

## **PART C: General development controls**

### **Section C13 Liveable housing**

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## 1.0 Introduction

Universal housing, also known as liveable housing, is an approach to housing design and construction that emphasises inclusivity, accessibility, and equity, as well as flexibility, and adaptability. It is designed and built to meet the current and changing needs of residents over time. Universal and liveable housing features aim to make homes safe, accessible, and adaptable, suitable for people of all ages, abilities, and lifestyles.

Liveable housing uses design features to make homes comfortable and functional for residents, planning for current and future needs. These features include step-free access (or room it) from the street and to the yard, wider passageways to accommodate diverse mobility needs including wheelchairs, rooms and spaces of sufficient size for comfortable and accessible movement, accessible bathrooms, and internal and external walls that are suited to the future installation of grab-rails.

Accommodating universal design features at the planning, design and construction stages is the most effective way to future-proof homes, for:

- families with children
- multi-generational families
- people with mobility needs, people with disability, people with temporary injuries
- older residents, or any other people who need to make adjustments to the built form of their home to accommodate changes in their mobility.

The *National Construction Code* requires (since 2022) all homes to be built to at least Silver Level *Livable Housing Design Standards* – wide doorways and halls as standard, accessible bathrooms, at least one level entry accessway. Victoria, Queensland, ACT and Tasmania incorporated these controls into legislation. Development should aim to accord to this ambition.

Universal housing has been a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) priority since at least 2009, with a commitment to inform and educate the housing sector and encourage voluntary uptake. Liveable housing is a recommendation of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and accords with the Australian Government's commitments under the current National Disability Strategy and the recommendations of the NSW State Parliamentary Inquiry into Housing Older People.

People with accessibility needs have specific housing needs and fewer housing options. They spend more money on housing modifications. Australia's population is ageing, and we will have more people with complex mobility needs into the future. It is important for our housing to accommodate those needs - not only for residents in their homes, but also to ensure they can visit other homes in the community, and for those family and community members that visit our homes.

By designing and building homes that can accommodate the current and changing needs of residents over time, we can create more liveable, functional, and sustainable spaces for our communities.

## 2.0 Application

This section applies to the following forms of residential development:

- dual occupancy
- attached dwellings
- multi dwelling housing
- seniors housing
- residential flat buildings
- co-living housing
- shop top housing.

For development involving heritage items or heritage conservation areas identified under *Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2012* ([LEP 2012](#)), a merit assessment will be undertaken to ensure the outcomes sought are balanced with heritage conservation outcomes.

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### 3.0 Additional information

#### Additional information

- *CN Local Housing Strategy*
- *National Construction Code (NCC) Silver Standard for accessibility*
- [\*Livable Housing Design Guidelines \(4th Edition\) 2017, Livable Housing Australia.\*](#)

### 4.0 Objectives

1. Promote development to achieve liveable and universal housing for all residents and visitors.
2. Increase the provision of adaptable and accessible housing that adopts universal design principles.
3. Plan for household needs now and in the future due to changes in mobility and ability.
4. Ensure inclusion and equity is achieved by maximising accessibility and universal design.
5. Provide dwellings in multi dwelling housing and residential flat buildings which are designed to be flexible and easily modified to cater for occupants with an existing or progressive mobility or ability need.

### 5.0 Definitions

A word or expression has the same meaning as it has in [LEP 2012](#), unless otherwise defined. Other words and expressions include:

- **Livable Housing Australia (LHA) provisional design certificate** – is a certificate issued by an LHA assessor registered with LHA and listed on the LGA website that certifies a Design or an As-Built dwelling as meeting the Livable Housing Silver, Gold or Platinum performance levels.
- **LHA assessor** – is a professional formally registered with LHA and listed on the LHA website as an LHA assessor.

## 6.0 Application requirements

Development category	Application requirements	Explanatory notes
All residential development to which this section applies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development application plans must provide sufficient detail indicating the universal design features included in the design. Dwellings must be clearly identified as either meeting Silver Level or Platinum Level.</li> <li>LHA Provisional Design Certificate issued by a registered LHA Assessor.</li> <li>LHA Final-as-Built Certification issued by a registered LHA Assessor.</li> </ul>	<p>LHA Assessors are registered with LHA and can be found on the <a href="#">Livable Housing Australia Website</a>.</p> <p>All dwelling houses are encouraged to be designed and constructed to accord to Silver Level <i>Livable Housing Design Standards</i>.</p>

## 7.0 Universal design

Objectives		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure housing includes universal design features to meet the access and mobility needs of occupants now and into the future.</li> <li>Ensure housing is inclusive, equitable and accessible for all residents and visitors.</li> </ol>		
Controls (C)	Acceptable solutions (AS)	Explanatory notes
C-1.Seniors housing development complies with the requirements of <i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021</i> .		The <i>Livable Housing Design Guidelines</i> describe design standards for key features for liveable housing design. A liveable home design meets an occupant's changing needs over their lifetime. Including user-friendly design features seeks to enhance the occupant's quality of life. The seven core liveable housing design elements are provided in the notes below.
C-2.All other dwellings (except detached dwellings) include the <i>Livable Housing Design Guidelines</i> Silver Level universal design features and demonstrate compliance at design stage and prior to occupation.		
C-3.Provision of liveable access is to have minimal impact on the significant fabric and setting of heritage items and of contributory buildings within heritage conservation areas.	AS-1.Where heritage impact is used as a reason for not providing liveable access, evidence is to be provided that no suitable alternative for access is available.	<p>Refer to <a href="#">Livable Housing Guidelines</a>.</p> <p>It is expected that the majority of Platinum Level units will be 1-2 bedroom units.</p>

C-4. For multi dwelling housing, residential flat buildings, apartments and shop top housing development resulting in five or more dwellings, at least 20% of dwellings are designed to Platinum Level under the <i>Livable Housing Design Guidelines</i> and demonstrate compliance at design stage and prior to occupation.	AS-1. For residential flat buildings it is a preference for a mix of units to be designed of Platinum Level.	Refer to Section E1 Built and Landscape Heritage.
C-5. Co-living housing is designed to Platinum Level under the <i>Livable Housing Design Guidelines</i> and demonstrate compliance at design stage and prior to occupation.		
C-6. Access to all communal open spaces is provided for people with a disability in accordance with Part 2 Section 7 of AS1428.		

**Notes:**

LHA Silver Level focuses on the key structural and spatial elements critical to ensure the home's future flexibility and adaptability.

The seven core design elements in the LHA Silver Level are:

1. A safe continuous and step free path of travel from the street entrance and / or parking area to a dwelling entrance that is level.
2. At least one, level (step-free) entrance into the dwelling.
3. Internal doors and corridors that facilitate comfortable and unimpeded movement between spaces.
4. A toilet on the ground (or entry) level that provides easy access.
5. A bathroom that contains a hobless shower recess.
6. Reinforced walls around the toilet, shower and bath to support the safe installation of grabrails at a later date.
7. Stairways are designed to reduce the likelihood of injury and also enable future adaptation.

Platinum Level has 15 elements. This level describes design elements that would better accommodate aging in place and people with higher mobility needs.

The 15 core design elements in the LHA Platinum Level are:

1. A safe continuous and step free path of travel from the street entrance and / or parking area to a dwelling entrance that is level.
2. At least one, level (step-free) entrance into the dwelling.
3. Internal doors and corridors that facilitate comfortable and unimpeded movement between spaces.
4. A toilet on the ground (or entry) level that provides easy access.
5. A bathroom that contains a hobless shower recess.
6. Reinforced walls around the toilet, shower and bath to support the safe installation of grabrails at a later date.
7. Stairways are designed to reduce the likelihood of injury and also enable future adaptation.
8. The kitchen space is designed to support ease of movement between fixed benches and to support easy adaptation.
9. The laundry space is designed to support ease of movement between fixed benches and to support easy adaptation.
10. Ground (or entry level bedroom space) here is a space on the ground (or entry) level that can be used as a bedroom.
11. Switches and power points Light switches and power points are located at heights that are easy to reach for all home occupants.
12. Home occupants are able to easily and independently open and close doors and safely use tap hardware.
13. The family/living room features clear space to enable the home occupant to move in and around the room with ease.
14. Windows sills are installed at a height that enables home occupants to view the outdoor space from either a seated or standing position.
15. Floor coverings are slip resistant to reduce the likelihood of slips, trips and falls in the home.