

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy provides guidance to Customers and employees on Hume’s approach to home modifications in social and affordable housing, and how property modification decisions are made.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all customers who live in Hume Community Housing (Hume) social and affordable properties in which customers have entered into a Residential Tenancy Agreement (RTA) with Hume. In leasehold properties and properties managed on a fee for service arrangement, the approval of the property owner/agent will be required. In these instances, Hume will approach the owner to seek approval for the modification.
- 2.2 Customers who live in Home Purchase Agreement (**HPA**) properties may make a modification request but this will be subject to approval from Land And Housing Corporation (LAHC).
- 2.3 This policy excludes all Specialist Disability Accommodation dwellings under Hume’s management and NDIS registration.
- 2.4 This policy does not cover general repairs and maintenance requests, works carried out on void properties, planned upgrades, cyclical works and alterations.

3 Policy Statement

- 3.1 Hume understands that Customers circumstances change and may require reasonable physical modifications to their homes to enable them to live safely and/or more independently.
- 3.2 Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Hume (and other landlords) have an obligation to provide ‘reasonable adjustments’ (disability modifications or relocation) to support Customers with a disability.
- 3.3 Hume is committed to ensuring that all customers have access to safe and suitable housing that meets their individual needs. We understand that some of our customers are also NDIS participants and may require home modifications through their NDIS plan to enable them to live independently and with dignity.
- 3.4 Hume acknowledges our obligation to approve home modifications through the NDIS Home Modifications pathway in accordance with the “reasonable and necessary” [guidelines](#). We will work with customers and their formal and informal supports to identify the modifications required in their homes.
- 3.5 Customers are required to obtain Hume’s consent before any modification can be made to their home.
- 3.6 Hume promote a transparent and inclusive modifications process and will provide information and support to our customers from request to completion.
- 3.7 Customers that request a modification are required to submit a modification request form, including recommendations from relevant parties such as doctors or occupational therapists.
- 3.8 Customers should apply for the appropriate funding to fund the modification in the first instance, such as through a government funding scheme.
- 3.9 Funding of modifications may come from various sources including:

- 3.9.1 NDIS: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/home-and-living/what-housing-supports-are-included>
- 3.9.2 My Aged Care packages: <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/aged-care-services/changes-to-my-home>
- 3.9.3 Hume: may finance a modification if this is deemed to be reasonable to ensure that capital properties comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 3.10 When assessing property modification requirements, Hume will consider the customer's needs and how the organisation can best meet those needs.
- 3.11 Hume will ensure compliance with the relevant housing building codes and standards during the development and modification of Hume properties.
- 3.12 There are two types of modifications:
- Minor:** low value, non-structural (for example, adding grip rails, installing a hand-held shower set, or changing to level style taps)
- Major:** high value, structural or requiring Development Approval (DA) (for example, widening doorways, providing ramp access, modifying the kitchen, bathroom, or laundry)
- 3.13 Hume may finance a minor modification if this is deemed to be reasonable to ensure that capital properties comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. For major modifications, where the customer is eligible for the NDIS, Hume will work within the rules of the NDIS to ensure modifications are carried out as required.
- 3.14 There are some additional circumstances in which Hume may also seek approval from LAHC before a modification can be approved. This includes where the modification is more than \$30,000, changes the number of bedrooms, or decreases the value of the property.
- 3.15 Where further approval is required e.g. from landlord in the case of leasehold or fee for service properties, Hume will approach the owner on behalf of the customer with the written application.
- 3.16 Generally, Hume will agree to modifications where the modifications are:
- Assessed to be economically viable.
 - Funded, where the customer has sought funding for the modifications (such as NDIS or My Aged care).
 - To assist the customer to remain in the home.
 - To comply with regulatory or contractual requirements.
 - Approved by other relevant parties such as the property owner.
- 3.17 When considering the economic viability of the modification, Hume will assess:
- Costs and benefits of other options such as relocating the household.
 - Funding sources.
 - If the modification meets the current and long term needs of the customer.
 - If the modification is appropriate for the type of dwelling and for customer's future needs.
 - Long-term value of the property, i.e. cost of the modification in relation to the value of the property.
- 3.18 Hume will provide clear contact details to customers formal supports who have provided safety recommendations regarding property modifications so that they have the correct point of contact at Hume.
- 3.19 Where possible Hume will arrange joint visits with customers formal supports, such as Occupational Therapists (OT) for major modifications. This will ensure clear discussion is undertaken between the customer, OT and Hume and will speed up the approval process.
- 3.20 Hume will advise the customer of our decision in writing within 28 days of receiving the modification request. If a decision cannot be made within 28 days, Hume will advise the customer why there is a delay and when they can expect a decision. Hume acknowledges that there may

be circumstances beyond our control which may contribute to the delay such as the requirement to obtain further approvals e.g. from landlords.

- 3.21 Hume will only engage approved contractors to complete all modifications and will monitor the work to ensure they comply with legislative and regulatory requirements.
- 3.22 Hume (or the owner of the property) may decline modification requests that are unfeasible or non-economically viable. In these instances, Hume will meet with the customer to discuss alternative suitable housing options. Hume may recommend the customer relocate to an alternative suitable property if available.

4 Nonviable modifications

- 4.1 If modifications are not economically viable or will not resolve the problem for the customer long term, or Hume cannot obtain the required approvals, Hume will consider other options such as relocation. Refer to the **Housing Transfer Policy** for more information.
- 4.2 Hume will inform the customer when advising the outcome of the modifications request, the reason for not approving the modifications and other options available.
- 4.3 If the modifications are not economically viable, Hume will identify if there are any modifications that can be completed that will keep the customer safe until an alternative suitable property is identified.
- 4.4 If the modifications are not economically viable, and the customer refuses two suitable alternative offers of accommodation, Hume may take action to end the tenancy.

5 Responsibilities

Role or responsibility	Position or delegation level
Approving Policy	Chief Operating Officer
Developing the process for this policy	General Manager, Assets
Ensuring policy aligns with compliance obligations	Senior Manager, Risk and Compliance
Policy Implementation	All employees
Policy review	General Manager Assets

Reporting

- 5.1 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 5.2 Employees must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in SDM.

6 Definitions

Alterations: improvements carried out by customers, at their own cost, with our approval. Refer to the **Alterations Policy** for more information.

Modification: changes Hume makes to a property because the property is not suitable to meet the customer's needs.

Social housing: properties made available to customers on low to moderate incomes and managed by Community Housing Providers or Department of Communities and Justice. Rent subsidies are available to customers to reduce their weekly rent payments

Tribunal: the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, or NCAT (NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal)

