



The University of Sydney

Faculties of Health Sciences and Architecture

The Home Modification: Information Clearinghouse Project

NEWSLETTER

www.homemods.info

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Our stated mission is “to develop a leading edge Home Modification information clearinghouse project designed with the assistance of, and accessible to, the full range of industry and consumer target groups.”

Feature Article: Funding options for Home Modifications.

One of the biggest barriers to undertaking access modifications in privately owned homes is the expense. There are a number of options that can be considered if someone does not have the funds to modify a property. Always discuss the situation with a legal advisor, case manager or occupational therapist prior to proceeding with home modification planning. A helpful checklist is available at [The HMinfo website](http://www.homemods.info).

Compensable Clients: Many clients do not realize they are able to request modifications as a result of disability or impairment if they are being managed under an compensation or insurance claim, Lifetime Care / TAC (or equivalent) or the Department of Veterans Affairs. These situations usually require a comprehensive assessment and recommendation list by an occupational therapist and quotes to be obtained prior to work commencing.

Personal Loans: Most banks, building societies and credit union have personal loans options for small amounts for things like home renovation. If you have a significant amount of equity in your home, it may be worth considering the reverse mortgage or asset loan concept. Asset lend is a loan against your home or investment property with a self declaration that the loan will not cause you any hardship, no financials required up to 70% of the value of your home. Asset loans are generally used by senior people over 50 years of age who may still be doing some form of part time work which may be on a self employed basis.

Companies like Australian Seniors Finance may be able to assist but should be discussed with your legal or financial advisor first.

Home & Community Care (HACC) Home Modification Services: The State and Federal Governments fund a home modification and maintenance service through the Department of Aging, Disability and HomeCare (DADHC). Each state has a slightly different way of managing these services so it is best to contact the HACC service provider in your area or an occupational therapist to ensure the service is available to meet your specific circumstances. All Home Modification services work in accordance with the National Program Guidelines for HACC and, as such, a person will not be refused service due to financial hardship. All clients are asked to contribute to the cost of all materials and a subsidised hourly rate in accordance with the NSW Services Type Guidelines for Home & Community Care – Home Modifications. All HACC Home Modifications must be recommended by a qualified occupational therapist.

For more information on the NSW Guidelines press ctrl +click [here](#).

For more information on NSW Home Modification & Maintenance Services press ctrl +click [here](#).

Accessing Superannuation: Under the APRA guidelines, modifications to the family home and/or vehicle to meet the special needs of a disabled member or his/her disabled dependant is considered a valid reason for accessing superannuation early. Fund trustees and RSA

providers can also release of benefits on grounds of permanent incapacity. The trustee or RSA provider must be satisfied that the applicant is permanently incapacitated before a release can be made. Terminally ill superannuation fund members who do not meet any other ground can apply to have their preserved superannuation benefits released tax free subject to meeting certain conditions. Applications for release of benefits in these circumstances should be made directly to your superannuation fund. Pending legislative changes, trustees and RSA providers will need to seek an exemption from the current Regulations in order to release benefits from a fund or RSA to terminally ill members who do not meet another condition of release. For more information go to the APRA website by clicking [here](#).

Charitable Organisations: These include, but are not limited to, Rotary International, Lions Club, Zonta etc. These organisations are good for long term planning as most require significant lead time as they raise the funds as required and usually do not have a large amount of cash in reserve.

Demographic specific funding agencies: There are some agencies that operate specifically to support a particular sector of the community (such as ethnic, social, diagnosis or age specific groups) and can assist with small, one off amount to cover costs of modifications where other options have not been successful. You can click [here](#) for a website that lists some organisations who assist particular groups but there are many others; discuss this with your occupational therapist as they are most likely to have some ideas of who would be best placed to help in the particular circumstance.

New HMinfo Publications:

Designing home environments for people who experience problems with cognition and who display aggressive or self-injurious behaviours.

An excerpt: There is little specific information about the design requirements of the physical home environment for those who experience problems with cognition and who display aggressive or self-injurious behaviour. An

initial literature review was conducted about the needs of and current design of homes of people who experience problems with cognition who display aggressive or self-injurious behaviour. Nine guidelines have been highlighted to assist in the design of optimum home environments for this population.

Aggressive behaviour is a form of agitated behaviour, however, not all agitated behaviours are aggressive (Carlson, Fleming, Smith, & Evans, 1995). Aggression also falls under the umbrella terms “challenging behaviour” and “problem behaviour” (Sigafoos, Arthur, & O’Reilly, 2003), but, again, other behaviours are included in these definitions. In the case of those with dementia or developmental disability, aggressive and self-injurious behaviours may be adaptive and functional, usually an attempt to communicate whatever the person feels that they need or want, eg, removal from the unpleasant environment, attention, etc (Fisher & Swingen, 1997; McVilly, 2002). However, the behaviours are ultimately problematic due to the risk of physical harm to either themselves or to others.

Aversive environmental stimuli have been known to result in self-injurious behaviour and aggressive behaviour and this review suggests that a person who experiences problems with cognition is less able to effectively receive and process stimuli in the environment and is less tolerant of stimulation than a person who does not experience such problems. Consequently, environments designed for this group of people need to be designed in such a way as to minimise known stressors within the environment. These stressors include: glare, noise, clutter, inappropriate temperature and crowded spaces.

Design variables that have been identified by the review:

- Reduction of known stressors
- Keep the environment free of complexity
- Balance between over and under stimulation

- Facilitating use of preventive and reactive support strategies
- Must be flexible and afford opportunities for choice and control
- Physically safe
- Features with a history of being damaged need to be made durable or removed
- Accommodate staff/family support
- Home-like design needs to blend in with the community.

References:

Carlson, D. L., Fleming, K. C., Smith, G. E., & Evans, J. M. (1995). Management of dementia-related behavioral disturbances: A nonpharmacologic approach. *Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research*, 70(11), 1108-1115.

Fisher, J. E., & Swingen, D. N. (1997). Contextual factors in the assessment and management of aggression in dementia patients. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 4(1), 171-190.

McVilly, K. R. (2002). *Positive Behaviour Support for People with Intellectual Disability: Evidence-Based Practice, Promoting Quality of Life*. Putney: The Australian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability.

Sigafoos, J., Arthur, M., & O'Reilly, M. (2003). *Challenging Behavior and Developmental Disability*. London: Whurr Publishers Lt.

The full evidence based practice review is available from the Hminfo website by clicking [here](#).

Gardening at Home Summary Bulletin.

An excerpt:

Backyards of private homes are often an overlooked area of home modifications; in fact, academic literature rarely records the garden as a part of the home (Bhatti, 2006). There is marked lack of information relating to the design of outdoor spaces for the aged (Cranz & Young, 2005), yet the garden is considered (after kitchens and bathrooms) as one of the spaces most renovated and modified in Australian homes (KPMG, 2006).

There are a number of advantages of gardening for people of all ages. Benefits include the development of fine and gross motor skills, exercise, pleasure for the senses, self-esteem building through gardening accomplishments, and the social benefits of mingling with other gardeners (Heath & Gifford, 2001; Willox, 2002). Research conducted by the University of Liverpool (Ashley, 2005) found that gardening had a positive effect on physical and mental

wellbeing, and gave the opportunity for participants to feel included, to socialise, and to boost their confidence in a task.

While the outdoor environment can be daunting for people with physical and sensory impairments, it can also be designed to suit and challenge the gardener's abilities. A personalised garden enables people with disabilities, in particular, control over their environment (Larson, Hanchek, & Vollmar, 1996). The design and building of a garden can be challenging and expensive and can seem to be the realm of professional landscapers and gardeners. With some practical tips for garden design, however, consumers and their families can take charge of designing and building gardens themselves.

References:

Ashley, A., Brown, S., Darwin, P & Hockburn, S. (2005). *The Role of Gardening in Everyday Life*. Liverpool: The Department of Geography, The University of Liverpool.

Bhatti, M. (2006). 'When I'm in the garden I can create my own paradise': Homes and gardens in later life. *The Sociological Review*, 54(2), 318-341.

Cranz, G., & Young, C. (2005). The Role of Design in Inhibiting or Promoting Use of Common Open Space: The Case of Redwood Gardens, Berkeley, CA. *Journal of Housing for the Elderly*, 19(3/4), 71-93.

Heath, Y., & Gifford, R. (2001). Post-Occupancy Evaluation of Therapeutic Gardens in a Multi-Level Care Facility for the Aged. *Activities, Adaptation & Aging*, 25(2), 21-43.

KPMG. (2006). *Draft report on existing HACC models in NSW: Home Modification and Maintenance*: Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care.

Larson, J., Hanchek, A., & Vollmar, P. (1996). *Accessible Gardening for Therapeutic Horticulture*: University of Minnesota Extension.

Willox, M. (2002). Adapting a garden for arthritis: Colorado State University.

The full article can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Latest Events & Training

- HMinfo Clearinghouse Advisory Committee Meeting 13th March 2008.
- Yooralla Accessible Buildings & Environment Training 10/11 April 2008.
- OT AUSTRALIA National Conference September 2008 – abstracts due NOW!

Ctrl+Click on the word to go to listed events and training

Publications Review:

Introduction to Kitchen Planning.

Published by HIA Ltd. Go to hia.com.au
RRP: Members \$16.50 / Non Members \$33



This simple to follow book would be an asset to any person or team who is starting to delve into the world of kitchen modification. The publication includes information on space planning, layouts, work zones and traffic flow, storage needs and options and materials and finishes.

Each section has explanations of what various jargon words mean, or describe the materials so layperson would be able to apply the information as well as a tradesperson.

It also takes into consideration general ergonomic principles and the fact that most appliances do not have a 'standard' size! The client survey form in the appendix would be a helpful tool for anyone planning a kitchen, but particularly as a prompt for the needs of people with access difficulties and mobility problems.

Guide to Kitchen & Bathroom Construction - Edition 2.

Published by HIA Ltd. Go to hia.com.au
RRP: Members \$16.50 / Non Members \$33



This slim 80 page book is the Housing Industry Association's guide to constructing kitchens and bathrooms. and refers to the minimum standards and guidelines where they exist. The purpose of the Guide is to provide general industry guidance and to outline reasonable standards and tolerances for kitchen and bathroom construction and

installation work, where such standards and tolerances are not articulated by the contract documents are not prescribed in the relevant state or territory Statutory Authority's legislation (such as the Home Building Act and Regulations in NSW) or the Building Code of Australia (BCA).

It covers a comprehensive range of topics in each area, e.g. power point and switch restriction zones in bathrooms, in simple easy to follow language and provides suggestions for further reading if required by the user. The appendices are comprehensive without being overwhelming.

The publication is simply laid out and easy to read and the graphics are clear and easy to read. This publication would not be out of place in either a tradesperson's ute or on a designer's bookshelf.

As this is a HIA publication, there are a number of advertisements for HIA products and services and those of their corporate sponsors throughout but these are not intrusive.

New Publications:

- [Research on environmental determinants and interventions in the home pertaining to aggressive and self-injurious behaviour of people with a cognitive impairment](#)
- Grabrail self-installation leaflet – out soon
- Modification or Relocation: Summary Bulletin – out soon
- Home Water Management: Summary Bulletin – out soon
- [Gardening at Home: Summary Bulletin](#)
- Research on the cost-benefits of caring at home – out soon

Ctrl+Click on an underlined publication to go straight to it!

News Updates: New AS/NZS

3000:2007, *Electrical installations* (known as the Wiring Rules).

Every day the National Wiring Rules brings safety to our lives. As industry embraces innovative technologies, wiring systems are becoming even safer, more reliable and cost-effective. Developed by industry experts and published by Standards Australia, the Wiring Rules specifies the minimum set of electrical safety rules and requirements for the design, construction and testing of electrical installations. Completely revised since the 2000 edition, this Standard specifies electrical installation safety requirements for all premises in Australia. With over 450 pages, it expands coverage on electrical installations, improves safeguards and ensures Australian electrical installations remain in-line with best contemporary practice.

Featured Web Site: CHAA

<http://www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/chaa/>

The Centre for Health Assets Australasia (CHAA) was established in 2005 to undertake research and development work in the area of health asset and facility management. The Centre is hosted by the Faculty of the Built Environment and is based at the University of New South Wales, Kensington campus.

The Faculty rollovers across the top of the screen provides some good insights into some of the opportunities and activities of the faculty, and subsequent research and publications however the CHAA download menu on the right hand side of the welcome screen provides access to more targeted resources and publications.

CHAA has three major programs of research;

1. [Standards and Guidelines](#)
2. [Benchmarking and Evaluation](#) and
3. [Capacity Building](#) and each section has a number of publications available to download.

The resources section (left side menu on welcome and subsequent pages) provides a wide range of publications, many able to be downloaded directly. The links and references section is excellent and provides a further range of external publications useful to anyone in health facility design, conducting research or planning to move into this area.

The website is simply structured and uncluttered with a limited amount of graphics thus does not visually obscure what is available. However, this site was not able to be read using standard accessibility software tools, nor was there any obvious option to easily increase font size or to access alternate text.

HMinfo Clearinghouse Staff

Tanja von Behrens recently left the HMinfo Clearinghouse team to undertake adventures in the Northern Territory. John Pimping and Katrina Chaudhary are also moving on to undertake new professional challenges. Lyndal Millikan is taking some time off with her second child and will be replaced by Andrew Clark for the next 3-4 months. Dr Katy Bridge, Maree Porter, Dr Navit Gohar and Yong-Moon Jung remain to keep the Clearinghouse ticking over.

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