



Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting of the HMinfo Advisory Committee

19 March 2020

At 3.00 p.m.

Room 4035, L4, Red Centre West Wing, BE Faculty, UNSW

Welcome, Introduction, Attendance & Apologies

Professor Catherine Bridge opened the meeting at 3.00pm.

Attending via Zoom

Konstantina Vasilakopou (KV)	Home Modification Information Clearinghouse (HMinfo)
Nicholas Loder (NL)	NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC)
Annette Hanly (AH)	SCOPE Home Access
Frank Riggio (FR)	Odyssey Builders Kuri Kuri Community
Alice Wilmshurst (AW)	Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) Deborah
Deborah Hammond (DH)	Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA)
Susan Dinley (SD)	Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA)
Karen Appleby (KA)	Council on Ageing NSW (COTA)
Steve Pretzel (SP)	Technology for Ageing and Disability WA (TADWA)(MODA)
Lyndal Millikan (LM)	iCare
David Sinclair (DS)	Assistive Technologies Suppliers Australia (ATSA)

Apologies

Kersi Vajifdar (KV)	National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
Irene Stein (IS)	National Seniors Australia (NSA)
Donna Dives (DD)	National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
Anthony Ryan (AR)	Young Care (YC)
Suzette Skobier (SS)	Australian Government Department of Health (DOH)
David Clarke (DC)	Paraquad
Julian Werrett (JW)	3 Bridges Community
Angela Peri (AP)	Wesley Mission
Robyn Chapman (RC)	Assistive Technology Australia (ATA)
Agnieszka Kuna (AK)	Domiciliary Equipment Services South Australia (DES SA)
Greg Killeen (GK)	Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA)
Claire O'Moore	Australian Government Department of Health (DOH)

Chair

Prof Catherine Bridge (CB) Home Modification Information Clearinghouse (Mino)

Minute Taker

Vincent D'Cruz (VC) Home Modification Information Clearinghouse (HMinfo)

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes from 5 December 2019 Meeting were approved by CB and accepted by NL.

Follow up actions from 19 March 2020 meeting:

- (i) KV to collate information from committee members about issues faced during this crisis and prepare a Factsheet addressing those issues and queries e.g. PPE shortage

1. HMinfo Website

Action

6.2. HMinfo Website Report

A query was raised by DS with regards to the trends of the graphs and response was given by both CB and LM to explain fluctuations caused by number of publications, events, teaching material, legislation, in various years.

1.2 HMinfo Website Progress

Accessibility/Usability

- A method to significantly improve the accessibility of PDFs hosted on the website was developed and documented in a draft guide that is currently being tested by staff. It includes instructions for improving the readability of content for audiences with visual impairments.

Estimated delivery: March 2020

Helmut

Website Manual Update

- 100% The website manual is in the process of being updated to include additional information and images as suggested by feedback received from administrative staff.

The expected delivery date has been moved to end of March 2020 due to development resources being delegated to building a peer review module for the HMinfo website as part of the ARC LIEF project.

Helmut

1.3 Website Development (Jan to Mar 20)

The web development projects:

- Real Time Report Progress – Website reports require a few minutes to generate but currently do not provide an indication of progress to staff, such as a progress bar or status text. Reports will be redeveloped in a manner that allows the reporting process to update a progress bar in real-time so that staff are aware of progress made during the production of a report. The completion date for these changes has been moved to end of April 2020 due to resources being delegated to web server upgrades over the new few weeks.
- Website User Tracking Enhancement – The website's user tracking capabilities have been upgraded to enable it to track user interest in news topics linked to the HMinfo subscription digest. By measuring and reviewing which news topics are of interest to users, administrative staff will be able to refine the selection criteria employed when publishing news articles. It is expected that this improvement in content curation will increase user retention.

Helmut

Helmut

2. Publications and Research Activities

Action

2.1 HMinfo Publications

a. Current

1. Consumer Factsheet: Home lighting (for review)

KV

b. Future

1. Summary Bulletin and/or Industry Factsheet and/or Consumer Factsheet on Assistive Technology – Smart Controls

KV

2.2 Grant Applications

The following grant applications were made in the last quarter:

1. Information Linkage and Capacity Building (ILC): Mainstream Capacity Building (MCB) Grand Round 2019-2020- Not successful
2. Information Linkage and Capacity Building (ILC): Individual Capacity Building grant Round 2019-2020- Proposal submission due date: 22 April 2020

3. Events & Training

Action

NIL

4. Governance & Administration

Action

4.1. Governance

Awaiting contract extension from DOH for CHSP for 2020/22

4.2 HMinfo Annual Report July 2018-June 2019

Report to be published in January 2020, in website and hard copies.

5. EBEP Funded Projects

Action

- 5.1 Australian Research Council's (ARC) LIEF scheme** Develop methods to produce accessible PDFs and generating functional requirements for triple peer review module.

5.2 GWA / Caroma: Under basin clearances for wheelchairs

Recruitment ongoing to get more volunteers to participate.

5.3 AHURI – AT for ageing and disabled housing

After conducting focus sessions, next step is to analyse results for report. Report due by end of April 2020.

6. Reports from Committee Members

Action

DS

DS has been working with the NDIA and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS QSC), along with the NDIA Minister's office to gain recognition that the supply of all AT including home modifications as an essential service, in view of the shortage of PPE for installers.

NL

LAHC Informed the committee that LAHC's contractors are required to pay attention to protocols to protect themselves. They will adhere to WHS requirements when working onsite.

FR

Highlighted that under Office of Fair-Trading website, there was no mention about protocols or guidelines in place e.g. what occurs if someone is diagnosed with covid19 and the job gets shut down, so where does the funding come from? Builders are currently pushing for Skyping with OTs for health and safety reasons.

LM

LM said a number of strategies was currently undertaken by iCare. As icare use an external panel of service providers for building projects management and for OT assessment these providers have been asked to undertake risk assessments whenever they action a referral e.g. undertake a risk checklist, keep social distance especially for vulnerable people etc. If participants or providers don't feel comfortable undertaking the assessment, they are within their rights to postpone the assessment or the work being done. In addition icare has actioned a rapid response approach to assist with discharge from hospitals for vulnerable / at risk icare participants. This is being undertaken by icare Home Modifications Team personnel and includes use of hire equipment and minor modifications to facilitate access and bathing.

AH

Spoke about their OTs undertaking pre-screening before attending an appointment as part of their risk assessment. The OT's will be asking key questions which are in line with DOH Guidelines. They have noted that people have been calling to cancel or postpone their appointments. AH noted there has been a drop in referrals and have been informed by RAS assessors they would be scaling down on home visits.

SP

Mentioned that have recently been getting some push back from clients as per advice given from their respective home care service providers. TADWA is encouraging clients to proceed with work on their property and has implemented screening of clients and strict precautions for technicians. Most clients are still keen to get works done but a few have been refusing entry to their property.

SD

Informed the members that DVA has been busy with minor and major home modifications. OTs in the field have contacted DVA to find out how they will be getting paid if they use Skype or telephone with clients. As part of DVA's policy, OTs will still need to meet face to face with Builders to obtain a quote. DVA have requested Advisers to collect Stats on the number of OTs requesting payments for completing assessments via telephone or Skype. At this point in time, DVA is not aware of any impediments and all projects are being completed. DVA has an agreement with portable bathroom companies to lease and store. There are some of these available if required. DVA, a national government dept is investigating telehealth procedures for OTs.

KA

Mentioned that COTA is currently working closely with DOH at a federal level to produce a 7 page Factsheet about covid19 and the impact on older people. COTA across different States are meeting weekly to discuss issues to be escalated at national level. COTA will produce a newsletter in the first week of April. All face to face meetings have ceased and all internal projects have stopped for the time being. COTA will continue to assist people over the telephone.

AD

PDCN is operating at a level to produce as much information as they can generate and post it over social media. PDCN has ceased all face to face contact and staff are now working remotely at home.

DH

OT Australia has recommended a number of strategies to assist occupational therapists to continue to work and remain safe. This information is being updated as health advice is being updated. OT Australia has also produced a wellbeing webinar and resource book – "Normal life has been disrupted: a guide for managing disruption to occupational participation" <https://otaus.com.au/media-and-advocacy/news/resources-on-the-coronavirus--covid-19-disease>. All CPD face to face training sessions has been suspended. Online training and Webinars are available. OT Exchange (22-23 June 2020 Melbourne) will now be an online forum. The details have yet to be determined.

AP

Wesley has been told to implement COVID-19 infection control precautions when visiting clients, there is uncertainty around long term sustainability of the Home Mods Department if things worsen due to the virus. OT services are being offered via Telehealth with home visits limited to 15mins (or close to) for therapists to take measurements, photos, and further assess clients. Trades team is prioritising internal home mods now while we can still enter people's homes, in case anything changes and we might be able to continue with external work such as handrails, ramps, steps etc which will reduce immediate contact with clients.

NL – 2 issues for discussion

1. Home Modifications to LAHC properties

LAHC has been developing a Competency Training module for LAHC Program Officers involved with home mods. LAHC thanks those Advisory Committee members who have provided input. In terms of the recently released NDIS Home Mods document (comments sent to CB), LAHC felt this document did not provide sufficient recognition of the competency needed to undertake home modifications in LAHC properties. LAHC can report that RC extended an invitation to LAHC to explore additional, LAHC-specific training at ATA's premises in Blacktown.

2. Scooters and Home Mods

After consultation with Advisory Committee members, LAHC concluded that home modifications requests for scooter shelters (and associated security) is outside of its obligations as a housing provider. Information to this effect will be published shortly. Note requests for scooter shelters can be made under the LAHC Alterations to a Home policy at <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/policies/alterations-home-policy> and Supplement <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/policies/alterations-home-policy-supplement>

Post Meeting Note by DS

The NDIS QSC has posted on their Provider Alert dated 24 March 2020, that businesses who are experiencing difficulty in accessing PPE where essential supports are provided to a person in their own home from the National Medical Stockpile.

The supply will only be granted under very strict conditions, plus the access will not be granted for general needs as these stockpiles is a safety net, a supply of last resort.

- Only if you have a client who has been identified as having COVID19, and
- You can demonstrate that you are not able to obtain PPE through your normal channels.

Close

- Professor Catherine Bridge closed the meeting at 4.15pm.

Next Advisory Committee Meeting 18 June 2020