



**Home Maintenance and Modification  
Information Needs and Evidence  
Based Practice Solutions in NSW**

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# Role of the Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) department in NSW

- ▶ The Home Modification and Maintenance Program plays a pivotal role for HACCC services by providing a safe environment for care workers, enabling greater independence, whilst decreasing care needs for consumers.
- ▶ Under the HACCC program, the Department provides funding to the Home Maintenance and Modification Sub Program to modify residences to ensure homes are suitably adapted to the needs of people with a disability or are adapted as they age.



## Policy context

Demand for modified housing in NSW continues to increase due to:

1. Ageing in place
2. Brain injuries and dementia
3. Deinstitutionalisation and loss of boarding house (licensed and un-licensed) beds
4. Rising property prices
5. Shortage of metropolitan land
6. Lack of appropriately designed and accessible housing stock



## **DADHC believes home modification**

- ▶ **is cost effective**

(Cumming et al., 1999; Mann, Ottenbacher, Fraas, Tomita, & Granger, 1999; Trickey, Maltais, Gosselin, & Robitaille, 1990).

- ▶ **can reduction of institutionalisation and can promote community integration and inclusion** (Iwarsson & Isacsson, 1998; Public Health Association of Australia, 1993; Steinfeld & Danford, 1997)



# Why do people need to modify their home environment?

## ▶ ‘Greater functionality’

- ▶ Two systematic reviews provide evidence that home modification can reduce functional decline (Cumming et al., 1999; Mann, Ottenbacher, Fraas, Tomita, & Granger, 1999).
- ▶ The number and severity of functional limitations are positively related to making modifications (Struyk and Katsura, 1988)

## ▶ ‘Desire to prevent injury’

- ▶ Presence of ‘frailty’ is related to need for modifications. Frailty was defined as mobility limitation, presence of two or more medical conditions, or the presence of a single restricting or serious condition. (Reschovsky and Newman, 1990)

## ▶ ‘Staying put’

- ▶ Pynoos and Cohen (1992) reported that in the United States, approximately 84% of adults age 55 and older indicated that they preferred to stay in their present home and never move.
- ▶ ‘Gilderbloom and Markham (1996) reported that lack of housing modification forces the elderly to live with relatives or in institutions.



# The Home Maintenance & Modification (HMM) Program in NSW

The objective of the Home Modification and Maintenance Program is to provide a range of one off services including:

- ▶ Minor dwelling repairs ie. replacing gutters, fixing floors & decks etc.
- ▶ Home upkeep ie. painting and yard maintenance
- ▶ Minor modifications ie. grabrails, handrails, non slip coatings and widening doorways
- ▶ Major modifications ie. ramps, redesign of bathrooms and kitchens and converting gardens to low maintenance.



## Some Home Modification & Maintenance Facts

- ▶ In terms of governmental investment, the Home Modification and Maintenance services represent a significant slice of State/Commonwealth investment. Home Modification and Maintenance Program received \$19 million funding in 2002/2003.
- ▶ The scheme is managed by a State Council of elected representative (one from each of the regions)
- ▶ Clients are expected to contribute a minimum of 20% towards service but none are excluded because of inability to pay.

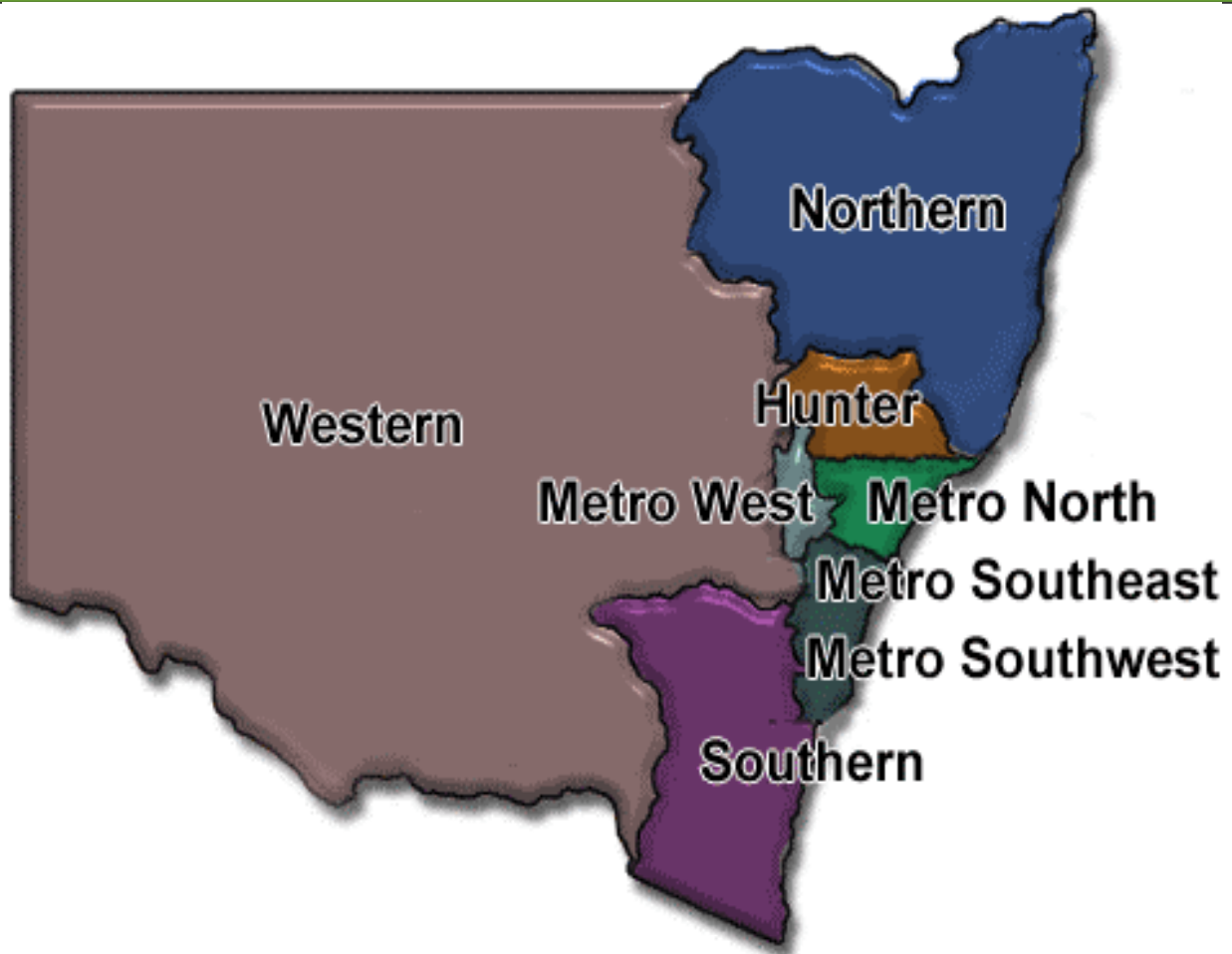


## Prior review of Home Modification and Maintenance Services in NSW revealed:

- ▶ the importance of the services being provided to consumers
- ▶ indicate a high degree of general satisfaction by consumers
- ▶ acknowledge that regional differences, including auspicing and funding differences contribute to a situation where services differ substantially in implementation and outcomes.



# HMM services have specialist Regional Technical Officers (RTO)



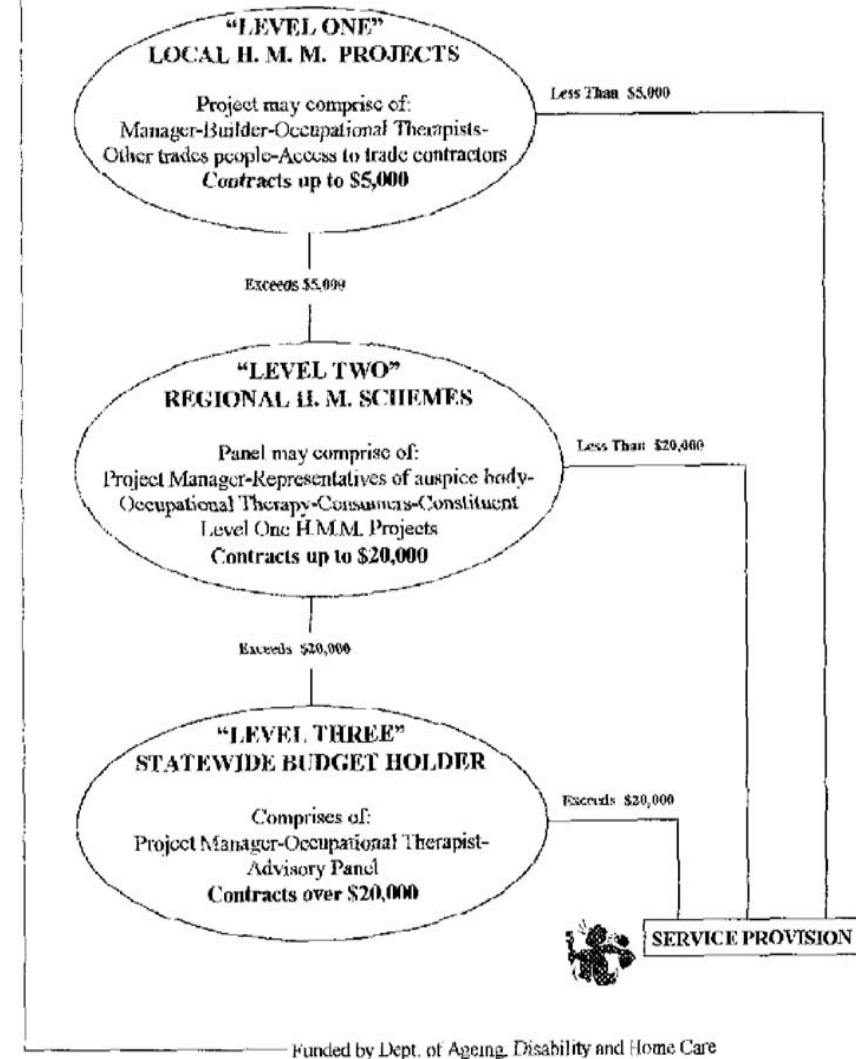


# 100 plus Services

Under the current structure:

- ▶ there is one level 3 Statewide budget holder which covers jobs greater than \$20,000;
- ▶ there are thirteen Level 2 regional schemes which covers jobs greater than \$5,000; and
- ▶ the rest are level 1 projects which cover jobs under \$5,000.

## THE STRUCTURE OF COMMUNITY BASED HOME MODIFICATION AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES IN NSW





## HMMInfo Mission

“To develop a leading edge Home Modification and Maintenance information clearing project designed with the assistance of and accessible to the full range of industry and consumer target groups.”



## HMMInfo key tasks

Collection and critical review of relevant national and international research, reasoning and design guidance literature.

- ▶ Gathering;
- ▶ Collating;
- ▶ Summarising;
- ▶ Analysing; and
- ▶ Dissemination



# Why information capability building is so critical

- ▶ The Home Modification and Maintenance (HMM) scheme delivers an important service
- ▶ Nevertheless, the 1998 ABS report on disability, aging and carers indicated that 36% of the home modification needs in Australia were either unmet or only partially met.
- ▶ Population projections indicate that the older population will represent a quarter of all Australians by the year 2051



# Clearinghouse stakeholders

First and foremost HMM service providers

Then...

- ▶ Occupational therapists
- ▶ Builders, subcontractors, architects, designers, tradespersons & planners
- ▶ Policy makers



# Need Assessment

In depth semi-structured interview of just under a third of the HMM services was conducted to:

1. understand current Home Modification and Maintenance service practice from an insider perspective
2. understand current Home Modification and Maintenance service practice re information sharing strategies already evident
3. systematically identify strengths, gaps or weakness with a view to building on strengths and minimising weaknesses
4. use findings to set priorities for web-based information clearing activities



# Home Modification and Maintenance Service Interview results

Home Modification and Maintenance Service Interview results:

- ▶ Absence of comprehensive and unilateral assessment, design and consumer information guidelines.
- ▶ Difficulties locating new or unusual solutions and or products
- ▶ Lack of uniformity in guidelines with individual services individually modifying existing guidelines such as AS1428 or HACC guidelines.
- ▶ Lack of or gaps in management policy such as level of client contribution, and operational procedures relating to use and role of contractors and occupational therapists.
- ▶ Critical isolation of rural services particularly those operating at level one.



## Designing a website tool to fill in some of the gaps

- ▶ Web development discussion paper
- ▶ Evidence based practice discussion paper
- ▶ Website mock up
- ▶ Legal advice re liability and disclaimers
- ▶ DADHC legal check
- ▶ Website prototype
- ▶ Then usability testing...



## Resources developed by the clearinghouse

- ▶ Evidence based practice reviews, factsheets & checklists (Systematic reviews methodology)
- ▶ Occasional research papers (Other methodologies)
- ▶ Annotated bibliographic materials
- ▶ Annotated web links
- ▶ Newsletter with top stories

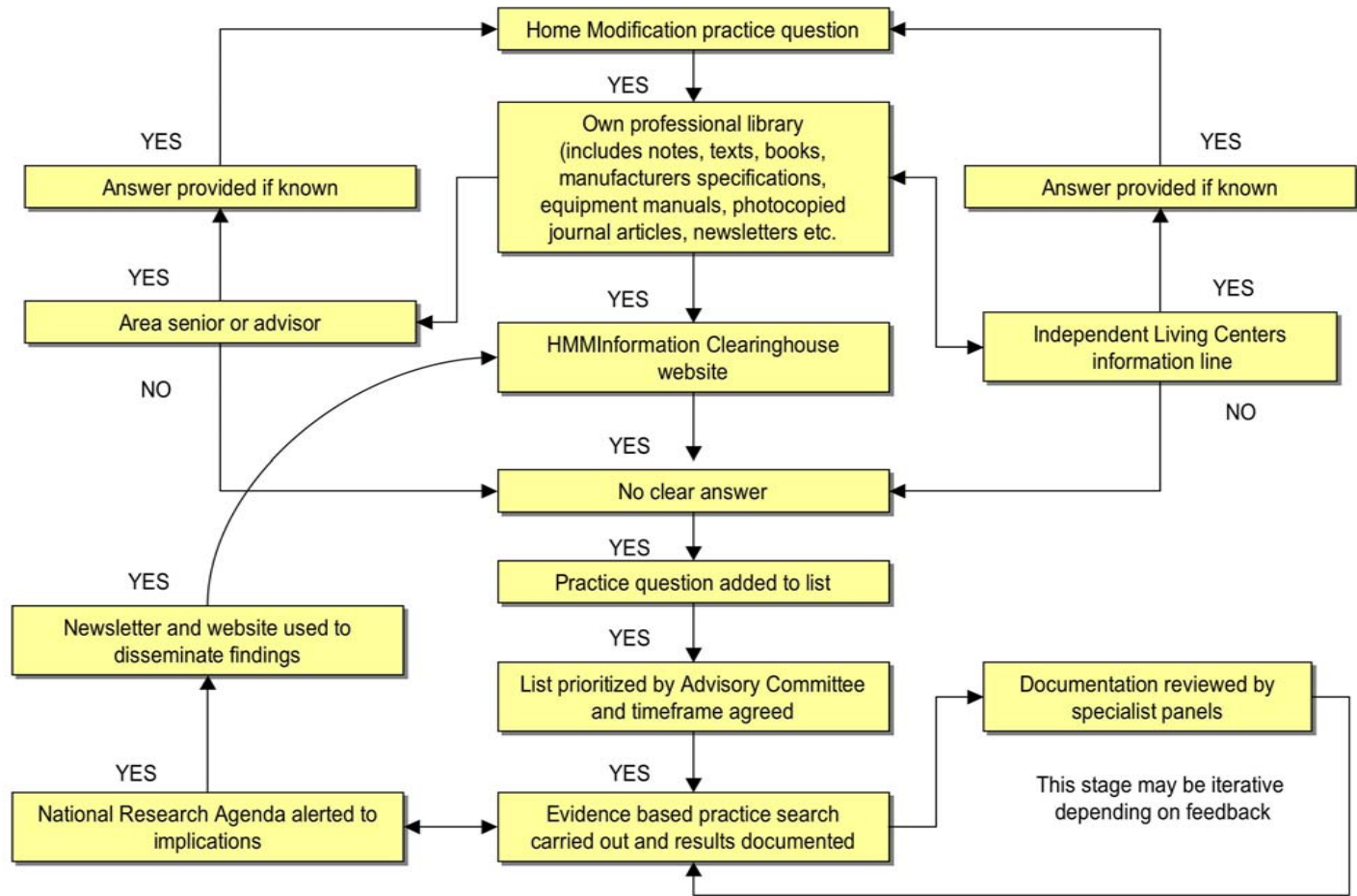


## Resources hosted by the clearinghouse

- ▶ A publicly accessible place to share relevant materials
- ▶ A secure place to collaborate and develop new materials
- ▶ A place to post messages and share product information, values and beliefs
- ▶ A place to locate sector relevant events & happenings
- ▶ A place to share interesting cases
- ▶ A place to locate Home Modification and Maintenance service information



# Evidence based practice protocol process





# Web based information delivery

## "Grabrails and more"

Welcome to HMMInfo gathering, collating,  
summarising, analysing and disseminating  
Home Modification Information

QuickTime™ and a Graphics decompressor are needed to see this picture.

<http://www.arch.usyd.edu.au/hmminfo.html>

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (LZW) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.



## Website features & benefits

- ▶ Practice questions and innovations can be more easily raised and answered
- ▶ A wide variety of material can be shared
- ▶ Gaps can be more quickly identified & targeted
- ▶ Policy will be easier to access, evaluate & develop



## Website growth

- ▶ The website will only be of maximum value if users think of the website as their intranet a special place to share cases, policy, questions and experience
- ▶ The value of the website will grow over time
- ▶ It can be used to inform government about the value and benefits of Home Modification and Maintenance services
- ▶ It can be used to build growth within the sector