

VERA
LIVING

SPACIOUS. SMART. FUNCTIONAL. BEAUTIFUL.

A guide to

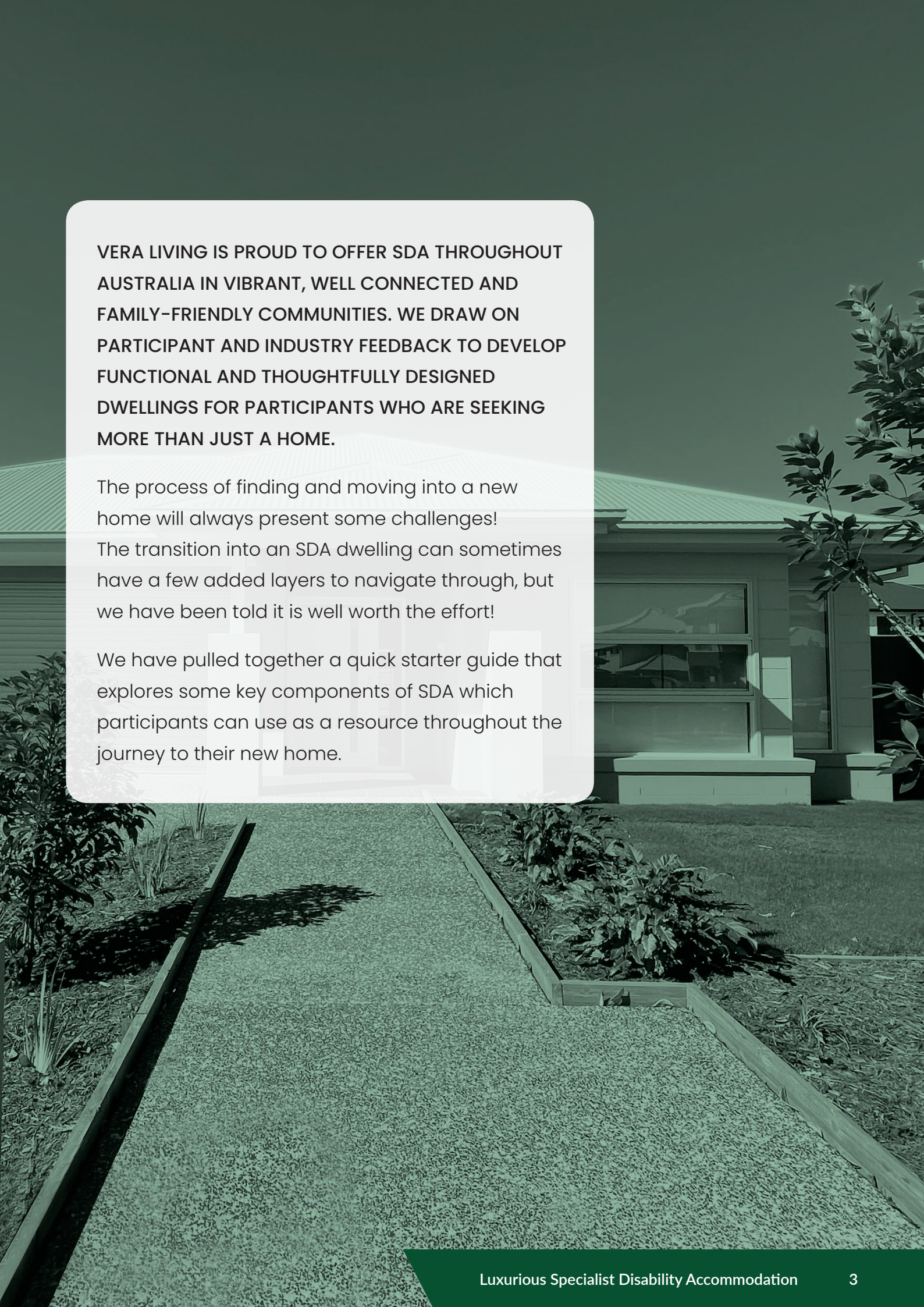
Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)

Vera Living's Starter Guide to SDA

Luxurious Specialist Disability Accommodation

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VERA LIVING IS PROUD TO OFFER SDA THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA IN VIBRANT, WELL CONNECTED AND FAMILY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES. WE DRAW ON PARTICIPANT AND INDUSTRY FEEDBACK TO DEVELOP FUNCTIONAL AND THOUGHTFULLY DESIGNED DWELLINGS FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE SEEKING MORE THAN JUST A HOME.

The process of finding and moving into a new home will always present some challenges! The transition into an SDA dwelling can sometimes have a few added layers to navigate through, but we have been told it is well worth the effort!

We have pulled together a quick starter guide that explores some key components of SDA which participants can use as a resource throughout the journey to their new home.

WHAT IS SDA?

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) refers to properties that are built to meet strict design standards, as published by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), 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 homes designed to support people to live a more independent lifestyle while accessing high-quality supports from their home.

SDA properties are sophisticated in their design, built with the goal to provide opportunities to actively engage in day-to-day life in a home environment which is intuitive to needs.

Typically, dwellings come standard with features such as wide doorways, accessible flooring and a range of assistive technology: from sensor-LED lights to automated doors and windows. The home environment should be fit-for-purpose for every participant and their lifestyle.



WHAT IS SDA?

WHAT TYPES OF SDA EXIST?

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

BUILD TYPES



Houses – typically for 2-3 participants with shared living spaces and common areas.



Apartments – likely to be found scattered amongst a strata complex. The apartment can have one or multiple bedrooms. The bedrooms may consist of one bedroom which is SDA compliant, then a secondary and/or third bedroom which can be occupied by a friend, family member or housemate who does not require SDA.



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



Group home – are home to 4 or more participants who share living spaces and common areas.

WHAT IS SDA?

DESIGN CATEGORIES



IL

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



FA

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



HPS

High Physical Support – High level of physical access provision for participants 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.



R

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.

WHAT IS SDA?

WHY SDA?

The public market has historically failed to meet the demand for quality housing uniquely designed to cater to the specific needs and lifestyles of individuals living with disability. In the past, housing was commonly offered in a group setting, attached to a support provider, and participants had limited options to live where, how and with whom they chose.

By legislating a SDA funding stream, designed to subsidise the cost of accommodation for participants of the NDIS who are eligible for this type of support, the Government has encouraged new investment from the private sector.

This will see the ownership of disability accommodation moving away from the government sector towards private investors which should, in theory, enable benefits of a competitive marketplace such as quality, affordability and sustainability.

Vera Living is an SDA provider. We partner with known, established institutional investors who are committed to providing long term flexible investment commitments, which in turn provide housing security to our tenants.

As the SDA provider, we are heavily involved in the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the home. That means that we, along with the owner, are highly invested in the build being of high quality, to encourage tenants to stay long term, minimise the time a home may be vacant, and reduce avoidable maintenance costs that can be mitigated by investing in a higher quality build from day one.

With various SDA providers offering different types of SDA builds and tenancy experiences, the idea is that SDA participants have greater choice in how, where and with whom they choose to live, and that they can continue to make these choices according to how their preferences continue to adapt and change throughout their life.

“The idea is that SDA participants have greater choice in how, where and with whom they choose to live.”

WHAT SUPPORTS CAN BE PROVIDED IN A SDA HOME?

By separating housing from support provision, participants are able to access a range of supports within their home.

When a participant agrees to make an SDA property their home, they will be asked to enter into a tenancy agreement with a SDA provider, who operates independently of a chosen support provider.

Participants can invite different chosen support providers into their homes to cater to their changing support needs and lifestyles over time.

The introduction of the NDIS has seen greater flexibility in the way in which participants design support models which suit their unique circumstances.

Some examples of supports that can be provided in a SDA home include:

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING (SIL)

- >> 24/7 support
- >> Shared supports
- >> Roster of care

INDIVIDUAL AND SHARED CORE SUPPORTS

- >> Support employed against a specific home and living goal
- >> Flexibly provided across the day
- >> May be employed against a specific capacity building, or daily living goal

INDIVIDUALISED LIVING OPTIONS (ILO)

- >> Supports designed and tailored to an individual
- >> Can be delivered flexibly and creatively i.e. host and house mate arrangements
- >> Can involve formal and informal supports

INFORMAL SUPPORTS

- >> Unpaid supports
- >> Provided by known friends or family
- >> Passive involvement in day-to-day life

Participants can design value for money supports around their lives

A SDA home which is built and operated to suit flexible and interchangeable support models, can provide participants the opportunity to design supports around their lifestyle in the most meaningful efficient and cost effective way possible. Most importantly, participants have the option to change this support if and when they choose.

WHAT IS SDA FUNDING?

SDA funding will be included in an eligible participant's NDIS plan. The NDIA decides the amount of SDA funding that a participant will receive and is generally set at an amount that the NDIA determines is reasonable and necessary.

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

When a participant chooses a SDA home that suits their SDA funding, the participant will sign an agreement with the SDA provider which allows them to claim the SDA funding amount directly from their NDIS plan.

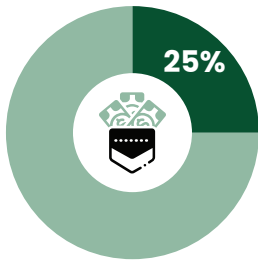
Unlike other funding amounts in a participant's plan, SDA funds must be NDIA managed, and cannot be plan or self-managed.

Separate to the SDA funding that an SDA Provider will claim from the NDIA, a participant may be asked to pay a reasonable rent contribution (RRC) and contribute to the supports that a participant receives in their home. These out of pocket expenses are different to SDA funding and will be separately agreed with the SDA provider and support providers.

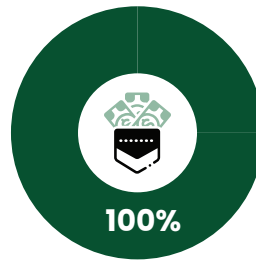
OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES

The NDIA Rules place a cap on the amount that a participant can be asked to pay as a RRC towards their housing costs, in addition to their SDA funding provided under the NDIS.

Currently, the RRC is made up 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 Rent Assistance (CRA) that can be accessed by someone entitled to the DSP

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

In addition to RRC, the participant will be responsible for general living costs such as utilities.

The NDIA Rules place a cap on the amounts that a participant can be asked to pay as a RRC towards their housing costs, in addition to their SDA funding by the NDIS.

HOW CAN A PARTICIPANT ACCESS SDA FUNDING?

If a participant doesn't have SDA funding in their NDIS Plan, they will need to complete the NDIS Home and Living Supports Request Form to determine whether SDA is the most suitable housing option for them. Vera Living can provide participants with information that may assist them in exploring 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.

ELIGIBILITY

SDA will not be the most appropriate housing option for all NDIS participants.

The NDIA use a specific criteria set by legislation to determine whether SDA is a reasonable and necessary support for a participant.

A participant's Support Coordinator can also help explore housing options and support in investigating which type of housing will enable a participant to reach their goals.

A participant will need to gather a range of information to support a housing application for SDA. Participants often request the support of an Occupational Therapist or other qualified clinician who can support in completing an individualised Home and Living Supports Request Form and provide documentation to support an application.

The NDIA will use this information to review whether SDA is a reasonable and necessary support to include in a participant's plan, and if so, what build type and design category aligns best to their individual support needs and lifestyle.

An SDA provider can support participants in further understanding the SDA journey, available housing options and specific supporting documentation which could be referenced in a report.

HOW TO SEARCH FOR A SDA HOME?

The NDIA have published a SDA finder tool on their website which enables participants to search for housing that suits their 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.

Participants can also reach out to different SDA providers and request information at any time.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO FIND THE RIGHT SDA HOME?

This often depends on each individual's circumstances and where they are on 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 housing options, applying for SDA funding (where required), undertaking reviews with the NDIA, finding a SDA provider and a home that suits them, and finally – moving in.

It does take time, but we have seen first hand that the journey is well worth it!

“My number one thing is be patient ‘cause I never thought it was going to happen but it did. I couldn’t have done it without good people around me. Living in SDA is better than I thought it would be.”

– Vera Living, SDA Tenant

HOW CAN VERA LIVING SUPPORT?

When a participant chooses to live with Vera Living, that is simply the start of their journey with us. At Vera Living, we are committed to the long-term wellbeing of our tenants in not only their home environment, but also their involvement and relationship with the local community.

As a SDA provider, we are there to support participants throughout their SDA journey.

Working closely with participants' chosen support provider as they navigate through the SDA journey, our Tenant Support Specialists provide the required property information to support a SDA application.

This can include the specific SDA information of a property identified by a participant, facilitating detailed drawings and tours for clinical teams completing home and living assessments, and assistive technology submissions.

Moving home can be stressful! Our Tenant Support Specialists are there to guide the transition for participants into their new home, working closely with the participant, their support networks and support providers to ensure an informed, holistic and thorough move-in process.

Vera Living Tenant Support Specialists are the conduit between participants and our development team, to enable required co-design elements to be introduced to the home and to make sure any maintenance requests are effectively managed and quickly resolved for our tenants.

A SDA provider plays a role in supporting participants to build their capacity in managing their home now, and into the future. At Vera Living, our Tenant Support Specialists proactively engage with participants to track their goals, satisfaction and support in lodging, managing and closing out maintenance and other tenancy requests.



WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

At its core, Vera Living understands that everyone's experience of a home should be one of security, individuality and comfort. We aim for an experience where participants are valued, contributing members of the households and neighborhoods in which they choose to live.

We take the time to know each participant and their chosen communities to ensure the right fit from day one. Vera Living work alongside support providers who are equally invested in, and capable of, providing access to quality support 24/7 as directed by our tenants.

If you would like to know more, contact a Vera Living Tenant Support Specialist today!

CONTACT US

Phone: (02) 6100 3077 · **Email:** tenants@veraliving.com.au · **Website:** veraliving.com.au

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This booklet contains introductory information to support participants to make an informed decision about the specialist disability accommodation that best suits their needs.

The information in this booklet is general and does not take into account a participant's personal situation. Before a participant enters into any arrangement for specialist disability accommodation, they should consider whether it is right for their needs, and where appropriate, seek professional advice from a legal, financial or other advisor.

Information in this booklet is current as at the date it was published and may be subject to change from time to time.