

## Property Alterations and Disability Modifications Policy

---

**KEY POLICY AREA:** Property Management

**POLICY:** Property Alterations and Disability Modifications

**APPROVED DATE:** 11<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2019

**MODIFIED DATE:**

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Residential Tenancies Act 1997

### STANDARDS, PROTOCOLS AND POLICY LINKAGE

Quality Assurance Policy

---

### POLICY

This policy applies to tenants of Wayss Owned properties, transitional housing (THM) properties, Head Lease properties and Council owned properties.

Wayss will manage requests from tenants to make alterations or disability modifications to a property. Wayss will ensure that each application is responded to in a fair, transparent and systematic way that clearly explains options, choices and decision-making processes.

The *Office of Housing* is responsible for disability modifications to properties. In Head Lease properties, the approval of the property owner/agent will be required. In both of these cases, Wayss will contact the appropriate party to seek permission for the alteration or modification to be approved.

### CLIENT RIGHTS

All clients have the right to request alterations or modifications be made to the property they are renting.

### RESPONSIBILITY

#### Property Alterations

Tenants should supply all necessary information in their application to make alterations.

Once the request is approved, the tenant is responsible for

- Paying for the costs of the alteration;
- Repairing and maintaining the alterations;
- Paying for any damage caused by the alteration;
- Paying for any council permits; and
- Paying for and restoring the alteration to its original condition at the end of the tenancy.

Prior consent is required from the *Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)* for Director Owned properties or the landlord for Head Lease properties.

Tenants may not be responsible for minor modifications required for them to live independently in the property (see disability modifications section).

### Disability Modifications

Wayss acknowledges that the needs of tenants (and/or other household members) may change due to illness, injury, age or disability and as a result, changes to the structure or layout of the home are necessary in order to provide safe passage and movement around their home. Modifications can be requested and require a letter from the tenant's occupational therapist or doctor/medical practitioner. Tenants may also request assistance of funding from their local council/shire, *National Disability Service* or *DHHS*.

Minor modification are changes that do not affect the structure of the property. Some examples include (but are not limited to):

- Hand rails and grab rails.
- Lever taps.

## Property Alterations and Disability Modifications Policy

---

- Handheld shower heads.
- Minor ramps.

Major modifications are changes that affect the property structure, needs specialised work and/or may require a permit.

The *Office of Housing* is responsible for the cost of minor disability modifications on Transitional Housing Managed properties. The *Office of Housing* is responsible for considering requests for major modifications. The *Office of Housing* will inform Wayss of whether or not they agree to pay for any modifications.

The *Office of Housing* is responsible for requesting owners of Head Lease properties to consider some minor modifications. The property owner is responsible for considering all requests for modifications.

An assessment is conducted to determine any structural constraints, condition of the building and whether the landlord agrees to modifications being made. Tenants must have written agreement from their landlord/agent before modifications take place.

If the *Office of Housing* or landlord refuses consent for a modification, the tenant may first request a reason for the denial. If a tenant believes the reason is unfair, they can apply to the *Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)* for a ruling.

### **EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed when required in line with changes to the *Residential Tenancies Act* and/or Office of Housing guidelines.

This policy will be reviewed as part of a formal evaluation process and as issues are raised. This policy will be monitored through data collected from tenant complaints, tenant feedback surveys and staff feedback.