

# Guide to Reasonable and Necessary (R & N) decisions

## Modifications to a new house build

### Case

Bethany has amputations to her legs and uses a wheelchair to get around. Bethany is planning to build a new house, and she has a goal to be independently mobile in her new home using her wheelchair.

Bethany would like the NDIS to fund some modifications to the standard house plan so she can move around in her wheelchair. These include an automated front door, moving some doorways for space to turn the wheelchair around, and creating some wider doors inside the house. She gives us an assessment from a qualified home modification assessor that confirms the exact modifications Bethany needs because of her disability.

### Would we fund this?

Yes, the NDIS will generally fund the difference between a standard home feature or fitting if it relates to your disability-support needs and is an NDIS support for you.

We would only fund features above the [Livable Housing Design Standard](#) (Australian Building Codes Board) that meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

In this situation we could fund the cost difference between a standard front door and Bethany's automated front door. We could also fund the cost difference between standard internal door widths, and the wider doors Bethany needs because of her disability.

**Note:** New standard homes will include access features required by the [Livable Housing Design Standard](#) in most states and territories from September 2022.

### Why would we fund this?

To work out if modifications to a new home build are reasonable and necessary for you, we'll look at the information you give us against the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

You'll need to give us evidence, including an assessment from a home modification assessor, that shows the modifications:

- relate to your disability support needs
- will help you pursue your goals
- are value for money compared with other supports that could achieve the same outcome

- will be effective and beneficial for you, having regard to current good practice. This means thinking about what's recommended, or has been found to work well for other people in a similar situation
- aren't something that could be given by your friends or family
- are an NDIS support for you
- comply with all the relevant Australian standards and regulations, including the National Construction Code in the state or territory you are building in. The modifications must also comply with relevant [Livable Housing Design](#) standards.

### **What else do we think about?**

We'll think about if you would have needed modifications to your new home build with good site and design selection. When building or moving into a new home, you should plan or look for home designs that suit your needs, or that need minimal or no modifications. Your home design should suit your disability support needs as much as possible now and in the future.

We'll also think about if you need other home modifications or assistive technology, and we'll think about your whole plan as a package of NDIS supports.

### **Case example 1**

Jorge is 42 years old. He has nerve damage in his arms and legs which affects his mobility, so he uses a wheelchair. He has a goal of being more independent when completing personal care tasks.

Jorge is planning to build a new home, so he contacts us before he starts the process. We provide some funding in Jorge's capacity building budget for a home modification assessor. The assessor helps Jorge consider his disability support needs while he's planning his house design.

Jorge would like his house plans changed to remove a non-load-bearing wall and adjust some doors on the standard plan. His builder can make these changes at no extra cost. He also needs to lower the bathroom sub-floor so he can wheel in without any step, and move the toilet pan so he can access the toilet independently.

Jorge asks us for funding for these changes to the bathroom.

He gives us an assessment from his home modification assessor that shows the changes will enable him to safely use the bathroom and toilet.

To work out if the modifications to the building plan meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#), some of the things Jorge's planner thinks about include:

- if Jorge needs the modifications because of his disability
- if the modifications are value for money compared with other supports, like assistive technology, that could achieve the same outcome
- if the modifications are likely to meet his needs in the long term

- if the modifications are an NDIS support for Jorge.

The planner decides the modifications to Jorge's bathroom meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#). They are value for money, and they allow Jorge to independently access his bathroom and toilet. This means he won't need someone to help him even if his functional abilities decrease over time.

The planner will need 2 itemised quotes from the builder. This is to work out the difference between the cost of the original house features compared with the modifications, as well as any design costs.

The planner approves funding to cover the cost of modifications to the house design plan to change the bathroom sub-floor and move the toilet pan in the bathroom.

### **Case example 2**

Tamara is 10 years old and has quadriplegic cerebral palsy. She has a goal to be more mobile in her home by having better access.

Tamara uses a customised attendant-propelled manual wheelchair. She has a specialised seating system and uses a hoist for transfers. Tamara also needs help with personal care and daily living activities.

Tamara lives with her family, who are starting the process of building a new home. Her family requests the NDIS funds modifications to their new home. These include:

- a widened front door and other internal doors for the living area, bedroom and bathroom that Tamara will regularly use
- grab rails and reinforcement for the ceiling hoist that helps transfer Tamara
- polished concrete flooring
- remote controlled ceiling fans and lighting
- a video intercom

Tamara's home modification assessor gives us evidence that explains how these requested modifications will benefit Tamara and help her work towards her goals.

Tamara's planner determines some of the requested home modifications meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#), but others do not.

The widened doors and grab rails for the ceiling hoist meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#). They are related to Tamara's disability and are value for money compared to other NDIS supports. They will also help her work towards her goal of being more mobile in her home by having better access.

But the polished concrete flooring, remote-controlled ceiling fans and lighting, and video intercom do not meet all the [NDIS funding criteria](#). They are not [NDIS supports](#) or related to Tamara's disability support needs. Everyone needs to pay for flooring options in their new home build whether or not they have a disability. There are standard flooring options that would meet Tamara's mobility support needs. The video intercom and remote-controlled

ceiling fans and lighting are also features that everyone would have to pay for, whether or not they have a disability. They do not relate to Tamara's disability support needs.

The planner includes funding in Tamara's plan for only the modifications that are NDIS supports and meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#). Tamara's family can choose to pay for the other specific fittings and features they want in their new home.

For more information, refer to [Our Guideline – Home modifications](#).