

# VER<sup>Λ</sup> LIVING

## Have a question about Specialist Disability Accommodation?

The process of finding and moving into a new home can often bring forth many questions.

We have pulled together a quick guide of some key components of Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) which may be helpful to draw upon as you navigate through your SDA journey.

If you would like to know more, our Tenant Support Specialists are here to assist you at a time which is suitable to you, so please, get in touch!

## WHAT IS SPECIALIST DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION (SDA)?

Specialist Disability Accommodation or SDA, is housing that has been designed to meet stringent design standards, as published by the National Disability Insurance Agency, which set a benchmark for innovative, accessible housing for people with disability in Australia.

SDA is designed to meet varying access and support requirements that cater to extreme functional impairment, or very high support needs.

Simply put, SDA dwellings are purpose-built, innovative homes designed to support people with disability to live a more independent lifestyle while accessing high-quality support from their home.

SDA properties are sophisticated in their design, with a goal of enabling participants to live as independently in their home as possible, providing opportunities to actively engage in day to day life in a home environment which is intuitive to needs.

## SDA IS DEFINED BY FOUR KEY FACTORS BEING

- >> **Design Category** – this is the type of design of the home, specifically relating to its accessible features which distinguish it from any other build.
- >> **Build Type** – this refers to the layout of the dwelling, for example: is it a house, a villa, or apartment.
- >> **Location** – the area that the home is in. Different locations will attract different levels of funding, calculated on things such as typical land price and available amenity near by.
- >> **Additional features** – this includes space for Onsite Overnight Assistance, Fire Sprinklers throughout, and a spare living or 'break out' room.

## WHAT TYPES OF SDA EXIST?

SDA can take the form of many shapes and sizes, as it should! Housing is never going to be a one size fits all approach.

### BUILD TYPES

**Houses** – typically 2-3 bedrooms with shared living spaces.

**Apartments** – likely to be found scattered amongst a high rise strata complex and can be one or multiple bedrooms.

The bedrooms may consist of one bedroom which is SDA compliant, then a secondary and/or third bedroom which can occupy a mate, family member or housemate who does not require SDA.

**Villas** – are multiple shared or individual dwellings on a block of land.

**Group home** – which is a house with 4 people or more residing under the one roof.

### DESIGN CATEGORIES

**Improved Liveability** – Reasonable level of physical access and enhanced provision for people with sensory, intellectual or cognitive impairment to enable greater independence in day to day life.

**Fully Accessible** – Incorporates a high level of physical access provision for people with significant physical impairment promoting opportunities of independent engagement in day to day activities.

**High Physical Support** – High level of physical access provision for people with significant physical impairment and requiring very high levels of support. The home incorporates assistive technology and spacious design to create a home environment that is intuitive to movement and support needs.

**Robust** – High level of physical access provision and very resilient building materials combine to reduce the likelihood of reactive maintenance and day to day risk to the participant and members of their household and community. A robust home should be a sanctuary designed to the strengths of the resident.

## WHAT IS SDA FUNDING?

SDA funding will be included in an eligible participant's NDIS plan, to the amount which reflects the reasonable and necessary determination of the NDIA.

SDA funds contribute towards the costs of a participant residing in a home which has been designed to cater to their unique support needs.

When you find a property that aligns to your SDA funding, you will sign an agreement with the SDA provider which allows them to claim the SDA funding amount directly from your NDIS plan.

Unlike other funding amounts in a participant's plan, SDA funds must be NDIA managed, and can not be plan or self managed.

SDA funding is different to reasonable rental contributions and to the supports that a participant receives in their home.

## OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES

The NDIA rules govern what is considered as a reasonable rental contribution for an SDA participant to contribute towards their housing costs, in addition to their SDA budget, funded by the NDIS.

This is representative of:

- 25% of the maximum disability support pension (DSP) payable to a single person over the age of 21 years
- 100% of the maximum amount of Commonwealth rental assistance that can be accessed by someone on the DSP

This amount is tallied to reach a final rental contribution, and will be payable by the participant, directly to their SDA provider, in a means agreed upon signing a rental agreement.

In addition to reasonable rental contributions the participant will be responsible for general living costs including utilities.

## HOW CAN I ACCESS SDA FUNDING?

If you don't have SDA funding in your NDIS Plan, you'll need to complete the NDIS home and living request form to determine whether SDA is the most suitable housing option for you. Vera Living can provide you with information that may assist you in you in the exploration of your housing options.

For more information, make sure to take a look at the Vera Living SDA Journey Map which is attached to this guide. The map highlights some key milestones from planning and application, through to the transition and move into a new SDA home.

## WHERE CAN I SEARCH FOR AN SDA HOME?

The NDIA have published an SDA finder tool on their website which enables you to search for housing that suits your support needs and lifestyle.

Housing websites such as **Housing Hub** and **GoNest**, SDA meet up events and sector expos are all great ways to explore housing options.

You can also reach out to different SDA providers and request information at any time!

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR ME TO FIND AN SDA HOME THAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

This often depends on each individual's circumstances and where they are at along their SDA journey.

It is not uncommon for participants to engage in the SDA journey for 18 months. This time includes completing housing assessments, exploring their housing options, applying for SDA eligibility (where required), undertaking reviews with the NDIA, finding an SDA provider and a home that suits them, and finally – moving in!

It does take time, but we have been told by our tenants that the journey is worth it!

## CONTACT US

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