

NSW service type guidelines for
Home and Community Care (HACC)

Home modification

NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care



Australian Government



home and community care

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



**New South Wales
Government**



**Department
of Ageing,
Disability &
Home Care**

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1 Framework for the delivery of Home Modification services

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the NSW Guidelines for Home and Community Care Funded Services.

1.1 Definition

Home Modification refers to structural changes to the client's home so they can continue to live and move safely about the house. It will often include the fitting of rails, ramps, alarms or other safety and mobility aids.

Home modification does not include general repairs to the house but does include explicit changes to improve safety or accessibility for the client.

1.2 Aims of Home Modification Services

The aim of the program is to assist older people and people with a disability to remain at home by providing affordable home modifications designed to change the home environment to make it safer and easier to carry out tasks and maintain independence.

1.3 Who can be assisted?

Home Modification services may be available to clients who meet the broad criteria for access to HACC services outlined in the NSW Guidelines for Home and Community Care Funded Services and who require some modification to the structure of their home or the installation of assistive technology to enable them to continue to remain living at home.

A comprehensive assessment of the client's home by an occupational therapist is required before Home Modification services are provided.

1.4 Home Modifications that can be provided

Home Modification services currently include:

- Bathroom/toilet modifications (e.g. replacement of bath with hobless shower, grab rails, re-location of wash-basin or toilet).
- Kitchen modifications (e.g. lowering of work-tops, replacement of ovens, wheel in space for wheelchairs under sinks).
- Access modifications (e.g. ramps, hand-rails, widening of doorways, construction of easy step pathways).
- Electrical modifications (e.g. re-siting of switches, power points changing to rocker switches).
- Modification of gardens to low maintenance gardens and gardens which are accessible to people with disabilities (this service type should be deemed a lower priority than other areas leading to functional change within the dwelling).

Home Modifications services are involved in the following activities:

- Liaison with other HACC providers to ensure provision of a safe home for clients, carers and care-workers.

- Liaison with appropriate allied health providers, principally occupational therapists, regarding assessment of an individual's needs and identification of modification work to meet that person's requirements.
- Scoping, costing and planning modification work, sourcing appropriate materials and suitably qualified tradespeople and handypersons in accordance with agreed quality standards for the building industry and the HACCC program.
- Establishing payment arrangements with the client.
- Liaison with the NSW Home Modification Information Clearinghouse to ensure that information for recommended modifications is up to date.

Home Modification services can also do work outside the HACCC program on a fee for service basis.

1.4.1 Assistive technology

Assistive technology refers to products, devices or equipment, whether acquired commercially, modified or customised, that are used to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Types of assistive technology can be classified according to functional needs and/or product categories such as:

- Communication aids (i.e. alternative input devices, alternative output devices and accessible software).
- Daily living aids (i.e. clothing and dressing aids, eating and cooking aids, home maintenance aids, toileting and bathing aids, and cognitive aids).
- Environmental controls and switches.
- Mobility and transportation aids.

Assistive technology most commonly required in the context of home modifications includes electronic cabling, sensor systems, environmental control systems and lifts.

Assistive technology provided under the Home Modification service must:

- relate to the functional need of the client;
- be recommended by the client's doctor and supported by an Occupational Therapy assessment; and
- not duplicate support available through existing programs such as the Program of Appliances for Disabled People (PADP), and aids and equipment provided by the Department of Veteran's Affairs and the Motor Accidents Authority of New South Wales.

The following issues must be considered prior to the installation of assistive technology within the Home Modification service:

- The structural capacity of the client's house to accommodate the assistive technology;
- The cost implications of installing the assistive technology particularly where the client's home may not have the structural capacity to support the assistive technology;
- The technical skills and qualifications required to install the assistive technology; and

- Equity of access to assistive technology as applied to special needs groups.
- Once installed, the assistive technology becomes the property of the client who is responsible for its maintenance including all related ongoing costs.

1.5 Overview of the Home Modification service model

In order to comply with the legislated licensing requirements contained in the Home Building Act and Regulations 1989 and to streamline administration, coordination and service provision, Home Modification services in NSW are transitioning to a new service model. An interim service model is in place while the proposed comprehensive service model is finalised.

1.5.1 Interim Model

The management, allocation, contracting and provision of Home Modification services has been organised across three overlapping levels of financial delegation. The overlaps in the levels of financial delegation give services flexibility to provide home modifications at their level or refer up to a higher level.

The three levels of financial delegation are:

Level 1 Home Modification Service	Responsible for work costing (market value) up to \$7,500.
Level 2 Home Modification Service	Responsible for work costing (market value) from \$5,000 up to \$25,000.
Level 3 Home Modification Service	Responsible for work costing (market value) over \$20,000.

Level 1 services are the entry and referral for all clients requiring Home Modification services. Level 2 and Level 3 Home Modification services are the budget holders for services at their level of delegation.

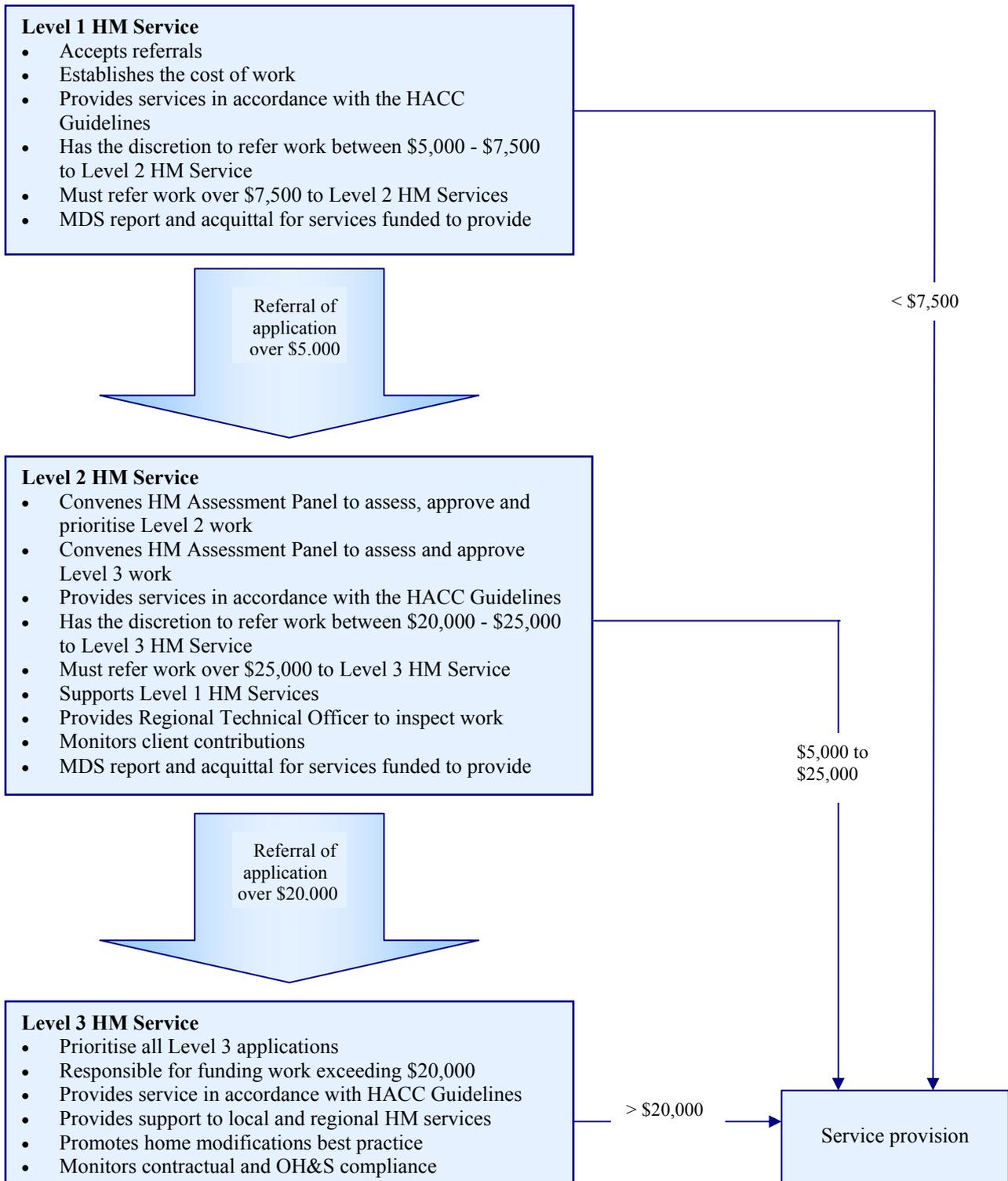
All Home Modification services are required to:

- Comply with the legislated licensing requirements contained in the Home Building Act and Regulations 1989;
- Obtain an Occupational Therapist assessment before any Home Modifications work is approved and provided; and
- Access technical advice through the Home Modification and Maintenance State Council.

Figure 1 below explains the roles and responsibilities across the three levels of service provision for the interim model.

Figure 1: Interim Model

**Three levels of Service Provision
Roles and Responsibilities**



1.5.2 Level 1 Home Modification Services

Level 1 Home Modification services have the following responsibilities:

- Providing the initial point of contact and referral for all clients seeking to lodge an application for Home Modification;
- Determining HACC eligibility;
- Assessing all Level 1 referrals;
- Conducting preliminary assessments for all Level 2 and 3 applications;
- Initiating and coordinate all Occupational Therapy assessments;
- Compiling modification/building plans and costings for all applications;
- Determining and managing the client fees for all Level 1 clients, according to the service provider fees policy;
- Undertaking work assessed as being up to \$5,000 (market value);
- Referring work over \$5,000 to a Home Modification Assessment Panel;
- Entering MDS data for Level 1 work; and
- For applications being progressed to Level 2 and 3, entering only that MDS data that relates to the preliminary phase, such as assessment.

Level 1 Home Modification services may be sub-contracted by Level 2 and Level 3 Home Modification services, dependent on capacity and skills. MDS data is to be entered by the service provider funded for the work, rather than the sub-contracted service provider.

1.5.3 Level 2 Home Modification Service

There are thirteen Level 2 Home Modification services throughout NSW. Level 2 Home Modification services have the following responsibilities:

- Liaising with the Level 1 Home Modification service in relation to applications for work assessed as costing between \$5,000 and \$25,000;
- Convening a Home Modification Assessment Panel to assess, approve and prioritise applications for Level 2 and assess Level 3 applications for prioritisation. (Details of Home Modification Assessment Panels including function and membership are discussed in Appendix B.
- Determining and managing the client fee, according to the service's fees policy;
- Undertaking the work by:
 - Allocating funds to another Home Modification service; or
 - Engaging a principal contractor or sub-contractors to complete the modification; or
 - Utilising staff employed by the Level 2 Home Modification service.
- Organising for a licensed builder, works supervisor or a Regional Technical Officer to inspect all Level 2 modifications upon completion (Refer to Appendix B); and

- Entering MDS data for all Level 2 work, including Level 2 work that may be sub-contracted to another service. Further information on MDS processes can be found in Section 2 of these Guidelines.

1.5.4 Level 3 State-wide Service

There is only one State-wide Level 3 Home Modification service. It has a dual role of service provision and service system capacity building.

The Level 3 Home Modification service has the following responsibilities:

- Liaising with the Level 1 Home Modification service in relation to applications for work assessed as costing over \$20,000.
- Receiving assessed Level 3 applications from a Home Modifications Assessment Panel (convened by a Level 2 Home Modification service) and establish priority of access of individual applications for funding;
- Determining and managing the client fee, according to the Level 3 service fees policy;
- Undertaking the work by:
 - Allocating funds to another Home Modification service, mentoring where required, to build skill capacity; or
 - Engaging a principal contractor or sub-contractors to complete the modification.
- Organising for licensed builder, works supervisor, or a Regional Technical Officer to inspect Level 3 modifications upon completion. (Refer to Appendix B);
- Entering MDS data for all Level 3 work, including Level 3 work that may be sub-contracted to another provider. Further information on MDS processes can be found in Section 2 of these Guidelines;
- Providing technical information and support to the Home Modifications service system in relation to complex Home Modifications;
- Providing advice to the service system on Occupational Health and Safety standards and legislation and contractual requirements; and
- Liaising with the Home Modifications Information Clearing House in regard to good practice and capacity building for the home modifications service system.

1.6 Mandatory requirements for Home Modification services

This section outlines the mandatory requirements for the provision of Home Modification services in NSW which are prescribed by legislation or the National Program Guidelines for the HACC Program. They reflect leading practice in home modifications.

1.6.1 Licensing requirements

All Home Modification providers must comply with licensing requirements under the Home Building Act and Regulations 1989.

The Home Building Act 1989 requires that work with a combined labour and materials cost of over \$1,000 at market value must be undertaken by a licensed tradesperson or supervised by a licensed tradesperson, and a written contract signed by the parties is required before the work can commence.

There are three licence types issued by the New South Wales Office of Fair Trading under each specific category of work to be done (e.g. building, electrical, plumbing):

Contractor Licence	Authorises that holder to contract and advertise to carry out the work described on their licence card
Qualified Supervisor Certificate	Allows the holder to carry out the work as described on their licence. A “Q” on their licence card indicates this.
Nominated Supervisor	Is an individual who holds a qualified contractor licence or a supervisor certificate, and who is registered against a contractor licence as the person supervising the residential building work or specialist work. All companies, partnership and unqualified individuals holding a contractor licence must nominate a supervisor.

Further information on licensing may be obtained through the Office of Fair Trading (www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au).

1.6.1.1 Types of labour that may be used

Home Modifications services may use one or more of the following types of labour:

- Labour directly employed by the service; and
- Sub-contracted labour.

In each case the service provider remains responsible for the quality of work completed and compliance with all relevant legislation and standards (including the HACC standards).

For further information in relation to engagement of sub contractors, refer to Section 2.4.1 of these Guidelines.

Any individual who carries out work in the following fields:

- Bricklaying and Stonemasonry
- Carpentry and Joinery
- Framework Construction
- Reinforcement Fixing
- Concreting
- Roof Tiling and Cladding
- Plastering
- Wall and Floor Tiling
- Glazing
- Painting and Decorating

- Excavating
- Demolishing

Any combination of the above fields (both labour and materials) which costs of more than \$1,000 must either:

- Hold a contractor's licence covering that particular field or fields and enter into a written contract under the Home Building Act 1989; or
- Be supervised by a Licensed Contractor.

Home Modification services should confirm that their builders/contractor licence status meets the requirements of the Office of Fair Trading.

1.6.2 Home Modifications Assessment Panels

The Level 2 services are responsible for convening an assessment panel which must:

- Consider all applications referred by Level 1 Home Modification services;
- Assess, approve and prioritise all Level 2 Home Modification applications; and
- Assess all Level 3 Home Modification applications.

At a minimum, the panel must comprise:

- A Level 1 Home Modification service representative;
- An Occupational Therapist;
- A consumer;
- The Regional Technical Officer;
- A HACC service provider; and
- A Level 3 Home Modification service representative as appropriate.

Appendix B of these Guidelines provides the Terms of Reference for Home Modification Assessment Panels.

1.6.3 Occupational therapist assessments

An assessment from a suitably trained Occupational Therapist must be obtained for all Home Modifications projects. At a minimum, an Occupational Therapist should review the application for Home Modification services and provide advice for the design of the project.

1.6.4 Home Modification Technical Advice (Interim Model)

The Home Modification and Maintenance Services State Council is funded to enhance the skills of the HACC Home Modifications sector to ensure quality work. The Regional Technical Officers provide an interim support to services to improve the capacity of their nominated licensed building supervisors in this specialised field.

These officers will:

- Train and upgrade the skills of new or inexperienced licensed builders, works supervisors, and contractors to undertake and sign off work in accordance with relevant building codes, standards and evidence based practice. Builders should ask a Regional Technical Officer or another licensed builder to endorse the

quality of their work. In the interest of minimising future claims for rectification, builders should not sign off on the quality of their own work.

- Where an organisation is in the process of becoming licensed, provide an interim service to inspect and give final approval for Level 2 and Level 3 Home Modifications, ensuring that they comply with the Australian building codes, relevant standards and OT specifications, until licensed builders, works supervisors and contractors are sufficiently skilled to do so;
- Jointly conduct, as required, final inspections with Building Supervisors, as a mechanism to build skill;
- Provide technical assistance and advice as required, with an emphasis on creating service capacity rather than reliance;
- Under the leadership of the Home Modification State Council, and in consultation with the Home Modification Info Clearing House, develop an Orientation Kit, support resources and networks for Building Supervisors to foster quality assurance processes in the provision of Home Modifications;
- Promote the Home Modification Info Clearing House and the Home Modification info website, www.homemods.info as a resource for quality work;
- Furnish reports for the Quality Assurance Rectification Program Applications, where work has been determined as inadequate (refer to Section 2.1.3).

Further information regarding the Quality Assurance Rectification Program and the provision of technical advice can be found at www.nswhmms.org.

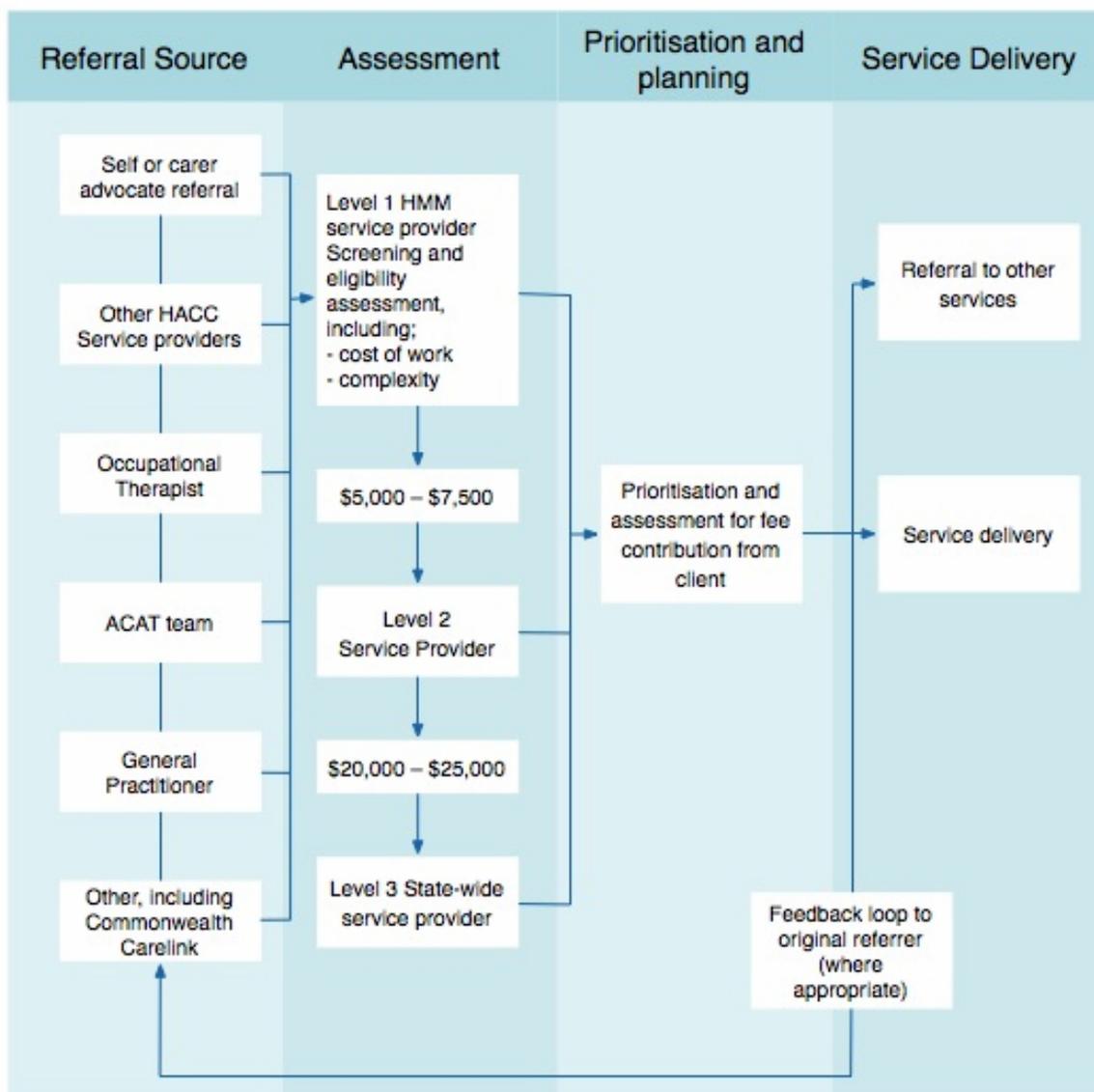
1.6.4.1 Insurance

All Home Modifications services, sub-contractors and contractors completing work under the HACC Program over the value of \$12,000 (at market value) are exempt from Home Owners Warranty Insurance. For a copy of the exemption contact the NSW Home Modifications State Council.

1.7 Referral paths for Home Modification services

The following flow chart provides an overview of the major referral sources for HACC services and the flow through to assessment and HACC service delivery:

Referral paths for HACC services



Key principles regarding referral paths for all HACC services are as follows:

- The Client Information and Referral Record (CIARR) will be the referral tool used by NSW HACC services.
- Duplication of assessment should be minimised. Service providers are required to keep informed of changes to the standardised assessment tools and processes adopted by DADHC and adapt their assessment protocols accordingly.
- Regular, clear and transparent communication mechanisms to inform the client of approximate time frames for service delivery, as well as to acknowledge the referral and provide summary information on the service delivery and outcomes achieved from the service intervention.

- Consent for referral to another agency (if appropriate) must be obtained from the client. Where written consent is not possible, verbal consent should be gained and documented on the client referral forms. In cases where it is not possible or appropriate to obtain consent from the client directly due to impairments in their cognitive function, consent should be obtained from the client's nominated carer.

1.8 Screening and assessment for Home Modification services

The HACC National Service Standards as they apply to the screening and assessment of potential clients of HACC services outline the minimum requirements of Home Modification service providers

- Objective 1: Access to Services (Service Standard 1.1) in the HACC National Service Standards specifies that all potential clients should undergo a formal assessment prior to or at commencement of service. An ACAT assessment is recommended for all clients of dementia specific services. The Project Coordinator should also conduct home assessments regarding OH&S issues.

Additional further requirements under Service Standard 1.1 of the HACC National Service Standards specify that:

- Where a potential client is refused a service, the reasons for refusing should be documented and should consistently comply with agency guidelines;
- Agencies which refuse services to potential clients due to resource constraints should demonstrate that waiting lists, if kept, are reviewed in order to reprioritise client access to services as necessary;
- Where there is a risk to the carer, services should provide a referral to the local Carer Respite Centre (contact details for Carer Respite Centres are available in Section 3 of the NSW HACC Guidelines); and
- Response times between referral and service delivery and between initial assessment and service delivery should be appropriate to clients' needs.

The Home Modification service provider determines eligibility for HACC services using a screening tool, performs an assessment of the client's needs, prioritises the referral, determines the likely cost associated with performing the required services and ascertains the client's capacity to pay the costs. The Home Modification service provider then provides the service or outsources the service to an appropriately qualified contractor.

1.8.1.1 Home Maintenance

In many cases, Level 1 Home Modification services also provide a range of Home Maintenance services. Where this occurs, there is no need to duplicate the common elements of assessment processes. However, services should ensure that appropriate attention is paid to the distinct outcomes of Home Maintenance and Home Modification services and the impact that these differences will have on assessment prioritisation, costing and planning.

1.8.2 Restricted or excluded service requests

The following outlines specific exclusions to the provision of Home Modification services.

1.8.2.1 Long-term neglect

Home Modification services should not undertake repairs or modifications that are the result of long-term neglect by the owner. General upkeep of the property remains the responsibility of the homeowner.

Modifications needed as a result of neglect may only be addressed where the neglect is addressed to establish a safe habitat and minimise risk for the client.

1.8.2.2 Retrospective compensation

Compensation for home modifications carried out by non-HACC funded Home Modification services will not be provided.

1.8.2.3 The installation of aids and appliances

Home Modification services should not provide aids or appliances unless they are cheaper alternatives to providing modifications or where the nature of the dwelling is such that modifications are not possible. For example:

- It may be cheaper to install a wheelchair lift or a portable ramp rather than install a permanent ramp; or
- It may be more appropriate to install a bath seat rather than remove a bathtub.

Where the most cost effective solution to a Home Modification problem involves the installation of an aid or appliance, this option should be pursued in preference to providing a Home Modification.

Before providing appliances, the service should make enquiries as to whether they are available from another program such as the Program of Appliances for Disabled People (PADP). Responsibility for these enquiries (made through the Area Health service) normally rests with the Occupational Therapist who is involved in the assessment. Details around the PADP program, including policy guidelines for its application, can be accessed at:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au>

This sub-section does not apply to the provision of assistive technology as defined in Section 1.4.1 of these Guidelines.

1.8.2.4 Duplication of services

HACC funded services should not duplicate services received by the individual from other program areas. In situations where the Home Modification provider receives a referral and the client referred is receiving services from other agencies, it is the service provider's responsibility to ensure that the services provided by the Home Modification provider are not similar to other services being provided to the same client by other agencies.

1.8.2.5 Activities captured by other HACC service types

Activities captured by other HACC service types (e.g. Home Maintenance) cannot be provided under the Home Modification service model as they constitute separate activities with distinct objectives and, as such, attract separate funding. An example of activities that are not applicable to Home Modification funding (and are recorded separately under the MDS) is the provision of goods and equipment to assist with mobility, communication, reading, personal care or health care. The full list of HACC service types is available in the NSW Guidelines for HACC Funded Services.

1.8.2.6 Post acute care situations

HACC-funded Home Modifications can provide a basic maintenance and support service to HACC eligible clients following an acute care episode. However, the “specialist” component of post-acute care (i.e. direct treatment for an acute illness including convalescence) is not to be provided to an individual by the Home Modifications service.

Palliative Care clients may be eligible for minor home modifications, such as grab rails, where they have a functional disability arising from their condition or treatment. However, major modifications are unlikely to be of benefit for clients with deteriorating conditions.

1.8.2.7 Clients in supported accommodation programs or congregate living situations

Home Modification services are not provided to clients in supported accommodation programs where the residence is provided as part of the support, such as group homes.

Home modification services are not provided to residents of boarding houses or residential aged care facilities, such as nursing homes, hostels or related services.

1.8.2.8 Public and private rentals

HACC-eligible tenants in a private or public tenancy do not generally have access to Home Modifications as they are not the owners of the property. Services that are the responsibility of the landlord cannot be provided by HACC services. Modification to Department of Housing homes, Aboriginal Community Housing, Community Housing, boarding houses and retirement villages are the responsibility of the owners of those properties.

1.8.2.8.1 Private rental - exceptions

On rare occasions, it may be possible to provide modifications critical for access, safety and to avoid a hazardous living environment in private rental accommodation. This will depend on individual circumstances such as the terms and security of the tenancy, appropriateness of alternative accommodation options and the willingness of the landlord to allow the work to be done. Appropriate actions in relation to these circumstances include:

- Obtaining the landlord’s consent and entering into a contract with the landlord and tenant to do the work.
- For work with a labour and materials cost less than \$1,000, the written permission of the landlord will be required when the work undertaken affects the fabric of the building.
- The HACC client may not have a guarantee of a long term tenancy arrangement and the owner of a property can sometimes benefit financially by the improvement made to the property. In such cases, payment for the work to be done should be negotiated with the landlord in the first instance. If the landlord cannot make payment, the client should then be requested to meet the payment for the work to be done.

An example of the consent required from a landlord to perform work on a rented property is set out in Appendix A.

Home Modification services can be provided in private rental accommodation on a full cost recovery basis.

1.8.2.9 Secondary residences

Home Modification services are applicable only to a HACC-eligible client's primary place of residence. Home Modification services are not available for secondary places of residence including holiday homes.

1.8.2.10 The provision of new homes and additional accommodation

When a client sells a house which has been modified they would be expected to make provision for any necessary modifications to their new dwelling from the proceeds from the sale of the modified house.

HACC funded Home Modifications services do not include the removal of an existing dwelling and the re-building of a new dwelling in its place.

Clients purchasing new homes could reasonably be expected to budget for any necessary modifications and would not be a priority for service. However, if they are an eligible HACC client, the Home Modification service could assist with assessment and advice. Such a service would be recorded in the MDS as both assessment and information outputs.

Home Modification services may not provide additional habitable rooms to dwellings. Requests for variation to this rule should be referred to the DADHC Regional Office. Additions to the area of the dwelling with bathrooms or toilets are allowable if these meet the service priority and access policies. Bathroom or toilet extensions must meet local council building codes and standards.

1.9 Prioritising eligible clients for Home Modification services

The NSW Guidelines for Home and Community Care (HACC) Funded Services. outline information on prioritising eligible clients for services.

In addition, in the case of home modification services, a key consideration is the cost effectiveness of the intervention. Where a referral for home modifications is received, it should be established that alternative options for service delivery have been explored and that the home modification service represents the most cost effective option available. Cost-effectiveness should be assessed on the basis of both the absolute cost of the modification project and the cost of ongoing services received by the client, as well as the sustainability of the modification to provide benefit to the individual.

In considering the cost effectiveness of possible modifications, services should first ascertain whether the existing home is a suitable environment that can be made safe for the client and their carers. Client consent for any modifications and fees to be incurred should also be established prior to starting any work.

Policies that outline priority of access for Home Modification services should consider the following factors:

Purpose served by service

Priority can be given to services that:

- Provide total independence from the need for ongoing service provision;
- Promote safety for clients, carers or caseworkers, including avoiding hazardous environments; or
- Reduce the need for ongoing service provision to the client.

Services that maintain or enhance the appearance of the home are of the lowest priority.

High Risk

A person whose safety is significantly at risk without the receipt of a home modification service may be given priority.

Post-acute care where a HACC eligible person returning home from hospital requires home modifications for a short term only, is not captured in this priority category.

Impact on Carer(s)

Priority may be given to services that reduce the demands and risks made by the person(s) in the HACC target population on their carer(s). Most notably risks would include issues that would be deemed OH&S risks in a work environment.

Impact on other services

Priority may be given to providing a Home Modification service that reduces the demand for other HACC services in the context of maintaining independence in living in the community. For example, a home modification may enable the delivery of less costly personal care services to the client in an environment that better meets OH&S requirements and, as such, facilitates the maintenance of the client in the community.

Availability of other alternatives

A person who has other alternatives to Home Modification services available can be given lower priority than one who does not have access to such alternatives. These include:

- The person requesting the service being in a position to move from his/her existing home to a more suitable home, for example, is eligible for modified public housing;

Availability of other alternatives (cont)

- An available piece of equipment being just as effective in meeting the needs of the person; or
- Other HACC services, such as delivered meals, being more appropriate than a kitchen modification

The cost-effectiveness of the home modification over other options must be established before prioritisation of the referral.

Independence

It is acknowledged that it is important to assist a person in the HACC target population to live in their own home, independent of their carers. If the person is presently supported by carers, the priority of their application may be lower, as they may be eligible for modified public housing for people with a disability.

Home Modification services should refer to the HACC National Service Standards (Objective 1: Access and to services, Objective 2: Information and Consultation) and the National HACC Program Guidelines when developing their priority of access policies.

Prioritisation of access to services should not be based on:

- The overall level of service required; or
- The ability or inability of the client to pay for the service.

Eligible clients who are able to pay the full cost of the service are counted as HACC clients and receive prioritisation on the same basis as eligible clients who cannot pay the full cost. Capacity to pay is not a determinant for eligibility or priority for HACC services.

Where the client is a younger person with a disability (less than 65 years of age), everything must be done to ensure they are not prematurely admitted to residential aged care.

1.9.1 Cap for modification services

When deciding to limit or cap the amount of modifications any one client receives in a given period, services should take into account the following factors:

- Cost and complexity of the modifications required (after a prima facie consideration of the client's needs);
- Number and cost of modifications the applicant client has received before in a five-year period;
- Whether the client's condition, circumstances and needs have changed markedly requiring additional modifications to be made to prevent them from being admitted into residential care;

- The cost of relocating the client compared with the cost of the modification required; and
- The impact on available resources.

1.9.2 Factors to consider when determining project management

Home Modification services should consider the following factors when determining the nature of a job and should develop protocols that incorporate these factors:

- Local Government development controls and consents required to undertake the work.
- Coordination of multiple tradespersons: Does the job require the services of more than one tradesperson? Will project management be provided?
- Time to completion: How long will the job take to complete and what will be the impact on the service recipient and any other persons residing in the dwelling during this time? Is there a need for the project to be completed within a limited timeframe?
- Re-location during construction: Does the job require the client and other household members to be housed elsewhere during construction?
- Budgetary control: What is the risk of costs exceeding budget? How will costs be contained, and is project management required? Including exploration of options to allow contribution to costs from clients such as fees and reverse mortgage options.
- Degree of structural change required to existing dwelling to perform modifications: Do the modifications constitute major structural changes to the existing dwelling or do the modifications represent an appropriate solution for that individual?

1.10 Client care coordination

The HACC National Service Standards recognise that Home Modification services do not require a service delivery plan or care plan. In the case of Home Modification services, the provider is required to inform clients of the work performed through other means such as job sheets or invoices.

It is important that Home Modification providers develop effective communication mechanisms with other HACC and community based services that will be providing services in the home of the client. In these cases services should work to achieve modifications that are appropriate to the OH&S needs of staff providing services in the home.

1.11 Client follow up and review of work quality

In order to ensure the quality of ongoing outcomes for clients who receive home modifications there is a need for services to engage in regular follow up review of work carried out. To achieve this, services should regularly review the outcomes of a sample of the work carried out.

This feedback should cover:

- Quality of the work carried out;

- Timing of the work;
- Communication with staff; and
- Whether the modifications met the needs of the client (and their carer).

In addition to review of a sample of services provided, services should also establish mechanisms that allow clients to provide direct feedback on the quality and outcomes of work carried out. This process should include procedures for identifying key issues with the work carried out and negotiating an appropriate resolution to the issues raised.

2 Funding, accountability and management of service provision

2.1 Payment of grants

2.1.1 Quality Assurance Rectification Program

The NSW Home Modification and Maintenance State Council is funded to administer the Quality Assurance Rectification Program (formerly known as the “Contingency Fund Project”). The Quality Assurance Rectification Program is used to cover rectification of sub standard and inappropriate work by Home Modification services.

Home Modifications services requiring assistance from the Quality Assurance Rectification Program need to apply directly to the NSW Home Modification and Maintenance State Council, using the process as set out in the Quality Assurance Rectification Program Information Package provided by the NSW Home Modification and Maintenance State Council.

Contact details for the NSW Home Modification and Maintenance State Council are provided in Section 3. A representative from the State Council will approve all allocations from the funds. Updates to criteria and changes to processes for applying to the Quality Assurance Rectification Program are available on the NSW Home Modification Info Clearinghouse website:

www.homemods.info

Information can also be found on the NSW Home Modification and Maintenance State Council website at www.nswhmms.org

2.2 MDS Reporting requirements

2.2.1 How to count MDS outputs

HACC service providers should be familiar with the instructions for reporting HACC MDS data and ensure that they submit their data in a timely and accurate manner. Detailed instructions for reporting HACC MDS data items can be found in the HACC Program MDS User Guide V2.0a (2006) at:

http://www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au/dadhc/Doing+business+with+us/HACC_MDS_data_elements.htm

For the purposes of MDS reporting:

- Home Modifications are measured in total cost of the work completed per client (not unit of time).
- Occupational Therapy services are to be recorded in hours as allied health.
- Home Modification services must record MDS data only for the services that they are funded to provide.
- Work undertaken for non-HACC clients should not be counted in the HACC MDS reports.

A five per cent variance on contracted services is allowed and needs to be appropriately reported through MDS.

2.3 Fees payable by recipients

2.3.1 Determining fees for Home Modifications services

Service providers should consider the following factors in the formula when calculating the unit cost of service provision:

- Cost for all materials associated with the service;
- Labour costs at commercial rate;
- Sub-contractor's costs; and
- Administration costs associated with service provision.

Administration costs should be monitored as a proportion of total service costs as a measure of efficiency in service provision.

When recouping the costs for services, service providers should always recover the full cost of materials associated with the service. Then in determining the level of the HACC subsidy determine whether the costs for labour, sub-contracting and administration should be fully recovered, partially recovered or not recovered based on service provider's fees policy.

Fee schedules apply only to those services that are subject to a Fee Limit. Home Modification is the only service type within the HACC Program for which an income assessment applies but where there is no mandatory fee limit.

Home Modification services should adopt a procedure for assessing asset ownership that is administratively efficient and respects the privacy of the individual, whilst at the same time allowing for an equitable allocation of resources to the client.

The process should take into account current and future estimated income where the client has an independent income source, as well as the range of existing services being accessed by the client and the costs associated with each of these services. NSW does not have a current policy relating to fees assessment and determination for HACC clients. Further guidance in relation to this area is provided in the Good Practice Guide.

Alternative financing options should be considered in all cases where the client has insufficient income to fund required home modifications but has significant assets. Options include home equity loans and reverse mortgages.

2.3.2 Full cost recovery work

While Home Modification services are funded to provide services to the HACC target population, occasionally they are called on to provide service to people who receive assistance under other Commonwealth and State Programs.

Work done for the following agencies or for clientele receiving support under the following or similar programs is to be performed on a full cost recovery basis:

- Compensable clients;

- Department of Veteran's Affairs;
- Group homes and other supported accommodation funded under the Disability services or Mental Health Acts;
- Community Housing Co-operatives;
- Community Aged Care Packages (CACP);
- Extended Aged Care in the Home (EACH) packages;
- Aboriginal Lands Councils;
- Department of Housing;
- Department of Community services;
- Ventilator Dependent Quadriplegics Program; and
- Hospital in the Home Program clients.

Work undertaken for these organisations, services or clients should not receive priority over service provision to the HACC target population. It is recommended that, prior to any work undertaken for other organisations, a signed written agreement between the Home Modification service provider and the agency involved is developed that specifies the terms of payment for the work being undertaken.

The Home Modification service provider should ensure that a written agreement with the service recipient is signed by both the Home Modification service provider and the recipient prior to the commencement of service provision. Such an agreement should detail the payment terms and conditions and the likely total cost.

2.4 Employment Practices

The Good Practice Guide outline principles and practice examples for the establishment of appropriate employment practices within the service.

2.4.1 Use of volunteers

Volunteers can be a valuable resource in the provision of HACC services, however, they may not undertake work normally done by qualified tradespersons. In some circumstances, it may be possible to attract licensed tradespeople to undertake work on a voluntary basis. Other than this, volunteers are restricted in Home Modifications service provision to the following areas:

- participation in management committees;
- office administration activities such as bookkeeping; and

Further information regarding the recruitment of volunteers can be found in the Good Practice Guide.

2.4.2 Use of subcontractors for Home Modifications

A subcontractor is a self-employed person who holds a contractor's licence to carry out his or her trade for consumers within the home building industry.

As a large proportion of domestic construction is currently carried out by subcontract labour, it is expected that all Home Modification services will utilise subcontractors at one time or another. The advantage in using subcontractors is that they are employed

only for the period that they are required and that the subcontractors themselves meet all on-costs.

Home Maintenance service providers are required to ensure mechanisms are in place to monitor the quality of work performed by subcontractors. The quality of any service undertaken by a subcontractor remains the responsibility of the Home Modification service provider who is overseeing the job and has engaged the subcontractor.

Home Modification service providers must have policies in place to ensure the appropriate selection of subcontractors who are suitably trained and experienced to perform the required service. The policy should also outline the processes for ensuring the subcontractor also has appropriate insurances to perform the work and that personnel involved in direct service delivery have current police clearances that have been sighted by the Home Modification service provider.

Home Modification services engaging subcontractors for work over a labour and materials cost of \$1,000 at market value must ensure that the subcontractor holds a licence issued by the New South Wales Office of Fair Trading. The licence must be sighted by a delegated person within the Home Modification service and a photocopy taken for the records of the service. In addition, services should obtain up to date details of the insurance cover held by each subcontractor.

Further advice on the use of subcontractors can be found in the Good Practice Guide.

2.4.3 Staff screening and checks

It is a requirement that Home Modification service providers screen staff to determine their suitability to provide home services to frail, elderly and/or disabled persons. All Home Modification service provider employees, volunteers and subcontractors must undergo a police check prior to commencing work. Home Modification services are required to have a policy regarding such screening of staff.

NSW police checks can be conducted through DADHC. Contact DADHC Human Resources Branch on 8270 2000.

2.5 Occupational Health and Safety

All HACC services are required to have an Occupational Health and Safety policy that complies with the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000. Details of this Act can be found at:

<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/LawAndPolicy/Acts/ohsact.htm>

Other supporting information and advice relating to Occupational Health and Safety can be accessed through WorkCover NSW, www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or telephone 13 10 50.

2.5.1 Requirement for an Asbestos Plan

Home Modifications services may encounter asbestos in a large number of homes in which they provide service, particularly those built prior to 1995. There are legislated requirements to protect those living and working with Asbestos. Services will need to

become familiar with these requirements, outlined on the Work Cover website at: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au and ensure they have a documented Asbestos Plan.

When working with Asbestos, services should refer to the Industry Safe Work Method proforma as developed by the NSW Home Maintenance and Modifications State Council at www.nswhmms.org Further information and resources regarding asbestos can be found in Section 3.

2.6 Vehicles policy

It is desirable that Home Modification service provider vehicles are set up as mobile workshops/storerooms to afford the greatest flexibility and efficiency in delivering home modification services in the community. Services should develop their own policies on this issue.

2.6.1 Transport of tools, equipment and hardware items

An enclosed van or vehicle equipped with shelves and drawers to carry tools and equipment and hardware items is recommended for Home Modification services. Equipment such as a mobile welder, pipe threading set, pipe vice and pipe bender can be carried to the job site in a van and work such as fabricating and installing handrails completed at one visit. Transporting bulky and large equipment in the sedan boots of cars may represent an occupational health and safety risk. Occupational Health and Safety policies for Home Modification services should include guidelines on the transport and manual handling of tools, equipment and hardware items including specifically, the transport of ladders, pipes and timber and bulk materials.

2.6.2 Security/operational issues

Home Modification services are responsible for the management and care of HACC funded vehicles. Policies and practices should be in place that inform employees, volunteers and organisational members of their responsibilities when using the Home Modification service vehicle.

The policies and procedures should cover items such as use, depreciation, garaging, accident reporting, care of the vehicle, recording travel time and purchase of petrol.

2.6.3 Types of vehicle

The choice of vehicle is at the discretion of the Home Modification service; however, it must meet occupational health and safety standards. It is recognised that distance travelled, road conditions and terrain will have an influence on the type of vehicle purchased.

2.6.4 Funding of vehicles

The following provides a summary of funding of vehicles for Home Modification services:

Initial capital costs	Home Modification services with permanent paid Builders, Tradespersons or Handypersons are eligible on establishment of the service for a, non-recurrent grant to purchase a vehicle.
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Running costs	Running costs are met through the Home Modification service recurrent grant. This is for the full running costs of the vehicle (i.e. including depreciation).
Replacement costs	Home Modification services are responsible for replacing their vehicle. They are expected to reserve some of their recurrent funding for this purpose. Services should refer to their yearly acquittal packages for information on vehicle replacement options available.

The timing of vehicle replacement is at the discretion of the Home Modification service.

2.7 Contracts

All work performed by Home Modification services, where the total cost is more than \$1,000, will require a contract to be signed by all parties before the work can commence. In cases where the client is a child in the parental care of the Minister for Community services (State Ward) the contract will be with the Department of Community Services. The New South Wales Office of Fair Trading Home Building service stipulates the following requirements for contracts¹:

- The contract must show the date and signatures of both the contractor and home owner;
- The contract must show the name of the contractor and the client, the contractor's licence details (the name on the licence card and licence number), the plans and specifications and any relevant warranties that are required by the Home Building Act;
- The contract price must be prominently displayed on the front page, and there must be a warning if it is subject to change;
- The contractor must give the client a copy of the contract within five working days of entering the contract;
- There can be no compulsory arbitration clause in the home building contract;
- There must be a clear statement setting out the cooling-off period of five clear business days within which the home owner may cancel the contract, applicable to contracts valued at over \$12,000;
- The contractor must provide the home owner with a copy of the Consumer building guide and the home owner must provide a statement of acknowledgment that they have read and understood the Consumer building guide and completed the checklist therein. Notably, the client guide does not have to be provided if the contract is required to be completed urgently so as to rectify a hazard, or potential hazard, to the health or safety of people or to prevent substantial damage to property; and
- The builder must provide certain warranties about the work, the materials used, compliance with the law, completion time, and that the dwelling is fit to live in. These warranties will last for seven years from the completion of the work.

¹ From New South Wales Office of Fair Trading website: <http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au>

The NSW Home Modifications and Maintenance State Council has developed a contract specifically for Home Modification services, in consultation with the New South Wales Office of Fair Trading. It is necessary for all Home Modification services to use this contract when they perform work with a total value of greater than \$1,000 at market value. The contract is designed to meet the requirements of the New South Wales Office of Fair Trading and the Home Building Act. A copy of the contract and guidelines for its use can be obtained from the NSW Home Modifications Maintenance State Council.

3 Resources

3.1 Home and Community Care Program

- **Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care**
Web: <http://www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au/DADHC.htm>
Phone (02) 8270 2000
- **NSW Home Maintenance and Home Modification State Council**
Web: www.nswhmms.org
Phone: (02) 6622 8386
- **NSW Home Modifications Information Clearinghouse:** - hosted by HSNet and provides home maintenance information and support services to providers of Home Maintenance services in NSW as well as consumer target groups
Web: www.homemods.info

3.2 Asbestos related information

- **Your Guide to Working with Asbestos published by WorkCover NSW – March 2003**
Web: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
- **Asbestos Codes of Practice and Guidance – An Introduction published by the Australian Safety and Compensation Council – June 2006**
Web: www.ascc.gov.au
- **Asbestos Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos – published by the Australian Safety and Compensation Council – June 2006**
Web: www.ascc.gov.au
- **Asbestos Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in the Workplace – published by the Australian Safety and Compensation Council – June 2006**
Web: www.ascc.gov.au
- **NSW Electrical Industry Asbestos Awareness Committee (EIAAC) – Minor Works on Electrical Mounting Boards for domestic and Commercial Metering/Electrical Installations – published by WorkCover NSW 2002**
Web: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
- **Guidelines to Working on Electrical Meter Panels Identified as Containing Asbestos – published by WorkCover NSW 2002**
Web: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

3.2.1 NSW TAFE Courses

- **Asbestos Management and Control in the Workplace:**
Web: www.tafensw.edu.au
- **Asbestos Removal (Friable Asbestos):**
Web: www.tafensw.edu.au

- **Bonded Asbestos Removal (Electrical)**
Web: www.tafensw.edu.au
- **Bonded Asbestos Removal (Construction)**
Web: www.tafensw.edu.au
- **Bonded Asbestos Sheet Removal**
Web: www.tafensw.edu.au

3.3 Additional useful sources

- **Volunteer Management resources:**
 - ♦ The School of Volunteer Management
Web: <http://www.svm.net.au>
 - ♦ Volunteering NSW Centre for Volunteering
Web: <http://www.volunteering.com.au>
 - ♦ Safetyworks Australia – for details on OH&S induction programs for volunteers
Web: www.safetyworks.com.au
- **NSW Office of Fair Trading**

General contacts	13 32 20
Specialised services	13 14 50
Teletypewriter Phone Numbers (TTY)	(02) 9338 4943
- **Regional and other service direct contact links:**
Web: <http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au>
- **NSW Department of Health:** - For information about the Program of Appliances for Disabled People (PADP)
Web: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au>

Appendix A

Landlord consent form

Name		(Landlord)
Address		
	Postcode	
Telephone Number		
I am the owner of the property located at:		
Address		
	Postcode	
Which is tenanted by:		
I hereby give permission for modification / maintenance works to be carried out for the tenant as listed below:		
Landlord's Signature	Date	

Appendix B

Home Modification Assessment Panel Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Preamble

The Home and Community Care (HACC) Program is a joint Commonwealth /State initiative to facilitate care in the community of frail aged, people with disabilities who are at risk of premature or inappropriate long term residential care.

The target population of HACC program as defined by the Commonwealth /State agreement is:

- Frail older persons with moderate, to severe disabilities or profound.
- Younger disabled persons, being persons with moderate, severe, or profound disabilities.
- The carers of the persons.
- Such other classes of persons as are agreed upon by the Commonwealth and State Ministers.

A person is considered to have a moderate or severe disability if he or she has been assessed as having difficulty in performing the tasks of daily living, such as dressing, preparing meals, house cleaning, home maintenance or using public transport - without personal assistance, supervision or appropriate environment equipment.

Services should meet the needs of, and provide equitable access as required by special needs groups within the broad HACC target population outlined above such as:

- People from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Persons suffering from dementia or related disorders
- Those frail aged people or people with disabilities living in remote and isolated areas.
- Financially disadvantaged persons.

Structure of the Home Modification Assessment Panel

Each member of the Home Modification Assessment Panel (“the Panel”) will be registered and approved by the Level 2 Home Modification Service convening the Panel, to ensure that membership and HACC Guidelines are met.

The Panel will have a Chairperson who will be responsible for the convening and conduction of panel meetings according to HACC Guidelines, Panel Terms of Reference and Guidelines set down by the Level 2 Home Modification Service.

All panel meetings will record minutes of proceedings and provide a copy to the Level 2 Home Modification Service.

All members will have a vote in the decision making process, irrespective of the number of representatives. In the case of a tied vote the Chairperson will cast a deciding vote.

The Panel will be responsible and accountable to the Level 2 Home Modification Service, and will function according to HACC Principles and Guidelines.

Purpose of the Panel

- To ensure that appropriate modification services are provided to the homes of the HACC target population.
- To evaluate each application for the modifications in terms of the appropriateness of the modification recommended, whether the proposed modifications will achieve the stated goals/outcomes for the client and are within HACC and Home Modifications Guidelines.
- To advise the Level 3 Home Modification Service which applications are recommended for funding.
- To assess applications and determine priorities based on agreed/approved criteria of need, urgency and other factors. In accordance with the HACC Guidelines for Home Modification and Maintenance Services – ‘Prioritisation of Request for Service’ P 29 – 30.
- To consider, assess and advise the Level 3 Home Modification Service on the provision of financial assistance to potential clients of the service and to prioritise financial assistance for applicants under the service.
- In extenuating circumstances, to consider and recommend reimbursement of costs incurred on home modifications by a HACC client.
- To consider the application for modifications which fall outside the Guidelines of home modification services with a view to individual circumstances of each client and/or their carers.
- To ensure that decisions for home modifications are consistent with Occupation Health and Safety guidelines.
- To monitor the use of Level 2 Home Modification Service budget.
- To ensure access to home modifications within the region between all groups within the HACC target population.
- To monitor and re-evaluate the progress and direction of the service.
- To prepare and present to the Level 3 Home Modification Service an Annual Report.
- Review the Terms of Reference every year and update as necessary.

Tenure of the Panel Members

Each external member of the Panel will be invited by the Level 2 Home Modification Service or nominated by an appropriate consumer group for a period of two years, after which they will be given the opportunity to renew their commitment to maintain continuity, changes in personnel should be on a staggered basis.

Meeting Times

Meetings will be held by mutual agreement based on demand with a minimum of quarterly meeting. At times it may be more appropriate to have a phone link up or individual applications may be faxed or emailed to panel members.

Roles of Community Members

Participate as part of the Panel consistent with purposes identified, including:

- Represent the voice of the consumer target groups on the Panel.
- Provide advice to the Panel on issues regarding access and use of the home modification service that may need to be given consideration in the delivery of the service.

Roles of the Occupational Therapists Members

Participate as part of the Panel consistent with purposes identified, including:

- Assist and provide advise to RTO and the Panel on alternative options which may address the needs of a particular client
- Evaluate each application so that modifications recommended are appropriate to the client's current and possible future functional requirements, based on their disability and advice received from their OT or medical practitioner.
- Liaise with the referring OT regarding queries or issues surrounding the application.
- Provide advice to the Panel on issues regarding access and use of home modification service that may need to be given consideration in the delivery of the service.

Roles of the Regional Technical Officer

Participate as part of the Panel consistent with purposes identified, including:

- To nominate a range of available dates to conduct home visits to clients when required.
- To evaluate and establish the individual modifications and associated maintenance needs of clients with the OT, the client, their carer and /or advocate when required. To evaluate specifications and report on modifications and estimated cost of jobs.
- To evaluate applications and specifications and report to the panel on the viability and estimated cost of same.
- To liaise with Councils and submit development applications when required.
- To call for quotes from appropriate sub-contractors for completion of work for approved applicants and to discuss the specific requirements with contractors when necessary.
- To supervise the modifications works in progress when required.
- To complete final inspection of jobs when required.
- To authorize variations and progress payments where required.
- To monitor the budget, in conjunction with the Coordinator / Book keeper of the Level 3 Home Modification Service.

- To prepare statistical information and reports when required.
- To obtain satisfaction reports from clients as necessary.

Roles of the Level 2 Home Modification Service

- Participate as part of the Panel and its decision making process consistent with the purposes identified.
- Be responsible for the expenditure of the funds for Level 2 home modifications.
- Provide advice and consult with OTs on urgent jobs between panel meetings.
- Arrange times and venues for meetings. Prepare agenda and ensure all relevant documentation and papers are prepared for panel meetings.
- Be responsible for the taking of and distribution of minutes of meeting.
- Follow up and ensure that issues for the next meeting are addressed.
- Advise on policy and budget constraints.
- Provide feedback to the Panel on development of the Service and on the receipt and progress of applications.
- Prepare an Annual Report in conjunction with the Panel.

Appeals Mechanism

In the event that a client wishes to appeal the decision of the Panel, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. A letter should be sent by the appellant, their carer or advocate to the Panel, protesting the decision and asking for reconsideration of the application. Any further relevant details applicable to the case should be included in the appeal.
2. This letter is to go to the whole of the Panel for further consideration of the additional details of the circumstances. If the decision remains not to assist the applicant, the client must be informed of this, and given the reason why the application was not approved.
3. If the client is not satisfied with the decision then the procedure of appeals mechanism of the Level 3 Home Modification Service will then be followed, including appeal to the Management Committee or independent mediator.
or to:

Commissioner for Community Services
Level 3,
Chambers Street,
Surry Hills NSW 2010.
Phone (Free call) 1800 060 409