

Modifications Request Policy

Location	Operations NSW/ACT
Policy Type	Social and Affordable Housing Policy
Version	5.0
Issue Date	July 2022
National Regulatory Code	Performance Outcome 1- Tenant and housing services and Performance Outcome 2 – Asset Management

1. OBJECTIVE

1.1. The objective of this policy is to:

- Meet the requirements of our clients and their families where they have disabilities or other special needs.
- To help our clients and their families to remain in their home wherever this is possible; and,
- To meet the requirements of the appropriate Residential Tenancies Act and anti-discrimination legislation.

2. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

2.1. Argyle Housing promotes and respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons with a disability and provides a service to clients in line with the principles of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, Disability ACT and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

2.2. Argyle Housing aims to provide properties which accommodate the changing needs of our tenants and their families. Each category of modification will be assessed in full consultation with the client, their carer, advocate and/or family support member.

2.3. Argyle Housing will ensure that all new acquisitions of properties and, if possible, major upgrades, will be completed using the Universal Designs Principle.

3. POLICY DETAIL

3.1. Modifications are grouped into two categories: minor and major modifications.

(1) Minor Modifications – involve non-structural work, such as:

- Grab rails
- A handheld shower
- Lever taps
- Securing furniture to a non-tiled wall for safety reasons
- Fitting childproof latch to an outdoor gate of a single dwelling
- Inserting fly screens on windows
- Installing or replacing an internal window covering (ie. curtains)
- Installing cleats or cord guides to secure blind or curtain cords
- Installing child safety gates inside the property



- Installing window safety devices for child safety
- Installing or replacing hooks, nails or screws for hanging paintings, picture frames and other similar items
- Installing a carriage service to connect a phone line or to access the internet and any associated facility or customer equipment
- Planting vegetables, flowers, herbs or shrubs (shrubs that don't grow more than 2 meters) in the garden if existing vegetation or plants do not need to be removed.
- Installing a wireless removable outdoor security camera
- Applying shatter-resistant film to window or glass doors
- Making modifications that don't penetrate a surface, or permanently modify a surface, fixture or structure of the property.

Minor modifications require written approval from Argyle Housing prior to completion, application for modification must be made using the Modification Request Form. Argyle Housing may request that any modification be completed by a qualified tradesperson.

(2) **Major Modifications** – usually involve structural changes, such as:

- Widening doorways
- Access ramps
- Changing the kitchen, bathroom or laundry
- Replacement of floor coverings
- Work that requires a Development Application (DA) approval

Usually, a request for minor work should be supported by a medical certificate or other evidence from a health care professional. For major work an Occupational Therapist or specialist report will be required to support the modification request.

3.2. Where a client requests a modification to a property the following criteria will be considered in assessing whether Argyle Housing will modify the property:
The request must be in writing on a Modification Request Form outlining all details relevant to the modification.

The proposed modifications must meet both the current and likely future needs of the person requiring the modifications.

Consideration of financial resources to complete the requested work.

Long term value and future use of the property.

Whether the property is a leasehold, or any asset not owned by Argyle Housing (see 3.4).

The cost and possible benefits of relocating the tenant and household members to a more suitable or alternative modified property.

3.3. Where the property is owned by Argyle Housing, the application will be assessed by a delegated Argyle Housing manager and the decision notified to the tenant in writing within 20 days of Argyle Housing receiving all supporting evidence.

3.4. Where a client requests a modification to a property that is not owned by Argyle Housing (e.g. a property rented by Argyle Housing from the private rental market, or the



property is owned by NSW Land and Housing Corporation), Argyle Housing will forward the request to the owner for consideration. Where an owner declines to approve a modification, Argyle Housing will endeavour to find suitable alternative accommodation for the client as per the Application to Transfer Policy.

3.5. Argyle Housing may consider requests from clients to provide a modification or upgrade to a common area to improve disability access. This should be in writing and addressed to the relevant Client Support Specialist or Team Lead.

3.6. Should it be decided that the required modifications are not viable either economically or because the structural changes are unable to be made in the property, Argyle Housing will endeavour to find suitable alternative accommodation for the tenant and their household as per the Application to Transfer policy.

3.7. Where a property is modified for a client, the items installed in the property will remain in the property at the end of the tenancy.

3.8. If the person with the disability moves out of the property Argyle Housing will discuss with the remaining occupants, the possibility of relocating to another property so that it can be matched to a suitable client requiring a modified property.

3.9. Approval for modifications does not negate the client's responsibility to restore or maintain the property in accordance with the incoming condition report, less fair wear and tear.

4. APPEALS

If a tenant believes Argyle Housing has made a wrong decision, they can ask for a formal review of the decision. To do this, they can complete an Appeals Form stating why they disagree with the decision. An appeal can be lodged by completing the 'I Want to Appeal Form' found on the Argyle Housing website www.argylehousing.com.au or available from any Argyle Housing office. The form, or a letter, can be emailed, posted or delivered in person to any Argyle Housing office or submitted online via the Argyle Housing website.

If the appellant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of the first appeal, they can appeal to the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) which is an independent appeals body specifically set up to consider appeals made by social housing tenants in NSW. An appellant can access HAC by calling free call 1800 629 794 or can get more information from their Client Support Specialist.

Matters that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) or the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) can resolve are not able to be appealed. For example, if Argyle Housing issues a Notice of Termination for breaches of the tenancy agreement. See Argyle Housing's Appeal Policy for further information.

5. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS



- 5.1. Argyle Housing Policy Definitions Policy
- 5.2. Delegation Policy
- 5.3. Your Rights at Argyle Housing Policy
- 5.4. Argyle Housing Appeal Policy
- 5.5. Management Transfer Policy
- 5.6. Property-specific Complaints Policies, Procedures and Tools
- 5.7. National Community Housing Standards Reference - 1.3 Changing needs of tenants

Version Control

Version No.	Review Date	Author	Position	Next Review Date
1.0	27/02/2014	D. Skelton	GM BD&R	26/02/2015
2.0	20/05/2015	M. Ward	Ops Mgr. NSW	19/05/2016
3.0	12/08/2015	W. Middleton	CEO	12/08/2016
3.1	01/05/2016	M. Ward	GM Operations	01/05/2017
4.0	17/08/2017	M. Reader	GM Operations	17/08/2018
4.1	07/09/2018	C.Doherty	HSM	07/09/2019
4.2	16/03/2020	C.Doherty	HSM	16/03/2022
5.0	18/07/2022	M. Ostojic	GM Operations	18/07/2024

