



The Need for Disability Housing Reform in Victoria

Issued June 2026

The Uniting Church in Australia affirms that every person is created in the image of God and is entitled to live with dignity, safety, and belonging. Our faith calls us to seek justice and to stand alongside people who are marginalised or excluded, including those who struggle to find a secure and accessible place to live. For people with disability, appropriate housing is not simply a practical need but a foundation for participation in all aspects of community life. Ensuring that people with disability have access to secure, accessible housing is therefore a matter of justice and a reflection of our commitment to the common good. As a Church, we continue to advocate for systems that uphold the dignity of every person and enable all people to flourish in community.

Disability Housing Closures

As of late February 2026, *The Age* reported that more than 80 group homes for people with disability had been closed. The closures followed the homes' privatisation in 2016, and the Victorian Government then removed state government financial support on 31 December 2025. The Federal National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has refused to cover the funding gap left by the Victorian Government's withdrawal of funding.

There are 549 group homes in Victoria that house almost 2,000 people with disability.

The JIM Cluster had campaigned against the privatisation of the Victorian group homes for people with disability in 2016, fearing that the residents and staff would end up worse off after the privatisation.

The funding gap has occurred because the support staff in the group homes have workplace agreements with pay rates higher than those set by the NDIA, as they provide higher levels of care to residents. The NDIA has refused to pay the higher rate in the existing workplace agreements.

While group homes are not necessarily the best model for homes for people with disability, any transition to a better model needs to be managed to ensure residents are not made homeless or placed in stressful situations.

The Wait-List Crisis Hits People with Disability Harder

Victoria's 2026 state budget includes an investment of \$860 million in the Social Housing Growth Fund to help deliver 7,000 additional social homes, but it is not enough to meet total demand.

Homeless Victorians are now waiting an average of 18 months before housing is found, nearly double the Government's own target. For people with disability, who often require accessible or modified homes, the wait is even longer, and the options are far fewer.

The current supply of disability housing in Victoria is far too limited, and many existing social housing properties still fail to meet even basic accessibility needs. While the National Construction Code (NCC) 2022 Silver Livable Housing Design Standard became mandatory

for new private housing in Victoria from May 2024, and accessibility requirements under the Victorian Government Big Housing Build primarily apply to new developments, these measures do little to address the large number of older homes that remain inaccessible to disabled Victorians.

The NCC Silver Standard represents only a baseline level of accessibility, and many people with disability require housing that goes beyond minimum standards to live safely, independently, and with dignity.

The *People with Disability in Community Housing Survey Report* highlights widespread concerns about inaccessible homes, long delays in maintenance, and uncertainty around funding for essential modifications.¹

What You Can Do

Write polite and respectful letters or emails to:

The Hon Nick Staikos
Minister for Housing and Building
Level 20, 1 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn
Minister for Disability
Level 22, 50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Salutation: Dear Minister

Salutation: Dear Minister

Email: nick.staikos@parliament.vic.gov.au E-mail: Lizzie.Blandthorn@parliament.vic.gov.au

Points to make in your letters or emails:

- Welcome the Victorian Government's commitment to building additional homes in the state.
- Request that the Victorian Government:
 - Provide a significant expansion of accessible housing beyond Specialist Disability Accommodation to meet the needs of people with disability;
 - Implement a statewide program to retrofit existing social housing for accessibility;
 - Adopt the Gold Livable Housing Design Standard as the minimum accessibility requirement for all new social housing to support long-term accessibility, reduce future retrofit costs, and strengthen universal design outcomes;
 - Set higher measurable accessibility housing targets in the next State Disability Action Plan including increasing the proportion of new social housing built to high physical accessibility standards beyond the current 5% target;
 - Ensure that people with disability are meaningfully involved in housing planning, redevelopment, and design;
 - Provide housing for people with disability where their group home closes and ensure that no one is left homeless and unsafe; and,
 - Ensure that people with disability do not fall between the gaps of Federal and State funding responsibilities.
- Point out the above are essential steps to significantly enhance the safety, independence, and quality of life of people with disability.

¹ Melbourne Disability Institute, University of Melbourne. Survey on people with disability in community housing, 2025, <https://apo.org.au/node/332517>