability, they may with the property owner's consent, affix furniture to the wall such as bulky bookcases and cupboards, flat-screen TVs and mobility aids⁶.

Property owners may only refuse consent in the abovementioned circumstances for the following reasons:

⁴ Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA), s70

⁵ Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA), s47

⁶ Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA), s47(2A)

- if affixing the item to the wall would disturb material containing asbestos; or
- if the premises are entered in the Register of Heritage Places compiled under the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990 section 46; or
- if the premises is a lot in a scheme under the Strata Titles Act 1985, the by-laws for the scheme prohibit affixing the item to the wall of the premises; or
- for another prescribed reason.

The legislation does not differentiate between simple and complex modifications.

In the Australian Capital Territory, ‘minor modification’ and ‘special modification’ are defined⁷.

‘Minor modification’ to premises under a residential tenancy agreement, means—

(a) a renovation, alteration or addition that can be removed or undone so that the premises are restored to substantially the same condition as the premises were in at the commencement of the agreement, fair wear and tear excepted; or

(b) a modification prescribed by regulation.

‘Special modification’ to premises under a residential tenancy agreement, means—

(a) a minor modification; or

(b) a renovation, alteration or addition for 1 of the following reasons:

(i) the safety of the tenant or other people on the premises;

(ii) on written recommendation of a health practitioner—to assist a tenant in relation to the tenant’s disability;

(iii) to improve the energy efficiency of the premises;

(iv) to allow access to telecommunications services; and

(v) the security of the premises, or the tenant or other people on the premises.

If a tenant makes a request for a special modification, the property owner may refuse consent only if they obtain ACAT’s prior approval, and in any other case, the property owner must not unreasonably refuse consent⁸.

In Tasmania, unless a tenancy agreement provides otherwise, a tenant must not make any alterations or additions, or add fixtures to a property without the written consent of the landlord⁹.

At the end of the lease, the tenant is responsible for the removal costs of any unauthorised alterations, additions or added fixtures. A common example is satellite dishes on the roof.

⁷ Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (ACT), s71AA

⁸ Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (ACT), s71AB

⁹ Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (TAS), s54

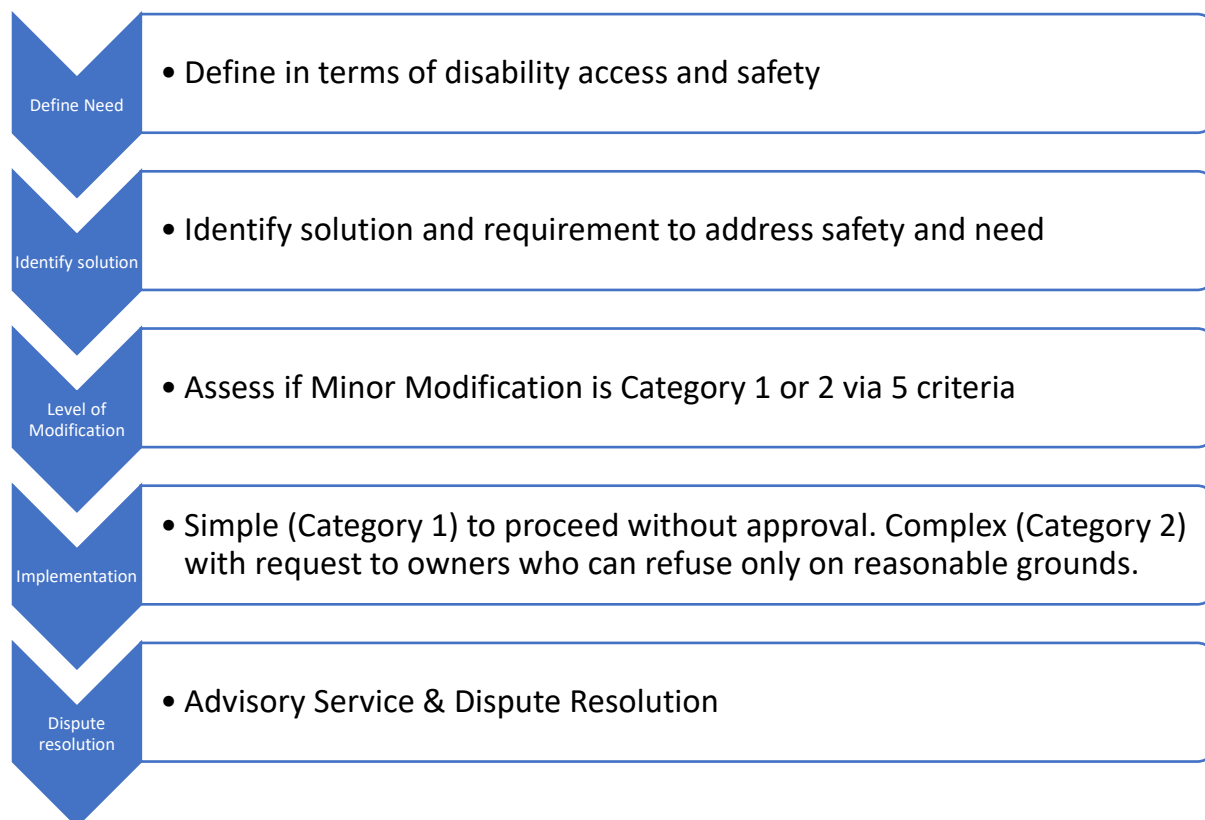
In the Northern Territory, it is a term of a tenancy agreement that the tenant must not, without the landlord’s written consent or otherwise than in accordance with the Act, make an alteration or addition to the premises or ancillary property¹⁰.

Installing Modifications

Proposed Framework

The REIQ and QDN (‘we’) recommend that the Department implement the social model of disability which recognises people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets, or they can be caused by people’s attitudes to difference, like assuming people with disability can’t do certain things.

The social model helps us recognise barriers that make life harder for people with disability. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers people with disability more independence, choice, and control. Not everyone uses the social model and that’s ok. How anyone chooses to talk about their disability is up to them.



¹⁰ Residential Tenancies Act (NT), s55

The following table outlines the relevant criteria and process applicable to a proposed minor modification to a property:

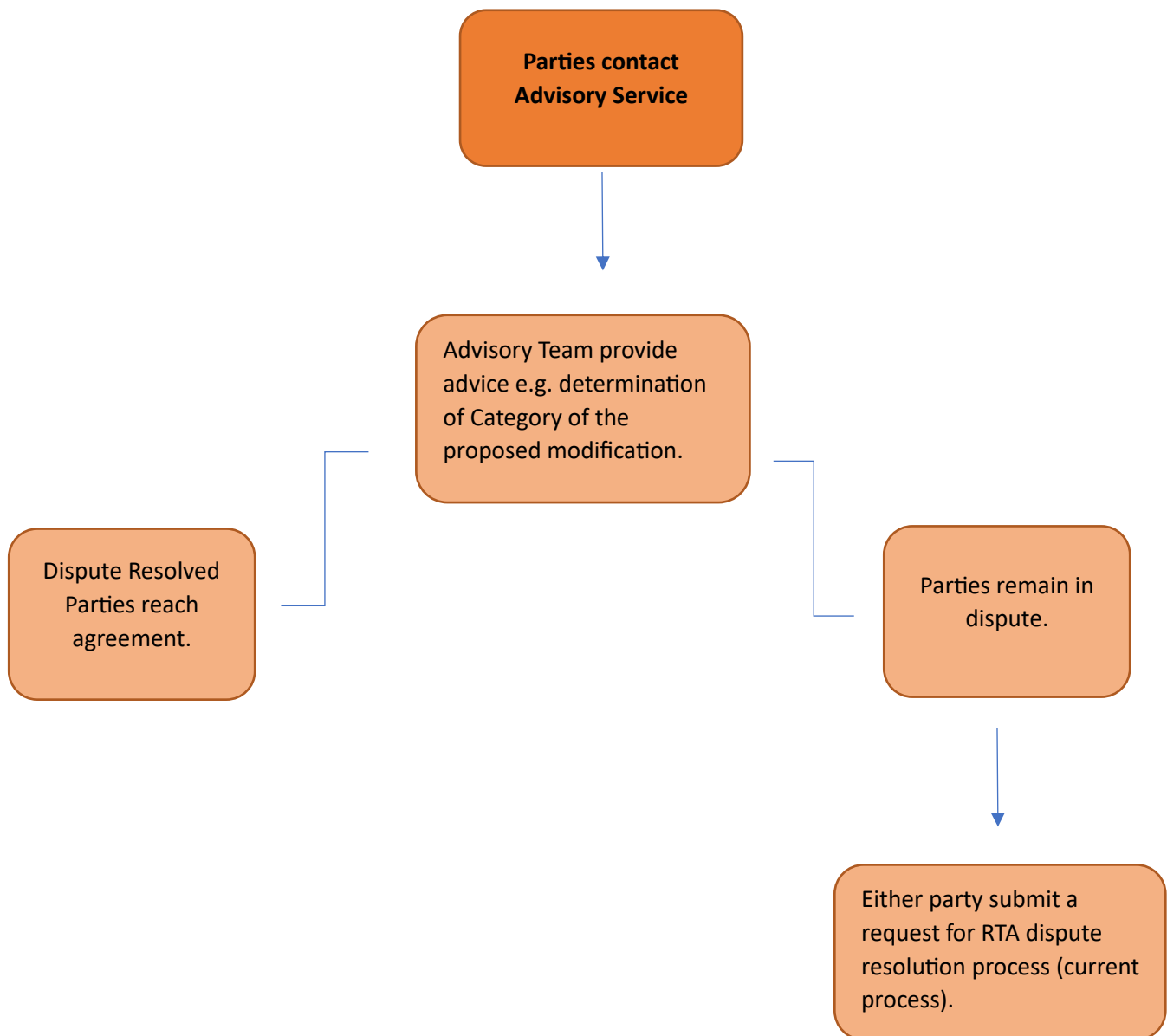
Criteria	Minor Modifications		Major Modifications
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Portability	Can be taken with you to the next property	May interact with structure but can be removed	Is structural in nature
Installation/ Removal	Can be installed/removed by tenant	may require require a handyman or tradesperson to complete without material damage to the property Removal: make good obligations are to be complied with	Requires appropriately licensed/qualified tradesperson and/or health practitioner to complete
Structural	Does not involve structural changes	Involves level of change to non-structural items	Involves structural change
Risk	Can be installed by tenant without professional input Low impact to property during installation and make good obligations	Professional input may be required 1. Tradesperson 2. Health Professional	Professional input is required 1. Tradesperson 2. Health Professional Prescribed Evidence required**
Decision Making/Approval	No approval needed	Request is made by the tenant (prescribed form). The owner can only be refused on prescribed grounds* or approved with prescribed conditions Response required within 7 business days. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ability for a PM to request an extension for another 7 business days with substantiated reason for extension If no response – refer to RTA Committee Urgent Approval – response provided with 2 business days – Urgent application	Approval required – assessed on a case by case basis

*Category 2	
Prescribed Grounds for Refusal	Prescribed Conditions for Approval
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Property is being sold; 2. modification likely to cause material damage to the property or inclusions that could not practicably be repaired for a cost that is less than the amount of the rental bond for the premises; 3. modification could not practicably be restored back to its original standard or appearance; 4. the tenant has not agreed to the reasonable conditions proposed by the lessor for approval to modify the property; 5. modification would contravene a law; 6. modification would contravene body-corporate by-law applying to the property; 7. modification would cause potential health issues to future occupants or owner. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Subject to Body Corporate approval; 2. Modifications to be performed by a specified tradesperson; 3. Costs to be borne by the tenants; 4. Make good obligations – costs to be borne by the tenants or as agreed otherwise (Note: to be dealt with on a case by case basis).
Category 3 **Prescribed Evidence	Provided by Prescribed Expert (e.g. NDIS/OT/GP/Applicable Specialist)

Dispute Resolution Process

Parties to contact the RTA Tenancy Dispute Resolution Web Service – to access the modifications advisory service. This service can also be established to manage disputes relating to Minimum Housing Standards investigations and management of Repair Orders.

It is proposed that the advisory team consists of – RTA, NDIS, Person with disability, OT and Building representatives. A person with disability will also be invited to be part of the advisory team (determined through selection process and criteria of experience). The proposed workflow is as follows:



Other considerations:

1. QDN and REIQ to continue working with the broader property sector to develop access criteria, levels, icons and implement accessibility features on existing real estate platforms e.g., realestate.com.au
2. Tenancy scheme for funding of minor modifications and make good arrangements. This could be funded through unclaimed rental bonds and/or interest earned on bonds that are kept secure by the RTA.
 - a. Parameters could include maximum of modification costs similar to NDIS.
 - b. Additional funding to programs like Home Assist Secure – to fund minor modifications for those unable to meet the costs.
 - c. Funding to go towards eligible tenants who cannot afford to make good at the end of a tenancy.
3. An Education Campaign is integral to the success of any legislative changes proposed and is key to underpinning the framework. This campaign both promotes the program for tenants, but also educated Property Managers and Owners around the importance of Minor Modifications related to accessibility and safety and contributes to sustainable tenancies for people with disability. As part of the initial promotion of the project, both tenants and property managers will need support in relation to minor modifications. QDN and the REIQ could continue the partnership and work with respective stakeholders to ensure best outcomes. It is hoped that through this campaign, minor modifications that are installed could be left in properties to add additional features and subsequently be promoted through real estate platforms.

Matrix for Home Accessibility and Safety Modifications – For Department’s consideration

Matrix for Home Accessibility and Safety Modifications

This Matrix builds upon a Framework jointly developed by the Real Estate Institute of Queensland (REIQ) and Queenslanders with Disability Network Ltd (QDN) to facilitate the development of more ‘user-friendly’ and timely modifications of rental properties tenanted by people with disability. It builds upon the outcomes of an August 2022 roundtable hosted by both organisations where housing and community industry stakeholders along with people with disability representatives broadly endorsed key components of the Framework.

The Matrix provides examples of Category One and Two Minor Modifications and Category Three Major Modifications detailed in the Framework. They are provided as suggestions/options, rather than a prescriptive list of solutions around each of the modification categories. Many solutions to be effective need to be tailored to the disability type and specific support needs of individual tenants.

People with disability and different disability types

People with disability make up 1 in 5 Queenslanders, with an estimated 306,400 Queenslanders of all ages have a profound or severe disability. People with a profound or severe disability require assistance in everyday activities, including core activities such as self-care, mobility, activities of daily living, social participation and communication. People with disability, like everyone else, want to live as safely and independently as possible. Minor modifications in the home can support independence for people.

The table below provides an overview of the disability types. It is important to note that a number of people with disability live with more than one disability type which compounds their functional ability to undertake every-day activities of daily living.

Type	Description	Functional Needs in the home
Physical	Impact on the ability to perform physical activities, such as moving around external and internal parts of a property, undertaking personal care and daily living activities and may also be associated with speech/communication challenges. Generally, relates to musculoskeletal, circulatory, respiratory and nervous systems.	Ability to enter and move safely around the interior and exterior of a property and undertake personal care (bathing, toileting) and daily living activities (meal preparation, cleaning) independently
Intellectual	Difficulties with thinking, learning, communicating and memory. This can affect peoples’ ability to undertake	Ability to undertake

	complex tasks and solve problems re personal care and activities of daily living needs.	personal care and daily living tasks and social participation independently and safely
Sensory	Impairments in hearing and vision. Sensory disability can have a significant effect on communication, including being understood clearly, it can also impact a person's ability to undertake personal care, social interaction and daily living activities.	Ability to enter and move safely around the interior and exterior of a property and undertake personal care and daily living activities, safely and independently
Neurological	Impairments of the nervous system occurring after birth which can impact upon a person's mobility; dexterity, thinking processes and as such, ability to undertake personal care and daily living activities.	Ability to enter and move safely around the interior and exterior of a property and undertake personal care and daily living activities, safely and independently. Ability to live independently and safely.
Speech	Speech loss, impairment and/or difficulty in being understood verbally, resulting in issues re communication, social interactions and social connection	Ability to communicate and action daily living activities live independently and safely.
Psychosocial	A disability that may arise from a serious mental illness and can impact motivation, emotional and sensory balance and communication, interpersonal and conflict resolution abilities. Not everyone who has a mental illness will have a	Ability to live independently, move safely around the

	psychosocial disability, but for people who do, it can be longstanding.	interior and exterior of the dwelling, undertake personal care and tasks of daily living.
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Entering the Home				
Issue	Why it is needed	Minor Modification - Category 1 and 2	Major Modification Category 3	Risk Management Strategies /Potential solutions
Changes to the street number	People need larger sized numbers or colour contrast to ensure that the residence number is visible and accessible to people with vision impairments	Replacing the street number with one that is a different size, format (braille), colour or finish. Painting the number onto the kerb of the property (Category 1)	Installing lighting or making a structural change.	If the street number is screwed onto the exterior of the house or mailbox, or painted, modification may be done by tenant or through handyman. If an alteration to the structure or electrical fittings need to be modified, then a licenced tradesperson should be engaged.
The front entrance location or visibility	People need clear and unimpeded access to their home to ensure that the entry way is clear for access. People need to be able to see door locks and entrance to ensure that entrance is well lit and safe, and tenants can access key locks	Installing sensor lights on pathways and property entrance (if solar or battery) (Category 1) Cut back bushes or shrubs overhanging footpath or property entrance. (Category 1 or 2 depending upon need for licenced tradesperson/landscaper/tree lopper)	Installing sensor lights (if wired)	Sensor lights that do not require wiring can be installed by tenant. If alterations to the structure of the home or electrical fittings need to be modified to install the lights, then a licenced tradesperson should be engaged. In cases where bushes are only slightly overgrown, they may be cut back by the tenant or a handyman. Conversely, where the bushes are overgrown to an extent where they require professional attention, a licenced tradesperson/ landscaper may need to be engaged.
Steps at the entry door	People need step free access and a smooth entry to their home to ensure that people with mobility issues and devices, including	Install a modular ramp system at the steps/ mobile stair lift. (Category 2)	Insert handrails on steps. Remove steps and replace with a ramp or a graded path. Install	It is recommended to consult an occupational therapist to assess which modifications are suitable for the individual tenant and this issue.

	wheelchairs, have access to a property independently.		handrails along the path or ensure surrounding soil and/or grass is level with the new path at the edges	A licenced tradesperson would be required to carry out each of the listed modifications.
Steps are slippery and dangerous	People need to be able to access their home without feeling unsafe and reduce the risk of injury.	<p>Tape non-slip, colour-contrasting strips (self-adhesive tape glue strips) to the top (tread) of each step. Ensure each step has a smooth surface before applying the strips, as they do not adhere well to rough surfaces.</p> <p>Paint the steps with slip-resistant paint.</p> <p>Clean the steps regularly, making sure no excess water remains. (Category 1)</p>		Most materials required to carry out these modifications can be purchased from a hardware store. The modifications are also simple in nature and could be made by the tenant themselves or by a handyman.
The edge of the steps cannot be clearly seen.	People need to be able to clearly see the steps and entry to a property, so they feel confident and are physically safe to navigate entry (covers more than just people with mobility issues)	<p>Install sensor lights (if not wired) that automatically light up the steps as they are approached.</p> <p>Paint the edges of the risers and/or treads of the steps with a strip of colour-contrasting paint.</p> <p>Tape non-slip, colour contrasting strips to the top (tread) of each step. (Category 1)</p>	Install wired sensor lights. (Category 3)	<p>The materials required to carry out these modifications can be purchased at hardwares, lighting and discount department stores. The modifications can generally be made by the tenant or a handyman.</p> <p>If alterations to the structure of the home or electrical fittings need to be modified to install wired lights, then a licenced tradesperson should be engaged.</p>
There is a step or change of level at a doorway	People using wheelchairs or mobility aids need a smooth surface to ensure they can access all	<p>Install a plastic modular or portable ramp at the step/change of level.</p> <p>Place a wedge/threshold ramp at the step/change of level.</p>	<p>Install a grab rail on the wall.</p> <p>Install a handrail from wall to</p>	Installation of grab rails and handrails is likely to require the expertise of a licenced tradesperson to ensure they are installed correctly

	levels of the property safely.	(Category 1)	ground or landing. Remove the step and replace with a graded path. Install handrails along the path or ensure the surrounding soil and/or grass is level with the new path at the edges. (Category 3)	and are safe for users. The removal of a step and replacement of it with a graded path with handrails would also require the skills of a licenced tradesperson to carry out.
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For people with disability related to mobility, dexterity and strength.

Door handles, doorways and doors, can be a significant unintentional barrier for people with certain disabilities. The following modifications would be required so that people with limited mobility and/or dexterity in their upper bodies/hands and/or cognitive or sensory impairment are able to manage door handles independently to ensure they can access the property unassisted and with safety.

The door handle and lock require two hands to operate		Replacing door handles with no locking mechanism (Category 2)	Replace the existing door handle with a key-in-lock lever action handle. Install a lever door handle and separate deadlock. (Category 3)	These modifications would require the skill of a licenced tradesperson (locksmith). An Occupational Therapist may also provide advise re most effective option for the tenant. .
The round door handles are difficult to turn		Use a piece of non-slip matting or slip resistant cover which fits over the door handle to help grip the handle. Use a clip-on lever door handle. Replace the handles with lever door handles.		These modification do not require the skill of a licenced tradesperson.

		(Category 1)	
There are too many keys to manage the different door locks around the home		<p>Use of different coloured keys for doors to assist people with cognitive / sensory impairments and psycho-social impacts. (Category1).</p> <p>Change the lock cylinder on all doors to be keyed alike. One key then operates all doors. (Category 2)</p>	It is likely lock cylinder changes would require the skill of a licenced tradesperson
The lock is located too close to the door frame		<p>Install a lever door handle with a separate deadlock or a key-in-lock lever action handle on the entry door.</p> <p>Use a built-up key holder to assist in putting the key in the lock. This is a key with a moulded or larger handle attached to its base. It gives an easier grip, good leverage and more length to assist in turning the key. (Category 2)</p>	<p>These modifications are likely to require the skill of a licenced tradesperson (locksmith)</p> <p>An Occupational Therapist may provide the tenant with advice re best option.</p>
The style of door does not allow for easy opening and closing		<p>Attach a piece of string/rope around the door handle to pull the door closed. (Category 1)</p> <p>Remove or change the style of the door.</p> <p>Rehang doors so they swing in the opposite direction e.g. outwards rather than inwards. (Category 2)</p>	<p>Attaching a piece of string to a door handle is an easy modification which could be done by the tenant or a handyman.</p> <p>Removing, changing, or rehangng a door is likely to require the skill of a licenced tradesperson.</p>
The doors do not stay open		<p>Place a doorstopper at the bottom of the door.</p> <p>Attach a magnetic catch on the door frame.</p> <p>Use a door wedge.</p> <p>Use a door hook.</p> <p>Remove the closer on the security screen door. (Category 1)</p>	These modifications could be carried out by the tenant or handyman.

<p>The door, the door handle and the lock are hard to see</p>	<p>People with low vision/ neurological impairment need to be able to differentiate between the different elements in the entry way to ensure that they can access the property unassisted and safely. (Category 1)</p>	<p>Paint the door frames contrasting colour to the walls. Ensure the door handles and locks are a contrasting colour to the door.</p>		<p>These modifications can be carried out by the tenant or a handyman.</p>
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Internal Hallways, doorways and windows

Issue	Why it is needed	Minor Modification - Category 1 and 2	Major Modification - Category 3	Risk Management
<p>The hallways and doors are too narrow</p>	<p>People with wheelchairs and those using mobility devices need to be able to navigate around a home without obstacles and to ensure they can access all parts of the property independently.</p>	<p>If door frames and walls are being damaged by equipment, install corner and wall protection. (Category 1)</p> <p>Remove doors to create extra door clearance. (Category 2)</p>	<p>Widen doorways off hallways. (Category 3)</p>	<p>Installing corner and wall protection can be done by the tenant or handyman.</p> <p>Removing doors may require the use of a licensed tradesperson - but no structural change.</p> <p>Widening doorways will require structural change and the skill of a licenced tradesperson.</p>
<p>The window latches are difficult to reach, open and close</p>	<p>People with mobility issues, including those using wheelchairs and mobility devices</p>	<p>Use a long-handed reacher stick to reach the window latch. (Category 1)</p>	<p>Install windows that have height adjustable window latches.</p>	<p>The use of a long-handed reacher stick does not require assistance from a</p>

	and people with limited dexterity and strength need to be able to access windows and lock them unassisted to ensure that they can safely open and lock their residence.	<p>Arrange for the window to be serviced so that the opening/closing mechanisms operate properly.</p> <p>Install winders on windows. (Category 2)</p>		<p>licenced tradesperson.</p> <p>Arranging a window service would involve engaging a tradesperson as would the installation of winders on windows, however, not require structural changes.</p> <p>The installation of new windows with height adjustable latches would require structural change and need the skill of a qualified tradesperson.</p>
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Bathroom / toilet

For people with disability related to mobility, dexterity and strength.

Bathrooms and access to the bathroom and toilet facilities are essential for everyone in the house, they are also a significant area of risk for people with disability due to their size and hazardous nature in relation to water and slippery surfaces. Being able to use bathrooms and toilets independently can be a significant challenge for people with certain disabilities for a range of reasons outlined below. The following modifications would assist people with mobility issues, including mobility devices, and sensory impairments to access all bathroom facilities safely, independently and with the required support. Having a level access to the shower means people in chairs and **using mobility devices** can get into the shower area independently, and having a shower fixture that is removable, enables them to shower without a support worker or carer for assistance. Having grab rails in the toilet area, supports people to use toilet facilities without assistance.

Issue	Why it is needed	Minor Modification - Category 1 and 2	Major Modification - Category 3	Risk Management
The door limits the amount of circulation		Rehang the door so that it sits outwards. (Category 2)		This modification may require the skill of a licenced tradesperson.

space in the bathroom				
There is a step into the shower		Install grab rails to give better stability while getting in and out of the shower. (Category 2)	Install a false draining floor in the shower recess or shower floor. Ensure the sides of the false draining floor are flush against the sides of the shower recess or walls.	A false draining floor modification is likely to require the skill of a licenced tradesperson. It is recommended that tenants consult an Occupational Therapist before installing hand and grab rails.
A fixed shower screen limits access			Replace the fixed shower screen with a shower curtain hanging from a continuous curtain rail. Consider using a weighted shower curtain for safety. (Category 3)	The replacement of a shower screen involves structural change and will require the skill of a qualified tradesperson.
The waterflow is hard to direct because the shower rose is fixed		Replace the fixed shower rose with a hand-held shower set on mounting brackets or a vertical grab rail. The shower rose can then be used in a sitting or standing position. For baths, use a hand-held shower with adaptors that push onto single and double bath taps. (Category 1 or 2 depending upon complexity)		Such a modification is likely to require the skill of a qualified tradesperson to the tenant or a handyman could do this. However it is recommended they check with the supplier to ensure the supplied vertical rail is appropriate for use as a grab rail. For safety reasons it is recommended that a vertical grab rail be used and that you seek

				<p>advice from an Occupational Therapist prior to installation.</p> <p>It is also recommended that before fitting the hand-held shower with a flexible shower hose, the tenant or handyman seek advice from an electrician and/or plumber to ensure the finished installation complies with the requirements of the Plumbing Codes and Wiring Rules.</p>
Seating is needed in the shower		<p>Place a plastic shower chair/stool with metal legs and non-slip feet in the shower. Plastic garden chairs are not recommended as hot water makes them brittle and crack over time.</p> <p>Use a mobile over-toilet shower chair if the shower allows wheel-in access. (Category 1)</p> <p>Install a drop-down shower seat. Install grab rails for support. (Category 2)</p>		<p>Placing a plastic or mobile chair in the shower does not require the skill of a qualified tradesperson.</p> <p>Installing a drop-down shower seat and grab rails would require the skill of a licenced tradesperson. These. Advice from an occupational therapist is also recommended prior to the installation of both items. .</p>

<p>The bath edge is high, and the base of the bath is low</p>		<p>Place an adjustable bath board on top of the bath.</p> <p>Use a bath board and bath seat (inserted low in the bath) if the bath is made of steel (as the weight of the person on the bath seat may cause damage to baths made of weaker materials).</p> <p>Use an over bath swivel chair.</p> <p>Use a tub transfer bench if the bath edge does not support a bath board/</p>		<p>All of these modifications involve the use of pre-made objects and can be managed by the tenant.</p>
<p>The toilet seat is low</p>		<p>Use a raised toilet seat (with or without handles).</p> <p>Use a height adjustable over-toilet frame that has a built-in seat and armrests to raise seat height and to provide armrest support.</p> <p>Use a toilet surround frame to provide armrest support.</p> <p>Use a mobile over-toilet shower chair if the area can be accessed by a wheelchair.</p> <p>(Category 1)</p>		<p>Again, these are pre-made structures and can be managed by the tenant.</p>

<p>There is no structural support around the toilet</p>		<p>Install grab rails that clamp onto the toilet to provide armrest support.</p> <p>Use a toilet surround frame to provide armrest support.</p> <p>Use a height adjustable over-toilet frame to raise seat height and provide armrest support.</p> <p>Use a mobile over-toilet shower chair if the area can be accessed by a wheelchair. (Category 1)</p> <p>Install grab rails on the wall. (Category 2)</p>		<p>The modifications requiring the use of pre-made structures can be managed by the tenant.</p> <p>The installation of grab rails would likely require the skill of a licenced tradesperson and it is recommended consultation occurs with an occupational therapist when installing grab rails.</p>
<p>The bathroom floor is slippery, especially when wet.</p>		<p>Treat the bathroom/shower floor with a 'slip resistive when wet' solution to give the surface a better grip.</p> <p>Place self-adhesive, non-slip rubber strips or shapes on the floor (including the shower and bath surfaces).</p> <p>Clean the shower/bathroom floor regularly and ventilate.</p> <p>Remove existing flooring and</p>		<p>Treating the bathroom floor with a slip resistive solution, placing self-adhesive rubber strips on the floor and regularly cleaning the shower/bathroom floor can be managed by the tenant. Removing existing flooring and replacing with slip resistant flooring would require a registered tradesperson, however not structural change.</p>

		replace with 'slip resistant when wet' flooring. (Category 2)		
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Kitchen

For people with disability related to mobility, dexterity, strength, sensory impairment.

Safe access to kitchens and kitchen appliances are essential for everyone in the house. Stove tops and ovens can provide an unintended barrier to use for people with disability. The hotplate controls may not be clear enough for people with low vision to see, or too small for people with low dexterity to hold properly. Shelves may be set too high or too deep so that people using mobility devices cannot reach easily. Cooking appliances can be a safety hazard for people using mobility devices if not set up in an accessible way. Many modifications can be made simply and with no structural impact to the home and support the independence of people with disability at home.

Issue	Why it is needed	Minor Modification - Category 1 and 2	Major Modification - Category 3	Risk Management
The hotplate controls are too small to grasp		Use a contour turner over the top of the hotplate controls to help with turning them. Consider other appliances for cooking which may be easier to operate e.g. a freestanding single hotplate, a microwave oven, a small grill oven, a crock-pot or an electric fry pan. (Category 1)		These are simple modifications as they involve the use of pre-made objects.
The hotplate control markers are very small		Place fluorescent markers, stickers or puff paint (dimensional fabric paints that have a raised surface) on the hotplate control markers to highlight	.	Placing fluorescent markers, stickers etc can be done by the tenant. The installation lighting will require assistance from a licenced

		<p>them and make them more visible. (Category 1)</p> <p>Install direct lighting to cooking area. This might be a light in the range hood or a 'down light' above the kitchen bench. (Category 2)</p>		tradesperson or electrician.
The oven door is in the way when removing items from the oven			Replace the oven with a model which has a side opening door. (Category 3)	Replacing an oven would require the skill of a licenced qualified tradesperson.
There is no set down area next to the oven		<p>Clear the bench space near the oven to ensure there is a safe set down area next to the oven.</p> <p>Use a trolley with wheels to move items to a clear bench space. (Category 1)</p> <p>If you use a wheelchair for mobility, consider using a stable table as a set down area</p>		These are all simple works which would not require the skill of a tradesperson.
The oven is too low		<p>Place a firm chair next to the oven to sit on while using the oven.</p> <p>Consider using cooking appliances that can be placed</p>		These modifications do not require the skill of a tradesperson.

		on a bench e.g. a microwave oven, a small grill oven or an electric fry pan. (Category 1)		
The shelves in the fridge are too deep, high or low		Store most-used items within easy reach in the fridge. Place a firm chair or stool next to the fridge to sit on while reaching items on the lower shelves. (Category 1)		These modifications do not require the skill of a tradesperson.
The sink, stove and fridge are too far apart		Use a trolley with wheels to move heavy items around the kitchen. If a wheelchair is being used for mobility, consider using a stable table to move items around the kitchen. (Category 1)		These modifications do not require the skill of a tradesperson.

Bedroom				
Issue	Why it is needed	Minor Modification - Category 1 and 2	Major Modification - Category 3	Risk Management
The toilet is too far from the bedroom		Place a commode next to the bed. Keep a bedpan or urinal bottle in a convenient place close to the bed and use with a plastic draw sheet.		These modifications do not require a tradesperson.

<p>The light switch is too far from the bed</p>	<p>People need to feel safe at night to navigate the bedroom. Installing an additional switch that can be reached from the bed ensures that people with disability are safer by being able to see obstacles in their path if needing to move around at night.</p>	<p>Place a lamp beside the bed.</p> <p>Attach a night light just above bed height. Plug in sensor lights are also an option.</p> <p>Keep a torch close to the bed. (Category 1)</p> <p>Install an additional rocker switch for the light close to the bed. (Category 2)</p>	<p>.</p>	<p>Placing a lamp, torch or night light above the bed do not require a tradesperson.</p> <p>Installing an additional rocker switch will require tradesperson such as an electrician.</p>
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Cupboards, wardrobes and drawers				
Issue	Why it is needed	Minor Modification - Category 1 and 2	Major Modification - Category 3	Risk Management
<p>The shelves/hanging rails are either too high or low</p>	<p>People need to be able to access clothes and personal items safely and independently and reduce risk of injury. Moving hanging rails or shelves to a lower position ensures that they can reach things without support.</p>	<p>Use a long handled pick up stick to reach the items you want.</p> <p>Use a piece of dowel or timber rod with a hook on the end to reach the required items. (Category 1)</p> <p>Move the hanging rail to a lower position in the wardrobe.</p>	<p>.</p>	<p>Using a pickup stick or an object with a hook on it does not require the assistance of a qualified tradesperson.</p> <p>The installation of new structures in the cupboard/wardrobe could be done by the tenant or may require a tradesperson.</p>

		<p>Install a second hanging rail in the wardrobe that is below the standard rail.</p> <p>Install pull-down baskets if the shelves are too high.</p> <p>Category 1 or 2)</p>		
<p>The shelving in the cupboard/pantry is too deep</p>	<p>People need to be able to access food and items safely and independently and reduce risk of injury. Changing shelving ensures that people using mobility devices or with limited mobility can access their needs without support.</p>	<p>Store regularly used items on a kitchen bench top or a trolley.</p> <p>Use baskets to store regularly used items and place on top of cupboards, shelves or the pantry floor.</p> <p>Consider using drawers to store grocery items. (Category 1)</p> <p>Install small wire baskets on the inside of cupboard doors to store regularly used items.</p> <p>Install a lazy susan to</p>	.	<p>The first options listed fall under Category 1 - do not require a tradesperson.</p> <p>Additions/moderations to the pantry /cupboard listed as Category 2 may require the assistance of a licenced tradesperson.</p>

		<p>store regularly used items.</p> <p>Install 180-degree hinges on the doors.</p> <p>Lower or raise shelves to make them easier to reach.</p> <p>Install pull-down baskets.</p> <p>Install a pull-out pantry. (Category 2)</p>		
<p>The drawers and cupboards are too hard to open and close</p>	<p>People need to be able to access storage cupboards and shelves independently and ensure that people with limited mobility and dexterity are able to use independently and safely</p>	<p>Install vertical or horizontal easy-pull D handles.</p> <p>Install open shelving for easy access to regularly used items.</p> <p>Replace difficult-to-open drawers with drawers on easy glide runners with stops.</p> <p>Place 180 degrees hinges on the cupboard to allow them to be pulled back easily,</p>		<p>All of the modifications listed would require a licenced tradesperson.</p>

		Remove the cupboard door and install a curtain.		
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Lighting, controls, taps and flooring

For people with disability related to mobility, dexterity, strength and vision impairment. Being able to access lighting and turn taps on and off are essential for everyone in the house. Having lighting that is bright enough so that people with low vision can navigate safely through the house is essential. For people with low dexterity or using mobility devices like wheelchairs, being able to reach light and power switches is essential for independent living in the home. A simple change of style of tap can ensure that people with disability using mobility devices or with low dexterity/strength can turn taps on and off without assistance.

Issue	Why it is needed	Minor Modification - Category 1 and 2	Major Modification - Category 3	Risk Management
The lighting level is low		Replace the light bulbs with higher output bulbs. Install task lighting or plug-in sensor lights to focus light in particular areas. (Category 1 or 2)		These modifications could be done by the tenant however may require the assistance of a tradesperson.
There is not enough lighting as the ceiling fan is in place of the ceiling light		Install a fan with a light fitting included. Consider a fan with a remote control. (Category 2)		Installation of a fan requires assistance from a tradesperson.
The light bulbs are high on the ceiling.		Use a small plastic device called a globe grabber which is fitted on the end of a long handle.		This modification could be carried out by the tenant or a handyman.
The light and power switches are		Use a piece of dowel or timber rod fitted with a		Using a piece of dowel or timber rod fitted with a

<p>difficult to turn on and off as they are too small and/or too hard to reach.</p>		<p>rubber thimble on the end to turn light and power switches on and off. (Category 1)</p> <p>Replace standard switches with large rocker switches.</p> <p>Mount a plug-in power board on the wall, floor or in a place that can be easily reached. Consider a power board with a large rocker switch. (Category 2)</p>		<p>rubber thimble is a simple modification that can be managed by the tenant.</p> <p>The replacement of switches or mounting of power boards are likely to require the assistance of a qualified electrician.</p>
<p>The mat and carpet edge are a trip hazard</p>		<p>Secure carpet edges.</p> <p>Remove any mats, carpets or vinyl where edges cannot be secured. (Category 1 and 2)</p>		<p>Removal of mats can be managed by the tenant. Removing carpet/vinyl will require tradesperson assistance.</p>
<p>The taps are difficult to turn</p>		<p>Attach a removable tap turner to the tap. (Category 1)</p> <p>Change taps so that they half-turn, with either short or long lever handles. (Category 1 and 2)</p>		<p>Attaching a removable tap turner to the tap would not require a qualified tradesperson.</p> <p>Changing taps may require the assistance of a licenced tradesperson.</p>

Outdoor areas				
Issue	Why it is needed	Minor Modification - Category 1 and 2	Major Modification - Category 3	Risk Management
The clothesline is too high	People need to be able to reach clotheslines independently, so that they can undertake daily tasks without the need of assistance. This ensures that people using mobility devices like wheelchairs can do daily living tasks like laundry without assistance.	<p>Install a fold-down clothesline outside home (e.g. Paraline).</p> <p>Use a drying rack.</p> <p>(Category 1)</p> <p>Install a fully retractable clothesline to outside walls and/or posts.</p> <p>Install a height adjustable rotary clothesline. (Category 1 or 2)</p>		<p>Category 1 modifications do not require a tradesperson.</p> <p>Instillation of the fully retractable and height adjustable clotheslines may require a tradesperson (Category 1 or 2)</p>
The garden gate latch is difficult to reach and use	People need to be able to access all areas of the property including outside areas independently. Being able to open the garden gate unassisted supports this and ensures people using mobility devices and/or with low dexterity/strength can access garden areas.	<p>Replace the gate latch with a lever handle opener.</p> <p>Attach a length of rope to the gate latch and use it to pull the latch open and closed. (Category 1)</p> <p>Use a wedge to keep the gate open.</p>		All listed modifications do not require a tradesperson.

		Remove the garden gate.		
The garden gate latch is located on one side only	People need to be able to access all areas of the property including outside areas independently. Being able to open the garden gate unassisted supports this and ensures people using mobility devices and/or with low dexterity/strength can access garden areas.	<p>Install 180-degree hinges on the gate.</p> <p>Install spring hinges on the gate.</p> <p>Install a lever handle on both sides of the gate. (Category 1)</p>		Installation of the listed items will not require a tradesperson.
The garden tap is difficult to turn	People need to be able to access all features in a property. A simple change of style of tap can ensure that people with disability using mobility devices or with low dexterity/strength can turn taps on and off without assistance.	<p>Install a lever handle.</p> <p>Use a tap turner. (Category 1)</p>		All listed modifications do not require a tradesperson.
It is difficult to open the letter box with one hand	People need to be able to open a letter box unassisted, Changing the type of letterbox ensures that people with mobility devices and/or low dexterity or strength can access the letterbox independently.	Install a letter box with a side-opening door, drop-down door or no door. (Category 1)		The installation of a letterbox should not require a licenced tradesperson.
The gardens are too low		Use a pot plucker.		Using a pot plucker or garden tools can be managed by the tenant.

		<p>Use long handed garden tools.</p> <p>Re-pot plants into large pots to raise their height. (Category 1)</p> <p>Consider establishing raised garden beds. Category 2)</p>		<p>Re-potting plants or establishing raised garden beds may require a licenced tradesperson/landscaper.</p>
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