



Home Modification Information Clearinghouse

Never Stand Still

Built Environment

Newsletter

Edition 40 | 6th July 2016



From the Editor

Welcome to our end of financial year quarterly instalment of the HMinfo Newsletter. As I write, I am sitting with the heater on under my desk and winter chills and snow being a reality for some in the Blue Mountains around Canberra and on the border of NSW and Victoria where a snowy region lies. Australia being more a land of bushfire and flood we sometimes forget the behavioural changes and/or modifications needed in ice and snow as any exposure to temperature extremes also places children, older adults and those with thermoregulation issues at greater risk for injury or death. For instance, when walking on icy steps, always use the hand railings and plant your feet firmly on each step. When installing outdoor handrails in icy regions it is wise to think about coating external Handrails with '[Thermilate](#)' or similar. Thermilate has a ceramic additive that makes standard paint into a highly effective radiant barrier, it is low cost and extremely simple to use as it is a quick-air-drying, semi-gloss paint which makes handrails and metal surfaces warm to the touch. It also reduces handrails becoming slippery due to precipitation and condensation and conforms with the Health and Safety Building Regulations.

Chilly weather is also a good time to think about heating internally as it is well known that the smoke from wood fires can affect air quality and may affect people's health (eg. asthma; those with vascular complications from diabetes; frail elderly people etc.), as well as being a major cause of air pollution. Nevertheless as the outside air temperature drops, the cost of heating the home increases, and older adults and those on limited incomes may try to save money by not turning on heating or by lowering their thermostat settings. This can be dangerous because a drop in environmental temperature below 15-33 C may result in hypothermia for elderly persons in their eighties and nineties. So it is important that those most at risk find a middle ground between having a home that's cosy and a resulting energy bill that won't send you broke, Chris Barnes from [Choice](#) magazine has some great information about [electric heaters](#), [gas heaters](#) and [reverse-cycle air conditioners](#) and they suggest that if you need to save money only heat the room you are in and check out their tips on [five ways to reduce your household's energy use](#).

It was our great pleasure to participate for the third year running in the third annual Universal Design Grand Challenge Awards. The awards are an initiative of the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the National Disability Authority in Ireland, supported by Enterprise Ireland.

The theme of this year's awards was "Solutions so smart they work for everyone". Read about the [2016 Universal Design Grand Challenge Student Awards Winners](#). It is my fervent wish that we could organize something similar here in Australia.

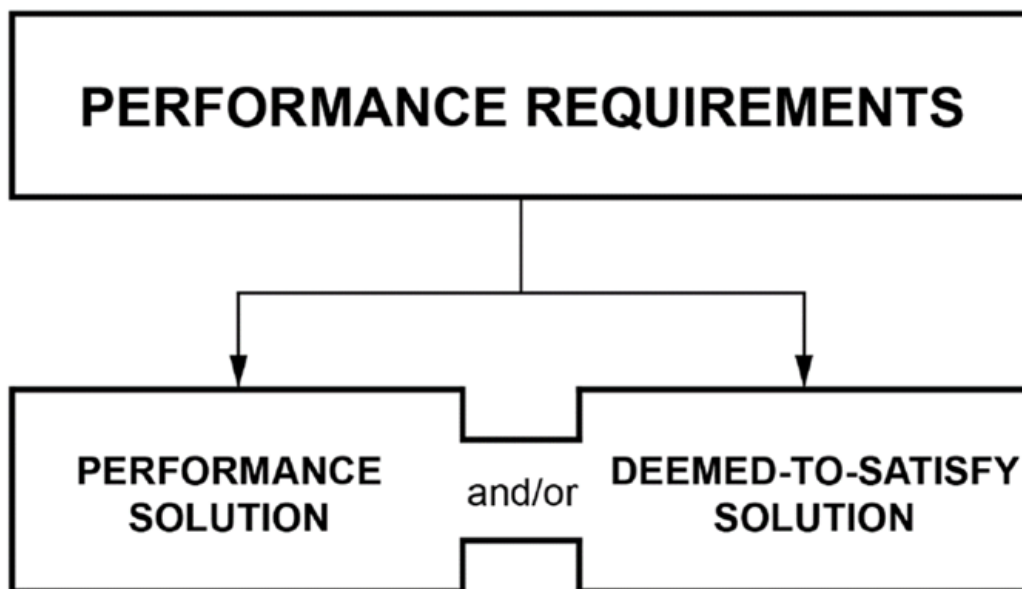
Like many others we were taken by surprise when changes to the National Construction Code (NCC) came into force in May of this year. The two biggest surprises were the changes made to ramps and to stair

tolerances. Australian Standard 4586 - 2013 'Slip resistance classification of new pedestrian surface materials' will now apply to class 1 and 10 buildings, as the Queensland exemption ceased 1 May 2016.

Critically, there was no consultation with our Industry representatives and there was no understanding of the potential impact on our Industry. Consequently, there was an apparent disregard for how the new minimum criteria would impact people with disabilities. For instance, higher slip resistance is not always better, ie. too rough so that they are too hard to clean (or a stumble hazard). Bowman goes on to conclude that "legislating inappropriate slip resistance requirements based on inadequate evidence is a wicked [performance outcome] principle"¹.

As a result of this change we were forced to put together new information and we highly recommend that anyone dealing with new ramps reads and fully understands what is required. The new information is detailed in the newly authored [Industry Factsheet: Slip Resistance of Ramps](#) publication now available from our website. Like the Building Industry our general advice is that attempting to determine a slip resistance classification after installation of a product, such as painted stairs, may not be possible.

Despite the fact that the NCC has been a performance-based code since 1996 it provides the minimum mandatory technical requirements for the design, construction and performance of buildings. However, Industry feedback to Master Builders and the like has indicated that a performance-based code is hard to understand, so the hierarchy pyramid diagram in the building code has been replaced with a two tier diagram. The new diagram states the performance requirements that are achieved by a performance solution, a deemed-to-satisfy solution, or a combination of both. Our problem is that at present no-one is charged with disentangling new build from home renovation or home modification and for developing appropriate solutions classes for housing types.



The NCC is just one tool that may aid in achieving better outcomes for more universally designed buildings. Nevertheless, the NCC has the ability to further contribute to unlocking this potentially best through:

- Offering more options for achieving performance solutions, including additional verification methods; and
- Providing additional guidance materials for achieving the desire performance solutions

Last but not least, it was a great pleasure to see and talk to many of you at the Home Modifications Australia (MOD.A) National Conference which took place on the 28-29 April 2016 at the National Convention Centre in Canberra. As I mentioned in the keynote that I gave, recent research by Dr Carnemolla in a before and after study of Home Modifications, has demonstrated improvement in quality of

life across all factors and a 42% reduction in care overall. The HMinfo Clearinghouse has also been successful in securing a second tranche of funding to develop 'Point of Sale materials' for 'Do it Yourselfers' to better position them to make more informed decisions and I am very happy to say that we have appointed Dr Gillian Barlow to lead this project. Dr Barlow is a writer and architect living in Sydney. Her PhD thesis which is a multidisciplinary exploration of space/place anchored in her work as an architect working in the area of Aboriginal housing. Gillian has also been responsible for the most recent Ageing, Disability and Home Care's guidelines for designing group homes: accommodation for people who require up to 24-hour supported care. We are very lucky to have her and are now in the midst of playing with co-design and Apps so stay tuned for more information about this project as it gathers momentum.

1. Bowman, R. and N. Graham-Bowman (2015). Goldilocks, slip resistance and the wicked problem of falls prevention. Proceedings 19th Triennial Congress of the IEA.

Home Modification Resources

Book/Journal paper review

Estimating the out-of-Pocket Expenses and Transport, Caregiver, Home Adaptation and or Special Equipment Acquisition Costs Associated with Parkinson's Disease

A recent study found that Parkinsons patients or their families had an significant out of pocket expenses associated with their diagnosis including having to pay for home adaptations, as a result the authors concluded that it was important that further research be undertaken to analyze the impact of this disease for the healthcare system and society.

Marquez, M., et al. (2016). "Estimating the out-of-Pocket Expenses and Transport, Caregiver, Home Adaptation and or Special Equipment Acquisition Costs Associated with Parkinson's Disease." Value in Health 19(3): A64.

Website review

The UK College of Occupational Therpists Specialist Section on Housing is supporting a project entitled 'genHome'

<<https://www.cot.co.uk/genhome>> or Housing outcomes, information, Management and Evidence. The purpose of the genHOME project has been to bring together and map out housing related research and evidence relevant to the needs of disabled and older people, and for this to be available within an accessible database. The vision of the project is for the information contained in the genHOME database to provide an evidence base for practitioners to use, and for it to inform and influence the future direction of research in this important area of practice. The initial phase of the project has been successfully completed and this has given rise to the initial A - Z database.

Staff Updates

We are thrilled to welcome two new members onto our team, Dr Gillian Barlow and Kiri Weller. Dr Gillian Barlow, as Research Associate, is a registered architect who has worked more recently in the disability and ageing sector. She has a MA (Hons) Communications and Media and a PhD, Writing and Society. She will be working on the DIY Point of Sale project. She is excited to be working on a project that will have very real outcomes for anyone who is wanting to do their own home modifications.

Kiri has also joined the team for two days a week as Research Officer, she has experience working in the disability, aged care and education sectors and has tertiary education in Social Sciences, Education, Training and Statistics. She is passionate about working towards improving the lives and health/ care costs for older people, people with disabilities and their carers, as well as having an interest in enabling environments and functional design.

In other staff news, on June 15 2016, we celebrated with our long time team member Phillipa Carnemolla at her PhD graduation ceremony. Congratulations Phillipa on the successful completion of your studies.

Events

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY 8TH NDIS SYMPOSIA SERIES - 8 Aug 2016

WORKSHOP: Environmental Home Modifications - The Basics - TAREE - 12 Aug 2016 - 13 Aug 2016

Universal Design 2016 (UD2016) - Learning from the past, designing for the future - Sun 21 Aug 2016 - Wed 24 Aug 2016

Universal Design Conference COTA - Tue 30 Aug 2016 - Wed 31 Aug 2016

ACSA 2016 National Summit - Choose To Thrive - Tue 6 Sep 2016 - Fri 9 Sep 2016

Publications by HMinfo Team

HMinfo research

Bridge, C., Maalsen, S., Zmudzki, F., O'Neil, S. and Carnemolla, P. (2016). DIY Home Modifications: What information is required at point of sale? Sydney: Home Modification Information Clearinghouse, University of New South Wales. (March) [online]. Available from www.homemods.info

Quinn, J. and Bridge, C. (2016). Industry Factsheet: Slip Resistance of Ramps June [online]. Available from www.homemods.info

Reports, journal articles and conference papers

Bridge, C., and Carnemolla, P. K. (2016). Effective Home Modification Practice. In M. Curtin, & M. Molineaux (Eds.), *Occupational Therapy and Physical Dysfunction* (7 ed.).

Carnemolla, P. K., and Bridge, C. (2016). Accessible Housing and Health-Related Quality of Life.. *International Journal of Architectural Research*, 10(2).

HMinfo Team



Associate Professor Catherine Bridge - Director
Dr Phillipa Carnemolla - Research Associate
Dr Joanne Quinn - Research Associate
Judy Lim - Administrator
Helmut Hoss - Website Developer
Aldyfra Lukman - PhD student

Any suggestions or feedback you may have on our newsletter would be greatly appreciated, so please feel free to contact us at hminfo@unsw.edu.au. To unsubscribe from future HMinfo newsletters, please click [unsubscribe](#).

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