

## **5 Other environmental factors**

The experience of disability is influenced, at least in part, by the environment in which an individual lives. This influence might be positive—enabling or facilitating a person with a disability to fulfil roles appropriate to their age, gender, social and cultural identity—or negative, limiting achievement of daily activities and participation in employment, education, and social, cultural and leisure pursuits. Indeed, the environment has been identified as the primary factor that improves or disadvantages the lives of people with disabilities (Hahn 1986; Barton 1994).

The ICF identifies environmental factors as one of three components defining the concept of disability, and represents an important new component of the ICF. Environmental factors recognised by the ICF as instrumental in affecting functioning and disability include products and technology, the natural and built environment, support, attitudes, and services, systems and policies that aim to provide benefits to people with disabilities.

### **5.1 Environmental factors and the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers**

Assessing the role the environment plays in the lives of people with disabilities is a complex exercise, as a multitude of environmental factors acting in concert may contribute to disability.

The Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers provides information on some of the environmental factors potentially impinging on a person's quality of life—support arrangements provided in educational and workplace settings; access to public and private transport; home modifications; receipt of assistance with activities of daily living, and the provision and use of aids and equipment (covered in Chapter 4). However, because of the structure of the Survey questionnaire, it can be difficult to determine whether exposure to any of these 'positive' environmental factors is related to need, what environmental factors are not but should be available, or indeed the effect these environmental factors have on respondents and their lives. Also, the Survey does not contain questions on attitudes and the physical or natural environment or includes only a few questions related to support relationships, three key chapters of the ICF Environmental factors component.

Because of these limitations in the available data, this chapter will focus solely on the state of environmental factors listed above, rather than investigating effect. Some comment will be made from supporting literature on how these environmental factors might affect people with disabilities but will not be translated to evaluate results from data analyses.

### **5.2 Education and support arrangements**

The last 20 years in Australia has seen a strong movement towards educating students with disabilities in mainstream schools and in mainstream classes. Research has shown that children with disabilities benefit from participating in mainstream educational settings and do not necessarily learn any better, either socially or academically, in special schools (see Foreman 2001 for a review). These findings, supplemented by an increasingly widespread acceptance of people with disabilities, have spearheaded this movement into mainstream

education. Special education policies recognise the importance of enabling children with disabilities to receive education in a mainstream classroom, with agreement that children should be educated in the 'least restrictive environment' (Foreman 2001).

The participation of children with disabilities in primary and secondary schooling in 1998 was high in Australia, with over 95% of school-aged children (5–19 years) attending school. The increasing inclusion of children with disabilities in 'ordinary' (or mainstream) classes is reflected in the results given in Table 5.1. For children with disabilities, attendance in ordinary classes was higher than in special classes or schools, regardless of severity of core activity restriction (Table 5.1). Over 70% of children with a severe, moderate or mild core activity restriction and 49% of children with a profound core activity restriction attended an ordinary classes. Around 60% of children with a schooling restriction only<sup>7</sup> also attended ordinary classes.

The proportion of children attending special classes was much lower but similar between core activity restriction groups, ranging from 22% (mild core activity restriction) to 25% (profound, severe and moderate core activity restriction) of school-aged children. The highest level of special class attendance (39%) was found for children with a schooling restriction (but see footnote below). The majority of special school attendants were children with profound core activity restrictions (26%).

**Table 5.1: People aged 5–19 years with a specific restriction, by type of school/class attended and severity of restriction, 1998**

Type of class/school	Profound		Severe		Moderate		Mild		Schooling restriction only	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Ordinary class	29.1	49.1	36.9	71.0	11.5	73.0	32.1	77.2	27.9	60.1
Special class	14.9	25.2	13.2	25.3	*4.0	*24.9	9.0	21.7	17.9	38.6
Special school	15.2	25.7	**1.9	**3.7	**0.3	**2.1	**0.5	**1.2	**0.6	**1.3
<b>Total attending</b>	<b>59.2</b>	<b>95.9</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>95.8</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>99.0</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Not attending	**2.5	**4.1	**2.3	**4.2	**0.6	**3.9	**0.4	**1.0	0	0.0

Note: Estimates marked with \*\* have an associated relative standard error (RSE) of 50% or more. Estimates marked with \* have an associated RSE of between 25% and 50%. These estimates should be interpreted accordingly.

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

## Support arrangements in primary and secondary schools

For some children, successful participation at school can depend on receiving support arrangements that enable or improve their ability to learn, write, communicate and get to and around school. Table 5.2 lists the types of support arrangements provided by schools for children with a profound or severe core activity restriction. Overall, a higher proportion of children attending special classes and, particularly, special schools, received support arrangements, compared with children attending ordinary classes. This may reflect either the

<sup>7</sup> A person is considered to have a schooling restriction if they are unable to attend school, attend a special school, attend special classes at an ordinary school, need at least one day a week off school on average or have difficulty at school (ABS 1999).

higher support needs of children in special education settings and/or a better array of facilities available in special compared with conventional education settings

Special tuition was the most common form of support received by children in all three education settings. Around 64% of children in special classes and special schools, and 17% of children in ordinary classes, received special tuition. Another common form of support for children was assistance from a disability support person/signing interpreter/counsellor—42%, 17% and 12% of children in special schools and special classes and ordinary classes respectively received this kind of support. A sizeable proportion (47%) of children attending special schools also benefited from special access or transport arrangements, compared with only 5% and 2% of children in special and ordinary classes respectively. This difference again might be related to need, quality and/or quantity of support arrangements.

Eighty four per cent of children attending ordinary classes did not receive or need education support arrangements. This figure is lower for children in special classes or special schools at 31% and 18% respectively<sup>8</sup>.

**Table 5.2: People aged 5–19 years with a specific restriction by type of support provided and type of school/class, 1998**

Support arrangements provided	Ordinary class		Special class		Special school	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Signing interpreter, counsellor or disability support person	15.8	11.5	10.2	17.3	*7.9	*42.3
Special computer or equipment	**1.3	**0.9	*4.1	*6.9	*4.9	*26.5
Special tuition	23.1	16.8	37.5	63.6	11.8	63.6
Special assessment procedures	*5.1	*3.7	11.3	19.2	*5.4	*29.0
Special access or transport arrangements	*3.2	*2.3	*2.9	*4.9	*8.8	*47.4
Other support conditions	14.6	10.6	**1.6	**2.9	*2.7	*14.3
No support conditions received or needed	114.8	83.5	18.1	30.6	*3.3	*17.9
<b>Total attending school<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>137.5</b>		<b>59.0</b>		<b>18.6</b>	

(a) Total may not equal to the sum of the components as more than one answer could be given to question on support arrangements provided. Percentages therefore do not add up to 100%

Note: Estimates marked with \*\* have an associated relative standard error (RSE) of 50% or more. Estimates marked with \* have an associated RSE of between 25% and 50%. These estimates should be interpreted accordingly.

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

## Support arrangements in post-secondary schools

Support provided to students in post-secondary educational settings was mostly in the form of a support person, special assessment procedures, equipment or transport arrangements (Table 5.3). Higher education establishments and TAFE colleges provided the greater proportion of these support arrangements. Compared with school-aged children, considerably more people in post-secondary education reported not receiving or needing support arrangements—76% of people at university, 85% attending TAFE and 91% in other post-secondary institutions.

<sup>8</sup> The data do not allow separation of children who did not need support arrangements from those who needed support arrangements but did not receive them.

**Table 5.3: People aged 15–64 years with a specific restriction by support arrangements provided and type of higher education institute attending, 1998**

Support arrangements provided	Higher education		TAFE		Other <sup>(a)</sup>	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Signing interpreter, counsellor or disability support person	*4.1	*7.3	*2.9	*5.1	**0.7	**2.8
Special computer or equipment	**2.2	**3.9	**2.5	**4.4	0	0.0
Special tuition	**1.3	**2.4	**1.9	**3.3	**0.6	**2.4
Special assessment procedures	*3.7	*6.6	**1.3	**2.4	0	0.0
Special access or transport arrangements	*3.1	*5.4	*0.2	*0.4	**0.9	**3.9
Other support conditions	*4.0	*7.1	**0.9	**1.6	0	0.0
No support conditions received or needed	42.5	75.7	48.2	84.8	22.1	90.8
<b>Total attending<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>56.2</b>		<b>13.0</b>		<b>24.3</b>	

(a) Other includes business college, industry skills centre and other.

(b) Total may not equal the sum of the components as more than one answer on support arrangements provided could be given. Percentages therefore do not add up to 100%

Note: Estimates marked with \*\* have an associated relative standard error (RSE) of 50% or more. Estimates marked with \* have an associated RSE of between 25% and 50%. These estimates should be interpreted accordingly.

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

### 5.3 Employment and workplace arrangements

Improving the participation of people with disabilities in the labour force may rely on a system of employment services and workplace arrangements that augment both an increased rate of entry into the workforce and the ability to remain employed.

Taking weekly leave from work might be necessary for some people with a disability. Around 20% of employed people with a profound or severe core activity restriction received some form of regular leave arrangement (Table 5.4). This dropped to 9% for people without a profound or severe restriction.

Workplace arrangements tended to be associated with severity of restriction—a higher proportion of employed people with a profound or severe restriction reported having such arrangements compared with those with a non-profound or severe restriction.

The most common form of workplace arrangements for people with a profound or severe restriction was assistance from a support person or assistant (10%), provision of special equipment (7%) or assignment of different duties (6%). Special equipment (4%) and different duties (3%) were also common forms of workplace arrangements for people with non-profound or severe restrictions.

People who were unemployed or not in the labour force in 1998 were asked what arrangements an employer might need to make if the respondent were to return to the workforce. Special equipment and the assignment of different duties were the most commonly reported workplace arrangements needed. A fifth of unemployed people with a profound or severe restriction also indicated modifications to the workplace as being necessary for workplace return.

**Table 5.4: People aged 15–65 years with a specific restriction, by employment and restriction status, and workplace arrangements, 1998**

	Employed				Unemployed				Not in labour force			
	Profound/Severe		Non Profound/Severe		Profound/Severe		Non Profound/Severe		Profound/Severe		Non Profound/Severe	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
<b>Workplace arrangements</b>												
Support person or assistant	14.4	9.5	11.8	1.9	**0.8	**4.3	**1.0	**1.2	10.0	3.1	*6.0	*1.0
Special equipment	10.2	6.7	23.5	3.8	*4.8	*25.8	*7.0	*8.4	11.6	3.6	14.0	2.4
Modifications to workplace	*4.9	*3.2	*6.4	*1.0	*3.7	*19.8	*2.7	*3.3	*4.9	*1.5	*5.1	*0.9
Training or retraining	**2.5	**1.6	*3.4	*0.5	0	0.0	**1.3	**1.6	*7.7	*2.4	*6.7	*1.2
Different duties	*8.9	*5.9	19.9	3.2	**1.1	**5.7	*4.3	*5.3	12.6	3.9	11.3	2.0
Other arrangements	*6.6	*4.3	9.1	1.5	**1.6	**8.4	*3.3	*4.0	*5.2	*1.6	*6.7	*1.2
No arrangements given or required	71.8	47.2	401.7	64.6	9.0	48.4	62.6	75.1	31.1	9.7	148.9	25.7
<b>Leave arrangements</b>												
Leave arrangements	30.6	20.2	53.1	8.5	..	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
Does not need leave arrangements	80.2	52.8	417.9	67.2	..	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
<b>Total with a restriction</b>	<b>151.9</b>		<b>621.7</b>		<b>18.7</b>		<b>83.3</b>		<b>321.7</b>		<b>579.6</b>	

*Notes*

1. Respondents who were unemployed or not in the labour force at the time of the survey were asked about the types of workplace arrangements they would need to return to the workforce.
  2. Totals may not equal to the sum of the components, as more than one response could be given. Percentages therefore do not add up to 100%
  3. Estimates marked with \*\* have an associated relative standard error (RSE) of 50% or more. Estimates marked with \* have an associated RSE of between 25% and 50%. These estimates should be interpreted accordingly.
- .. not applicable  
 — rounded to zero, including null cells

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

## 5.4 Access to public transport

Safe and ready access to public transport enables people with disabilities to obtain independence in transportation, particularly where other forms of transport are not readily available, and to improve participation, by providing the means by which educational, work, and social and cultural settings can be easily reached. In recognition of the importance of public transport to people with disabilities, Parliament passed in October 2002 the Disability Standards for Public Transport under the Disability Discrimination Act, which outlines measures transport operators and providers should take to make public transport more accessible.

### Availability of public transport

Public transport was available to 80% and 72% of all people with a core activity restriction aged 5–64 years or 65 years and over respectively (Table 5.5). Of those people who used public transport, 90% aged under 65 and 95% aged over 65 reported public transport being readily available in their area. The difference between these percentages may be because some people who might otherwise use public transport do not do so because of limited availability.

Ninety eight per cent of people aged over 65 and who used public transport held a concession card compared to 52% of people under 65. This large difference may be partly explained by people over 65 years' eligibility for the Seniors Cards.

**Table 5.5: People with a core activity restriction, by availability and use of public transport, 1998**

Age group (years)	All with core activity restriction		Users of public transport				
	Public transport available		Public transport available		Has concession card		Total users
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000
5–64	1,376.3	79.4	676.0	90.2	391.3	52.2	749.2
65+	796.0	72.1	397.3	94.8	409.4	97.7	419.0

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

### Problems associated with public transport use

Three quarters of people with a core activity restriction aged under 65 years reported being able to use all forms of transport, 8% some forms of public transport and 13% no form of public transport at all (Table 5.6). In comparison, around 58% of people with a core activity restriction and over the age of 65 years could use all forms of public transport but similar percentages reported ability to use only use some forms (10%) or no form at all (16%).

Survey respondents reported a range of problems and difficulties associated with their use of public transport. Access difficulties associated with doors, steps or other structural features of the mode of transport was the primary problem experienced by both age groups—16% of people aged 5–64 years and 33% of people aged 65 and over (Table 5.6). Being able to get to and from the station or transport stops was another significant problem faced by people with core activity restrictions.

**Table 5.6: People with a core activity restriction, by ability to use public transport and problems or difficulties associated with public transport use, 1998**

	0–64 years		65+ years	
	'000	%	'000	%
<b>Ability to use public transport</b>				
Can use all forms	1,299.2	75.4	640.8	58.0
Can use some forms	139.8	8.1	108.0	9.8
Can't use any form	219.0	12.7	175.1	15.9
Doesn't leave home	11.6	6.7	20.0	1.8
Not applicable	52.3	3.0	160.7	14.6
<b>Reasons or difficulties associated with use</b>				
Getting to stops and stations	121.7	7.1	173.6	15.7
Getting in and out of vehicles (steps/doors/other)	267.0	15.5	360.2	32.6
Inadequate access to toilets	13.7	0.8	12.2	1.1
Crowds/poor ventilation	54.5	3.2	19.0	1.7
Lack of seating	76.6	4.5	68.4	6.2
Discomfort associated with seated position	113.2	6.6	53.7	4.9
<b>Total with a core activity restriction</b>	<b>1,721.7</b>		<b>1,104.8</b>	

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

### Transport use in previous fortnight

Most respondents relied on private transport as their primary form of transport in the fortnight preceding the survey—around 80% of people with a core activity restriction in both age groups (Table 5.7). Public transport accounted for 7% and 8% of transport used respectively by people aged under 65 and over 65 years. Reasons for using private transport over other forms of transport varied, with 85% of people regardless of age group indicating that private transport was more convenient, quicker and/or easier to use. Around 6% of people, however, stated that the absence of public transport in their area meant they had to rely on private transport.

Problems encountered with public transport was the reason given by a smaller proportion of people (2% of those aged under 65; 3% of those aged over 65) for relying on private rather than public transport. Difficulty due to disability was the primary reason most of these people cited as their major problem using public transport: 68% of people aged 5–64 years and 85% of people aged over 65 years reported this reason. Problems with the safety, frequency and reliability of services and, in particular, the absence of direct services, were also identified as barriers to public transport use.

**Table 5.7: People with a core activity restriction, by transport used in last fortnight and problems associated with use of public transport, 1998**

	0–64 years		65+ years	
	'000	%	'000	%
<b>Main form of transport used in last fortnight</b>				
Private transport (as passenger or driver)	1,353.99	82.3	694.3	79.5
Public transport	119.4	7.3	70.8	8.1
Other	172.6	8.1	107.8	10.4
<i>Total made journey last fortnight</i>	<i>1,645.9</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>873.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<b>Reason for using private transport in last fortnight</b>				
Quicker/more easier/convenient	1,146.2	84.7	588.9	84.8
More comfortable	55.2	4.1	27.9	4.0
No public transport available	83.7	6.2	40.3	5.8
Other problems with public transport	22.4	1.7	18.6	2.7
Other reasons	46.4	3.4	18.7	2.7
<i>Total using private transport in last fortnight</i>	<i>1,353.9</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>694.3</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<b>Problems with public transport</b>				
Too infrequent	**2.5	**1.3	**0.7	**3.9
Too unreliable	**1.3	**5.8	0	0.0
Overloaded	**0.7	**3.0	0	0.0
No direct services	*6.2	*27.6	**2.3	**12.3
Safety of services	**2.5	**11.2	0	0.0
Difficulty due to disability	15.3	68.4	16.0	85.4
Other problems	**0.8	**35.6	**0.6	**3.2
<i>Total citing problems with public transport<sup>(a)</sup></i>	<i>22.4</i>		<i>18.6</i>	

(a) Percentages do not add up to 100% as more than one response on problems with public transport could be given.

Note: Estimates marked with \*\* have an associated relative standard error (RSE) of 50% or more. Estimates marked with \* have an associated RSE of between 25% and 50%. These estimates should be interpreted accordingly.

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

## 5.5 Assistance with daily activities

Respondents in the Survey could report type of assistance received as informal only, formal only or a combination of both. Informal assistance was the main type of assistance received by people aged 0–64 years with a core activity restriction, ranging from 52% for health care to 88% for meal preparation (Table 5.8). For the core activities, informal assistance accounted for 81% of self-care and 76% of mobility assistance received. Communication was the exception, where only 36% of assistance came from informal carers. Instead, around 55% of all assistance for communication was received from a combination of formal and informal services.

Formal services only generally accounted for less than 10% of assistance received for daily activities, with the exception of health care services, where 19% of all assistance with health care being attributed to formal services.

**Table 5.8: People aged 0–64 years with a core activity restriction living in households, by need for assistance with daily activities by type of assistance received, 1998**

Type of activity	% type of assistance received				% extent need for assistance met			Total ('000)
	Informal only	Formal only	Both	None	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	
Self-care	81.4	2.9	8.2	7.4	87.8	4.7	7.4	361.7
Mobility	75.8	3.2	14.2	6.8	82.2	11.0	6.8	440.4
Communication	35.6	*5.4	54.7	*4.3	62.5	33.2	*4.3	138.3
Health care	52.1	18.6	22.3	7.0	82.8	10.2	7.0	477.2
Transport	84.5	3.1	6.4	6.0	81.8	12.3	5.9	410.0
Housework	80.8	5.6	8.4	5.3	77.9	16.9	5.3	438.4
Meal preparation	88.2	*2.1	*5.3	*4.4	86.0	9.7	*4.4	149.2
Paperwork	79.6	4.6	7.4	8.4	79.1	12.6	8.4	188.0
Property maintenance	68.9	10.8	12.7	7.5	73.8	18.6	7.5	629.0

Note: Estimates marked with \* have an associated RSE of between 25% and 50%. These estimates should be interpreted accordingly.

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

Informal services also tended to be the primary form of assistance for people aged over 65 years. However, there was a greater proportion of assistance attributed to formal services only compared with that reported by people under the age of 65 years (Table 5.9). This was particularly apparent for housework and property maintenance (25% of all assistance), and health care where a higher proportion (48%) of assistance came from formal rather than informal services (30%). There was an interesting contrast between age groups in the receipt of assistance for communication; 86% of all assistance for those age over 65 years came from informal services only whereas just 36% did for people aged under 65 years.

**Table 5.9: People aged 65+ years with a core activity restriction living in households by need for assistance with daily activities by type of assistance received, 1998**

Type of activity	% type of assistance received				% extent need for assistance met			Total ('000)
	Informal only	Formal only	Both	None	Fully met	Partly met	Not met	
Self-care	68.0	8.6	14.3	9.0	86.1	*4.8	9.0	155.2
Mobility	75.7	4.5	13.9	5.9	81.6	12.5	5.9	273.6
Communication	85.9	0.0	**3.3	*10.8	86.6	**2.5	*10.8	28.6
Health care	30.0	48.0	15.3	5.8	85.2	9.1	5.8	369.0
Transport	76.5	6.1	11.6	5.7	84.5	9.7	5.7	232.2
Housework	51.7	25.4	18.7	4.3	82.2	13.5	4.3	365.3
Meal preparation	71.6	15.7	10.6	*2.2	91.9	6.2	*2.2	135.4
Paperwork	88.2	*3.7	*4.2	*4.0	91.1	*4.9	*4.0	136.0
Property maintenance	50.5	25.2	19.2	5.2	75.8	19.1	*5.2	494.0

Note: Estimates marked with \*\* have an associated relative standard error (RSE) of 50% or more. Estimates marked with \* have an associated RSE of between 25% and 50%. These estimates should be interpreted accordingly.

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

In both age groups, a high proportion (more than 70%) of people who required assistance had their needs fully met, although this was somewhat higher for people aged 65 years and over (Tables 5.8 and 5.9). People aged 0–64 years who needed assistance with communication, however, were less likely to report having their needs fully met (63%), and

were more likely to report having their needs partly met (33%), compared with people needing assistance with other daily activities. There also remained a substantial proportion of people whose needs were not met at all. Among people aged 0–64 years, this especially affected those needing assistance with self-care (7%), mobility (7%), health care (7%), paperwork (8%) and property maintenance (8%). Self-care and communication were the main activities for which people aged over 65 years reported higher levels of no assistance<sup>9</sup>, 9% and 11% respectively. An absence of adequate assistance is a continuing problem for people with disabilities (AIHW 2001), impinging on their potential for participation and quality of life.

## 5.6 Home modifications

Modifications to the home environment can improve the physical independence of people with disabilities, from enhancing mobility in and around the home to facilitating ability to perform self-care activities. These modifications can include alterations to kitchen, bathroom and laundry fixtures, structural and architectural changes, and access alterations.

**Table 5.10: People with a core activity restriction living in households by severity of core activity restrictions, age group, tenure type and type of home modifications, 1998**

	Have home modifications			% type of home modifications <sup>(a)</sup>					Total ('000)
	'000	%	% use aids	Structural changes	Ramps	Bathroom / laundry	Handgrab rails	Other	
<b>Core activity restriction</b>									
Profound	122.9	22.8	87.0	22.7	21.9	54.3	63.2	*6.6	537.8
Severe	80.6	13.5	87.3	16.8	14.7	39.4	52.6	*8.3	598.7
Moderate	65.9	10.0	75.6	*9.5	14.4	39.4	54.2	**3.0	656.3
Mild	54.0	5.2	76.9	*7.3	*6.8	29.1	43.6	*9.9	1,026.8
<b>Age group</b>									
0–14	22.9	11.1	75.2	*29.6	*14.2	*20.7	*14.2	*11.3	205.7
15–29	15.7	6.7	74.8	*31.3	*22.8	*38.3	*18.1	*24.6	234.7
30–44	33.8	8.2	82.5	*20.2	*18.0	39.8	42.2	*12.1	410.0
45–64	70.8	8.1	82.9	23.8	21.7	36.2	40.8	*7.1	870.8
65+	180.1	16.3	84.9	9.0	13.1	50.1	72.3	*3.6	1,104.7
<b>Tenure type<sup>(a)</sup></b>									
Owner	248.0	13.9	82.8	16.1	16.0	41.1	56.3	6.8	1,783.7
Renter	43.4	7.5	86.5	*10.6	*17.3	46.0	52.0	**3.6	575.0
Boarder	15.5	14.6	71.3	*21.5	**10.0	51.7	54.7	**12.6	106.5
Rent-free	13.7	12.7	89.5	**10.9	*18.6	64.0	57.7	**11.9	108.3
Other	2.8	13.9	80.4	*66.0	**24.2	**49.8	**30.7	0.0	20.4

(a) Does not include 'Not applicable' responses.

Note: Estimates marked with \*\* have an associated relative standard error (RSE) of 50% or more. Estimates marked with \* have an associated RSE of between 25% and 50%. These estimates should be interpreted accordingly.

Source: AIHW analysis of ABS 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Confidentialised Unit Record File.

<sup>9</sup> Due to the structure of the Survey CURF, it was not possible to separate people who did not need assistance from those who needed assistance but did not receive it.

People with profound or severe core activities were more likely to modify their homes than those with a moderate or mild core activity restriction. Around 23% and 14% of people with a profound or severe core activity restriction lived in homes that had received some sort of modification (Table 5.10). The occurrence of home modifications generally rose with age, with 16% of people aged 65 and over and with a core activity restriction living in such homes. The exception was the age group 0–14 years, where the occurrence of home modification was second highest at 11%. Rates of home modifications were similar (between 13–14% of homes) in the homes of people who either owned the dwelling or lived in it as a boarder or rent-free. The latter may be because individuals are dependent on family members. Modifications were less common (8%), however, in the homes of renters.

Structural changes, modifications to the toilet, laundry or bath, and the addition of ramps were the most common modifications made to houses for people under 30 years of age. For people aged over 30 years, handgrab rails were the most common type of home modification, followed by toilet, laundry or bath modifications.

Structural modification to the home may not be a cheap option and only those with the financial means, either through personal means or from an equipment scheme, may be in the position to afford such changes. The low occurrence of home modification possibly reflects the financial inability of some people to make the changes to the home they need. Ownership of the home is another potentially confounding factor, with equipment/home modification schemes (e.g. CAEP) stipulating that the home must be privately owned. People living in rental properties are therefore excluded from making such claims.

The occurrence of home modification in the homes of people also reporting the use of aids and equipment is markedly higher than those who do not use aids and equipment, exceeding 71% regardless of severity of core activity restriction, age or housing tenure. This suggests that those who use aids and equipment are more inclined to have their homes modified, possibly to complement their use of specific aids. However, this does not imply that all those people not using aids and equipment do not need home modifications but rather that some are not in the financial position to have these changes made.