

Home Modifications Australia

2016 Federal Election Platform

MOD.A represents providers of home modifications, which are applied to ordinary Australian homes in order to enable older people and people with disability to function independently and access or remain living in their homes for as long as possible. The reforms taking place in the aged care and disability sectors in Australia and supported across all sides of politics clearly support people living in their own homes rather than accessing specially built and staffed residential accommodation. Home modifications enable people to remain in ordinary housing, attached to family and community.

As the reforms rapidly progress toward completion MOD.A believes that we need a much stronger focus on making housing suitable for people with disability to live in and for older people to age in place. This requires the Australian government to commit to the following measures:

- 1) The creation of a stand- alone, home modification-specific means-tested grant programme that can subsidise all Australians (on a sliding, means-tested scale) who are affected by both impairment and barriers in their home environment (across both disability and aged care).
- 2) The home modifications programme is to be targeted at consumers to reduce barriers in the home environment wherever this is identified, in owned or rented properties across Australia, and provides grants to those who require it based on their capacity to pay.
- 3) A key strategy of the home modifications programme is the provision of information to home owners about how to identify hazards and to make their homes safer and more accessible for lifelong habitation.
- 4) The home modifications programme is to exist as a housing grant available to all individuals separate to funding and programmes targeted at older people and people with disability (*Living Longer Living Better* and the National Disability Insurance Scheme) and available to eligible participants of both.
- 5) The home modifications programme needs to be developed with the built-in capacity to deliver solutions to people living in a range of housing types regardless of tenure or the properties location or age.
- 6) Providers of solutions within the home modifications programme are to be funded, for a minimum of 3 years, to establish capability and supply of suitably skilled and experienced providers.

- 7) A single, nationally recognised quality standard, specific to home modifications, needs to be developed by MOD.A to enable providers to be identified as the preferred service delivery agents used by all Australian Government funded and subsidised home modification programmes.
- 8) A preventative, “early intervention” strategy needs to be adopted by the Australian Government to encourage Australian property owners to renovate and retrofit their homes to a suitable standard whereby they can access or remain in their own homes for as long as they wish.
- 9) The Australian Government must introduce significant tax concessions to home owners who wish to renovate or retrofit their homes to a suitable accessible standard.
- 10) Property owners, including those who own investment properties, must be offered tax and other incentives to encourage the retrofitting of existing housing to a suitable accessible standard to enable older tenants or tenants with disability to live there as long as they wish without having to access specialist residential options.
- 11) The Australian Government must promote the key principles of retrofitting for suitably accessible housing in a long-term national media campaign, backed up by funding for MOD.A as the national body focused on supporting all aspects of quality delivery in this area.

In addition to these measures specific to home modifications MOD.A supports the positions of the Australian Network on Universal Housing Design on the need for regulation to build new housing to universal housing design standards. This would reduce the cost burden on individuals and government in future to enable people to access and remain living in a broader range of housing types in all communities. MOD.A also supports the measures to address affordable housing and reduce homelessness outlined in the Vote Home 2016 election platform.

MOD.A is part of the National Aged Care Alliance and the NSW Ageing Alliance, and endorses the positions adopted by these groups.