

Problem

After a life-changing injury or illness, people often need to modify their home or find an alternative place to live. This is because their previous home is no longer suitable or equipped for their high level physical, mental, or support needs [1-4]. Despite the clear nature and extent of the problem (1.3 million Australians have a severe / profound disability requiring daily support) [4], many people remain in unsuitable living environments for years or are moved to institutional group homes or nursing facilities in an attempt to 'solve' the problem [2,5].

While there are some housing resources currently available to help consumers modify their homes, they are limited in scope (i.e., focused solely on physical accessibility design) and substance (i.e., static information mediums: websites, Microsoft Word® documents, or PDF documents simply listing information).

There is **no resource currently available** to systematically and comprehensively assist consumers in designing or re-designing their own home.



Solution

The "*My Accessible Home*" resource (see <https://www.myaccessiblehome.com.au/>) is a comprehensive, online decision tool (with the potential of being a 'one-stop-shop') for people with disability and their families to access relevant housing information and plan for the future.



Importantly, the information provided includes, but is not limited to, physical access considerations. In contrast to other housing resources currently available, the *My Accessible Home* tool prompts consumers to not only think about functional design, but to also think more broadly in terms of what they would like their home to include, and where and how they would like to live.



For the first time, consumers are able to navigate through a comprehensive and detailed resource, watch informative videos, browse pictures, and collate (save) their ideas in a virtual space representing 'My Dream Home'. The resultant report may then be shared with individuals in a position to help the person improve their housing situation (e.g., friends, family, advocates, architects, designers, builders, occupational therapists) via print form, email, or social media. Importantly, the information comprising the technological platform is **evidence-based and informed by consumers' voices**.

Impact

Traditionally, consumers have not had the financial capacity to build, buy, or modify their own home unless they had been able to access compensation, inheritance, or grant funding. This situation changed in 2016, when the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS) commenced in Queensland (and has also been rolled-out across Australia).



The individualised funding packages provided to consumers through these schemes have enabled consumers to invest in their housing situation, subsequently compelling the sector to respond to a new consumer market. The user-friendly, interactive nature, and comprehensive information provided by the *My Accessible Home* resource will empower consumers to make important decisions in early design (or purchase) processes.

It is anticipated that the resource will **improve housing suitability and liveability for people with complex disability**, reducing the number of forced relocations of people into group homes and nursing facilities.

References

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