



UNSW
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Home Modification Information Clearinghouse

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Built Environment

Newsletter

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From the Editor

On 19th May, the Hon Ray Williams, MP, Minister for Disability Services, launched HMinfo's DIYmodify App. The App helps people do their own (DIY) home modification projects by helping them to identify where a home modification might help, what choices are available, how they can be done and what things to consider. DIYmodify is the first App of its kind to provide this information so people can step through the five home modification projects finding all the information they need to do a particular project. The App has been developed with accessibility features included, such as a font that is easy to read in size and shape, colour intensity with maximised contrast, and clarity of structure. The App is a hybrid one and is fully integrated with the HMinfo website. Anyone can download the App for free from [Google Play](#) and [The App Store](#) by searching 'DIYmodify'. Everyone is encouraged to download the App now and see how it might assist them or someone they know.



To date over 717 downloads of the App have been recorded. The project came to a close at the beginning of July and with her contract at an end, we will lose Gillian Barlow, the staff member who led this project, to other endeavours including getting her PhD turned into a book in Hawaii.

As you may be aware, while the National Construction Code (NCC) has always been a performance-based code for building and plumbing since its inception in 1996, there has been a

reliance on prescriptive solutions as it has been difficult to quantify performance requirements, especially in the disability area. This has resulted in home modification practitioners, occupational therapist, access auditors and designers not being confident in using performance requirements. However, the move to digital production, smart technology and robotics plus the fact that the Centre for International Economics, Benefits of Building Regulation Reform (2012) showed a potential productivity gain of \$1.1bn by increasing the use of performance solutions within the Australian building and plumbing industry, has led to work being commissioned to make performance assessment more practicable. As a result, the Australian Building Code Board has contracted the Enabling Environments program with two pieces of work in the disability performance area. The first project is on ramps and the other on stairs. We look forward to being able to share with you the results of our research into these topics in the near future. The aim of this work is to ensure that people with functional limitations are appropriately considered while enabling the development of tailored innovative performance solutions, and in the case of disability, aligning methodologies with evidence-based best-practice.

Last but not least we have been working hard behind the scenes to improve website navigation by the introduction of a tabbed menu and website breadcrumbs. Additionally, you should see some increased site-wide navigation speed and a new video streaming capability (which we needed to host videos for the DIYmodify App). Over the coming months we will be adding smart device resolution responsiveness to improve usability on non-desktop devices such as mobiles and tablets and if a large cross university and digital hub Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities application is successful, we will develop and deploy smarter more automated processes for managing ISBN', DOIs and peer-reviews. Hopefully, this will make this process faster and more transparent.

HMinfo Research

DIY Modify Final Report Findings

The report, "DIY Home modifications: Stage 2: Resources for people with disability and seniors", is currently being finalised and will present the findings from this interdisciplinary research project. It is the final stage of a two stage research project, and adds to the previous work documented in a positioning paper (Bleasdale, McNamara, Zmudzki, & Bridge, 2014) and the occasional report (Bridge, Maalsen, Zmudski, O'Neill, & Carnemolla, 2016).

The research for this latest stage is divided into two phases:

1. An existing resources review and
2. The new resources development.

Apps, short for 'software applications' are available for use on smartphones and devices. First released to the public in 2008, apps are a new way for disseminating information. The resources, focussed on for this stage of the project, were an app and factsheets, which could be made available at point-of-sale (POS).

Findings from the research include:

- Apps are difficult to search for, particularly as a layperson who may have no means of adequately assessing them or the information they contain.
- Information on any of the five home modifications identified did not cover the range of 'dimensions' identified for the literature review.
- There were no apps found that were for these home modification projects, that were accessible and targeted people with disability or seniors
- Co-design through a participatory action research methodology assisted in all aspects (wording, look, Information architecture) of the development of a resource app and drove a creative, innovative solution.

The final app developed assists 'ageing in place' and is the only example found for people with disability and/or seniors to make informed choices.

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Events

Home Modifications Australia (MOD.A) National Conference 2017 - ANZ Stadium, Sydney Olympic Park 14-15 August 2017

2017 Housing Forum - Sydney Olympic Stadium (Level 5 Conference Centre) 15 August 2017

Driving Growth in Disability Housing - Sydney (Sydney Boulevard Hotel 22-23 August 2017)

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