



Home is where my heart is: *renting, access & modifications*

- Narissa Wilson -



Living in my own home, of my choice, is one of the most liberating facets of my life. From the age of 17 to 20, every six to twelve months I was moving rental properties. I rented houses and apartments privately through real estates, which would sell or have lease changes. This made it difficult for me to have stability and the freedom to make changes. This was not sustainable and I thought long and hard about my options. I decided public housing was not in my best interest. It did not suit my short and long term goals due to the restrictions it placed upon my life.

I approached two key people in my life with an idea. I asked if it would be possible for them to purchase a property as an investment which I could rent from them. They would have a very loyal long term tenant who looked after and loved their property. I would have an understanding landlord who is committed to the lease and any needed modifications.





When entering this agreement I had a few requirements for the home. It needed to be ground level on a flat block of land, with a yard and a minimum of 3 bedrooms. It's location needed to be walking distance to public transport, within a small supportive community that had a country feel. Both parties agreed my requirements needed to fit within the landlords set budget. The agreement with the landlords is just like any other rental property adhering to the Residential Tenancies Authority rules.

When purchasing the property, the landlords incorporated reasonable modification cost into the budget such as bathroom, widening of doorways, tiled flooring, lowered light switches and remote controlled fans. Anything out of this scope such as my request for an electric glass sliding door, I sourced separate funding.

Tiled floors: are throughout the home which makes it easier to roll the hoist. It eliminates risks for my breathing and it is easier to keep clean.

Bathroom: together we designed a bathroom that worked for me. I required accessibility to a shower and a bath tub. The bath has been raised to allow a hoist to roll under and lower me into the tub. This also combines as a storage place for the hoist. The shower is widened and open to allow easy access for a shower chair. A new door way was installed between my bedroom and the bathroom to create privacy whilst transferring.



Light switches and remote control fans: enable me to have control over lighting and cooling throughout the home. It has often meant, if I have been alone I can turn the light on or switch everything off before leaving the home.

Electric glass sliding door: was a major modification to the home. We trialled several types of systems that would enable me independent access. The landlords, myself and Home Assist Secure worked together to find the solution that best suited. This process took almost two years to get right.





These home modifications and the arrangement with my landlord has allowed me freedom, flexibility and control over my home. I can access every part of the house. I can make modifications to the home as my health needs change without the hassles and delay of red tape.

I love my beautiful little yellow cottage that I call home. I can come and go freely from my home and I feel safe and happy.

Written by Narissa Wilson for the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, 2016