



home and community care

A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM
PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED



**Independent
Living Centre WA**

Making choices finding solutions

WA HACC Home Modifications and Assistive Technology Project

The Independent Living Centre WA (ILC) is working in partnership with WA Home and Community Care (HACC) on a new service development project that aims to improve on and further develop a sustainable service delivery model for WA HACC clients accessing home modifications and assistive technology (HM & AT) across the state.

WA HACC currently directs funds to support home modifications and goods and equipment through the state based Community Aids and Equipment Program (CAEP) administered by the Disability Services Commission (DSC) and via the Not for Profit organisation Technology Assisting Disability (TADWA).

Since the introduction of the WA Assessment Framework (WAAF) in 2011 and the continued focus on wellness and independence there has been an increase in referrals for home modifications and assistive technology in Western Australia.

Goods and equipment and home modifications were identified in the WA HACC 2012 - 2015 Triennial Plan as an area of unmet need.

As such WA HACC has committed to growing this important service area in response to increasing demand and recognition that individuals accessing HACC services wish to be supported to remain at home; and the provision of home modifications and assistive technology plays an important role in supporting this desire.

Referrals for home modifications and assistive technology in WA for HACC clients are made through the WAAF by Regional Assessment Service (RAS) assessors who are likely to have limited knowledge about home modifications and assistive technology. The sector has subsequently noted irregularities in choice of referral pathways and the appearance of system bottlenecks.





The Commonwealth Living Longer Living Better Report identified home modifications as an area of development and reform that will support and facilitate enablement and independent living at home for older people.

At a national level work has commenced as part of the Commonwealth Aged Care reforms to determine the proposed pathways, levels of assessments and the clinical governance and prescription required by the Aged Care Gateway, or other entry point, to access home modifications and assistive technology services across Australia.

As the WAAF is consistent with the intended Commonwealth reforms, the WA HACC Home Modifications and Assistive Technology Project will contribute to the work being carried out to explore how the RAS model of service delivery in the WAAF structure will be accommodated in the proposed Aged Care reforms.

The WA HACC Program's implementation of the Wellness Approach since 2006 and the WAAF since 2011 places the program in an ideal position to be able to advance a best practice model for home modifications and assistive technology.

Key project objectives include:

1. Build on the WAAF and identify approaches to facilitate a streamlined client pathway, improve communication between key stakeholders and reduce duplication of assessment.
2. Map current pathways for home modifications and assistive technology currently used by RAS assessors including CAEP current practices.
3. Develop a model providing clinical governance and identify strategies to support TADWA in referral management and service delivery.
4. Develop guidelines that support the consistent application and practices in the sector for HACC referrals and service delivery.
5. Make recommendations of how ongoing maintenance of equipment will be delivered and funded.
6. Determine and develop strategies to ensure there is a recognised interface/pathway between short-term targeted enablement and provision of home modifications and assistive technology.
7. Develop a strategy and resources to better support WA HACC clients to make informed choices about their home modification and assistive technology needs.

Project Activities

The focus of the project team since May 2014 has been to:

- Collect and collate data to inform the project and identify current pathways, processes and clinical governance;
- Develop strategies and resources to support the RAS state-wide, including the establishment of an advisory line for assessors;
- Work with TADWA to understand and map their referral and service delivery processes and commence work on a clinical governance framework;
- Conduct a literature search focused on best practice in home modifications; and
- Develop working partnerships with other HM & AT stakeholders such as the CAEP to support streamlined pathways.

Benefits associated with Home Modifications

A recent review of the HACC home modification service type five under the Commonwealth HACC Program (KPMG 2014) suggests that home modifications can have positive outcomes for individuals and may reduce the need for downstream care.

According to the KPMG review, the evidence shows that the key benefits associated with home modifications include:



- enhancing accessibility which in turn improves access to the broader community and participation in outdoor activities;
- increased independence through improving engagement in daily living activities;
- improving safety around the home, particularly in relation to falls risk;
- reduction in rate of functional decline and slowing the impact of age related disability; and
- positive overall impact on an individual's health and wellbeing.

Furthermore the report suggests that home modifications may reduce or even eliminate the need for home care and reduce the likelihood of entering residential care by facilitating self care practices.

The KPMG report states that 'good practice' home modifications assessments should include the following elements:

- person centred, outcome focussed and put the individual at the centre of the decision making;
- consistent, culturally appropriate and timely;
- foster a partnership approach and are strengths based;
- are provided as part of a holistic reablement focussed approach; and
- have capacity for reassessment and review to ensure outcomes are achieved and consumer needs are reassessed.

These are all existing elements of the WAAF which can be further improved upon to ensure WA HACC has a best practice model for home modifications and assistive technology which is fit to meet the growing demand in this important area. The ILC is pleased to be conducting this innovative service development project in partnership with the WA HACC Program.

The ILC Home Modifications and Assistive Technology Team welcomes any enquiries and can be contacted as detailed below.



Hilary O'Connell

Project Manager

Phone: 08 9382 0277

Email: hilary.o'connell@ilc.com.au

Kelly McAuliffe

Project Officer

Phone: 08 9382 0278

Email: kelly.mcauliffe@ilc.com.au