

UNIVERSAL DESIGN: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

'Universal design is an approach to the design of products, services and environments to be useable by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Universal design is an inclusive design philosophy which spans age, gender and ability'.

(Center for Universal Design, 1997)

- Provide easy access for all people to enter the house
 - ✓ Can a continuous pathway run between the street or car parking and the entrance to the house?
- Have a level and covered entrance to the house
 - ✓ Can a covered porch or garage/car port be included?
- Have a room on the entrance level that can be adapted to become a bedroom and bathroom
 - ✓ Ideally an entrance level bathroom is included, but how about ensuring pipe runs and other infrastructure are in place for easy modification?
- Have a bathroom that is easily adaptable
 - ✓ What about installing additional noggins in the bathroom walls that can later support grab rails near the bath, shower and toilet?
- Have a shower that is easily used and adjusted by all people
 - ✓ Can you have a detachable, hand-held shower and do away with an entrance step or lip to the shower?
- Incorporate door and corridors that allow for easy access
 - ✓ How much easier is it to make doors and corridors wider increasing accessibility when building than altering once built?
- Have a kitchen that can be used by all people and designed for safe use
 - ✓ Is kitchen layout and space enough for all people to move easily? Are storage units, cupboards, drawers, and work surfaces at a range of heights or can height be adjusted?
 - ✓ Are power sockets near bench edges?
 - ✓ If a hot dish is taken from the oven, is there an easily accessible place to put the dish down?
 - ✓ Is the floor slip resistant?
- Incorporate handles and tapware that can be easily used by all people
 - ✓ Can handles and tapware be reached?
 - ✓ Are they easy to turn, with a lever rather than a knob?
- Have switches and other controls that can be easily used by all people
 - ✓ Can switches, sockets and heating or other controllers be accessed by all people?

Source: Adapted from GreenSmart House Accreditation Protocols and Australian Network for Universal Housing Design. See anuhd.org