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Specialist Review Panel Terms of Reference

Authored by
the Home Modification Information Clearinghouse

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Contents

Introduction	4
Aims	4
Objectives	5
Procedure	5
Publication Audience	6

Tables

Table 1	Specialist Review Panel and Target Audience for HMinfo Document	7
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Introduction

The Home Modification Information Clearinghouse (HMInfo) develops and publishes a wide range of research-based documents on issues relevant to home modification.

These documents include:

- Occasional Papers;
- Summary Bulletins;
- Evidence Based Practice Reviews; and
- Consumer and Industry Factsheets and Checklists.

These documents are published on the HMInfo website www.homemods.info, and are accessible to any site user.

Prior to the publication of these research documents, HMInfo have a policy of undertaking a review process. The reviews are performed by Specialist Review Panels, whose members provide their expertise and feedback on documents.

The Specialist Review Panels are comprised of three regular panels of four to seven members: the Consumer Panel, Industry Panel, and Research Panel. These panels provide specialist advice and represent the viewpoint of a wide range of stakeholders. Accordingly, panel membership aims to include members with various backgrounds and experiences. For example, the Consumer Panel may include representatives for people with vision or hearing impairment, intellectual disability, mobility impairment, neurological impairment and older people. Similarly, the Industry Panel should include occupational therapists, designers, architects, builders, and other industry-relevant trades people. At times, publications may require the co-opting of people with specific speciality or expertise as guest expert reviewers. These participants are not required to provide ongoing peer review as in the case of the regular Specialist Review Panel members.

Aims

The Specialist Review Panels provide HMInfo with the expertise for a comprehensive review process for their published documents. The review aims to fulfill the function of a traditional academic peer-review of HMInfo documents by researchers in the same field. However, the review also contributes the valuable knowledge of experts in other fields, including design, building and healthcare, as well as the experiences of people with a wide range of disabilities.

Objectives

- To ensure that documents prepared by the HMinfo team and published on the HMinfo website are technically accurate, while maintaining the readability of documents, and relevance for target audience.
- To ensure the research on which the documents are based are academically rigorous.

Procedure

Prior to publishing an HMinfo document, a Specialist Review Panel will review and comment on the draft document. The process for sending a document for review is:

- Develop shortlist of potential reviewers from the [Specialist Review Panel list](#) on the HMinfo website.
- Identify expert reviewers who are relevant to the particular document, and add to the shortlist.
- Send a letter to potential reviewers outlining:
 - details of research project and the document;
 - why they have been selected as a reviewer;
 - requirements for the review;
 - duration of the review (usually three weeks);
 - confidentiality and copyright of: all documents prior to their posting on the website, draft versions of documents, and review documents and feedback;
 - acknowledgement of the Specialist Review Panel in the final published document;
 - date to confirm their participation in the review;
 - how to obtain the [Feedback Form](#) on the HMinfo website.
- Email the PDF document and the Feedback Form as attachments, to each reviewer. The document can also be provided in alternative formats if required.

The Project Director and research assistants are available to answer queries regarding the documents under review. The anticipated response time for reviewers is three weeks (15 working days) from receipt of the document.

The HMinfo team collates and reviews the comments received from the Specialist Review Panel, with the document amended as required. The HMinfo Advisory Committee will review the modified document for final comments. It is the responsibility of the HMinfo team to ensure the consistency of each type of research-based

document in their suite of publications. As such, decisions relating to final document presentation lie with the HMinfo team.

Each HMinfo publication includes an acknowledgement of the members of the Specialist Review Panel, in the front of the document and/or on the HMinfo website.

The inaugural term for membership of the Research Panel, Industry Panel, and Consumer Panel, is 18 months. Subsequent terms will be 12 month periods. Panel members who do not actively contribute (when requested) in a 12 month period may be asked to step down by the HMinfo Director.

Publication Audience

The different types of research-based documents that are published by HMinfo have some variation in their target audiences. The target audience has a direct influence on the writing of the document and on the composition of the Specialist Review Panel. The target audience and the relevant Specialist Review Panel for each document type are outlined in Table 1.

Document	Target Audience	Specialist Review Panel
<p>Evidence Based Research / Systematic Reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to support evidence based practice in the provision of home modification and maintenance. • The reviews result from an extensive search of relevant literature including academic research papers and industry publications. • The research question is defined and criteria for inclusion and exclusion of documents are determined. • Critical review of the documents identified in the literature search is against these criteria to optimize validity, reliability and identify commonalities in the results. • Presentation of the review findings includes recommendations for best practice. 	<p>Researchers, academics. Professionals such as occupational therapists and architects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Panel • Industry Panel • Consumer Panel • Guest Expert Reviewers
<p>Industry Factsheets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include guidelines for practice and a checklist. • The guidelines provide supplementary information for the checklist. • The authors assume that readers have a basic familiarity with regulatory documents. • The publications provide technical information that supports the decision making process in the design / redesign for home modification and maintenance. • They do not provide an exhaustive list of building regulations but reference relevant documents. 	<p>Architects, builders, development approval authorities, occupational therapists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry Panel • Guest Expert Reviewers

Document	Target Audience	Specialist Review Panel
<p>Consumer Factsheets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information that supports consumers making informed decision regarding modifications to their home. • This information enables improved communication of the consumer with building professionals and occupational therapists. • The fact sheets include details on where to find further information or assistance. 	<p>People with a disability, carers, companions, other people interested in issues relating to disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer Panel • Guest Expert Reviewers
<p>Occasional Papers and Summary Bulletins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research publications produced by the HMinfo team that are based on methodologies other than Systematic Reviews 	<p>Researchers, academics.</p> <p>Architects, builders, development approval authorities, occupational therapists.</p> <p>People with a disability, carers, companions, other people interested in issues relating to disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Panel • Industry Panel • Consumer Panel • Guest Expert Reviewers

Table 1 Specialist Review Panel and Target Audience for HMinfo Document