

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

Home maintenance

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 Maintenance

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

1.1 Definition

Home Maintenance refers to assistance by the agency with the maintenance and repair of the person's home, garden or yard to keep their home in a safe and habitable condition. Home maintenance includes minor dwelling repairs and maintenance, such as changing light bulbs, carpentry and painting, or replacing tap washers as well as some more major dwelling repairs such as replacing guttering or other roof repairs. Home maintenance also includes garden maintenance, such as lawn mowing and the removal of rubbish.

1.2 Aims of Home Maintenance

The aims of Home Maintenance services are to provide affordable and basic Home Maintenance services to the HACC target population that:

- increase the independence of individuals;
- reduce health and safety risks for clients, carers and care workers;
- reduce the cost of providing services or delay the transition to other higher cost care options; and
- contribute to the provision of a package of co-ordinated home and community care services to the HACC population.

1.3 Who can be assisted?

Home Maintenance services may be available to clients who meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the NSW Guidelines for Home and Community Care (HACC) Funded Services (for access to HACC services) and who require assistance in the form of Home Maintenance services to enable them to continue to remain living at home.

Both older people and younger people with disabilities should be screened on the basis of need for basic maintenance and support services.

The type of assistance provided varies from place to place, depending on the needs and abilities of individuals and the priorities service providers set in response to local conditions. For example, the clearing of long grass in a high fire danger area may have a high priority in some rural areas, whereas in the metropolitan area, lawn mowing may not be a high priority.

Palliative Care clients may be eligible for Home Maintenance where they have a functional disability arising from their condition or treatment.

Exclusions apply for rented premises, secondary residences and new homes. Details are outlined in Section 1.8 of these guidelines.

1.4 Home Maintenance activities that may be provided

The following is a description of the range of Home Maintenance activities which may be delivered through Home Maintenance services. In NSW, Home Maintenance services have been established across two overlapping service areas:

- Home Maintenance; and
- Home Maintenance – where only gardening and lawn mowing are delivered.

Funding to provide these services may be identified separately in funding agreements.

1.4.1 Home Maintenance

Home Maintenance activities may include:

- Minor carpentry (e.g. windows, including sashes, doors, floors, cladding, security devices);
- Minor plumbing/drainage (e.g. washers, cisterns, minor leaks and blockages);
- Other plumbing/drainage (e.g. pumping septic tanks, replacing a section of guttering where there is a safety/access issue, installing hot water supply);
- Minor electrical (e.g. fuses, light globes, replacing switches, replacing stove elements);
- Other electrical (e.g. replacing hot water heaters);
- External maintenance (e.g. fences, gates, paths, one-off yard and rubbish clearance, cleaning of gutters);
- Sections of roofing (e.g. tiles, corrugated iron, flashings);
- Repair of appliances, fittings and furniture (e.g. kitchen cupboards, chair backs);
- Other maintenance (e.g. glazing, plastering, bricklaying, chimney cleaning, internal and external painting);
- Yard clearance and other fire safety measures for clients in bush-fire prone areas;
- Other clean-ups of house and garden to enable a HACC service to commence.
- Liaising with other service providers regarding assessment of an individual's needs and identification of maintenance work to meet that person's requirements; and
- Scoping, costing and planning maintenance work, sourcing appropriate materials and suitably qualified tradespeople and handypersons in accordance with agreed quality standards for the building industry and the HACC program.

Home Maintenance services do not cover structural changes such as the installation of grab rails. However, a range of modifications/adjustments to furniture or fittings to improve ease of use may be offered. These may include:

- Installation of appliances (e.g. night lights, bath/shower seats);
- Adjustment to appliances (e.g. adjusting temperature on hot water systems);
- Safety adjustments (e.g. making cords, rugs etc safe); and
- Furniture/fittings adjustments (e.g. lowering height of tables, installing “pulleys” for curtains).

1.4.2 Home Maintenance – gardening and lawn mowing

Home Maintenance refers to assistance with maintenance of service users’ gardens and yards to help keep the home in a safe and habitable condition. Activities include:

- Lawn mowing;
- Garden maintenance and the removal of rubbish;
- Garden re-design to improve accessibility and to provide ease of maintenance for the service user;
- The conversion of a garden to low maintenance;
- General garden tidying up and general yard maintenance;
- For clients in bush-fire prone areas services may include yard clearance and other fire safety measures;
- Liaising with appropriate allied health providers and nurses regarding assessment of an individual’s needs and identification of maintenance work to meet that person’s requirements; and
- Scoping, costing and planning garden maintenance work, sourcing appropriate materials and suitably qualified handypersons and tradespeople in accordance with agreed quality standards for the industry and the HACC program.

This service type includes options for repetitive upkeep lawn mowing services and may be provided on a one-off or ongoing basis.

1.4.3 Upkeep services

It is recognised that requests will be made to Home Maintenance service providers to provide repetitive upkeep services, in particular, lawn mowing services and other upkeep services to maintain safety and access (e.g. upkeep of non-slip coatings). Whilst some Home Maintenance service providers are funded to provide repetitive upkeep services, the majority of services are only funded to provide a one-off service. There are various options available to services for dealing with requests for repetitive upkeep if they themselves cannot meet demand. The Home Maintenance service may refer them to:

- HACC funded services that provide upkeep lawn mowing and yard maintenance;

- Local commercial services; or
- Local service clubs, scouts or work pools who do this work on a voluntary or subsidised basis.

Home Maintenance service providers should make an effort to build up a referral network of local, reliable and reasonably priced commercial and non-commercial individuals or organisations.

In determining the range of activities provided, service providers must consider the relevant exclusions to receiving Home Maintenance service which are contained in Section 1.8.

1.4.4 Co-ordination

Where skilled labour is required, Home Maintenance providers must ensure that work carried out is done so by individuals who hold qualifications as required by relevant legislation (e.g. builder, plumber, electrician licence where required). In the case of handymen, services should ensure that licensed handymen are employed to provide handyman services.

Home Maintenance service providers may also use volunteers to perform maintenance work which does not require a licence such as lawn-mowing.

1.5 The Home Maintenance service model

Home Maintenance services are designed to provide only maintenance and repair of the client's home, garden or yard that is necessary for the safety, security and/or well being of the client. Also, to reduce levels of OH&S risks for clients, carers and care-workers to allow required support services to be provided in the individual's home.

For example, internal painting for aesthetic reasons would not be regarded as a HACC-funded activity, whereas, painting required to cover up repair work as a result of maintenance may be appropriate as a HACC funded activity.

Repetitive upkeep such as lawn mowing, garden or yard maintenance can only be offered when a service can meet demand or is funded for this purpose.

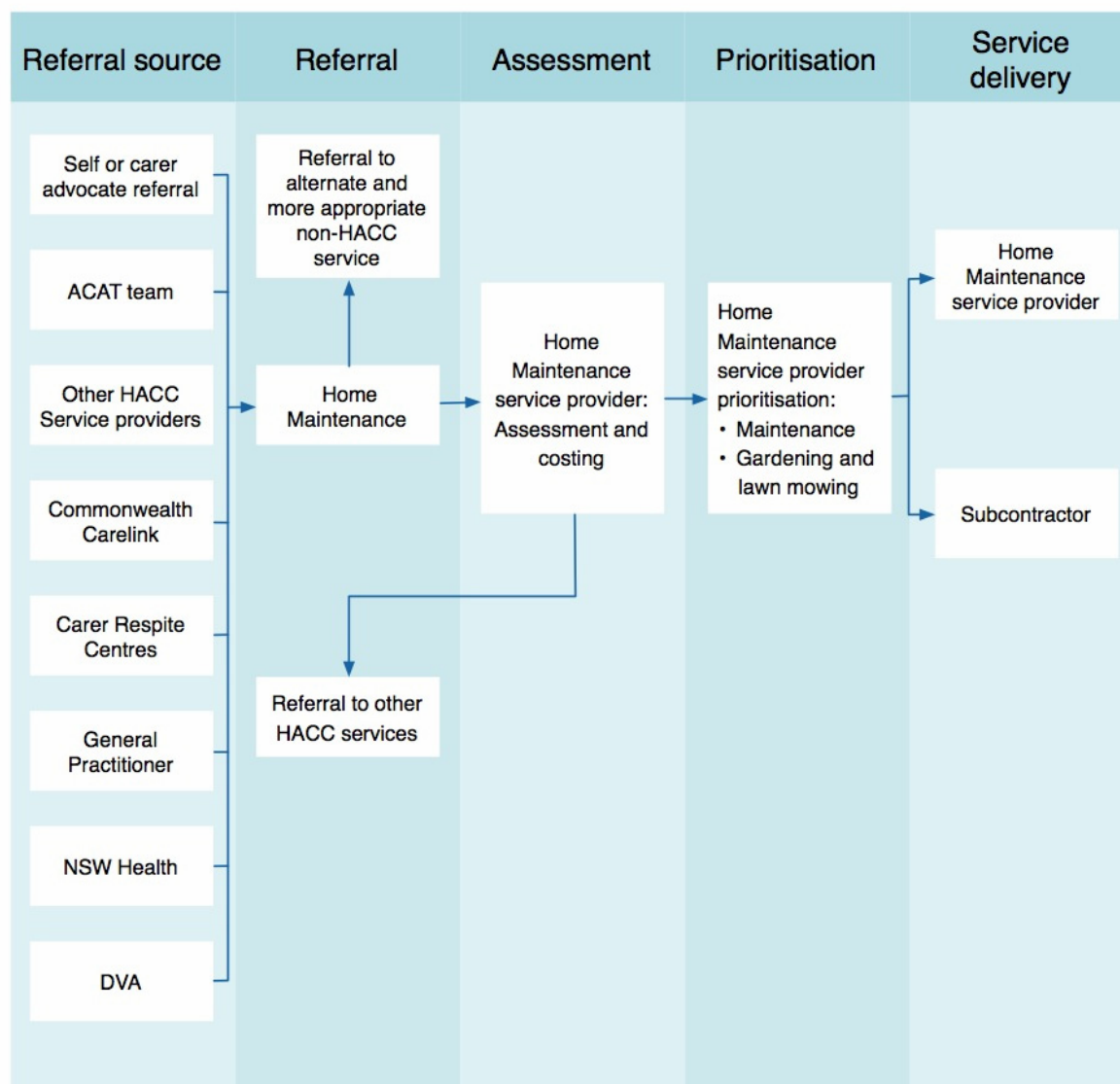
Service providers can then either undertake the work themselves, or contract the job to a local home repair service or tradesperson.

Home Maintenance services do not involve making structural changes which are provided through Home Modification services. Services outside the scope of the Home Maintenance service model should not be provided with designated Home Maintenance service funding. An example of a service that is not applicable to Home Maintenance funding (and is 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 HACC National Data Dictionary at: <http://www.health.gov.au>.

The following flow chart describes the key phases of the Home Maintenance service model.

Key phases of home maintenance model



The local Home Maintenance service is the first point of contact for lodging applications for all Home Maintenance. In many cases, these services also provide a range of home modification 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 services.

In regard to Home Maintenance, the service provider screens for eligibility for HACC services, performs an assessment of the client's needs, prioritises the referral and determines the likely cost associated with performing the required services. The

service provider then provides the service using paid staff or out-sources the service to an appropriately qualified contractor.

Home Maintenance service providers should consider the following factors when determining the complexity of a job, and should develop protocols for determining the activity required that incorporate the following factors:

- Involvement of staff: does the job require the services of staff with specific skills?
- Budgetary control: what is the risk of costs exceeding budget?
- Exploration of options for modifications or equipment that may assist the client to undertake ongoing maintenance; and
- The relative cost of the service against other service options.

1.6 Referral paths for Home Maintenance services

The major referral sources for Home Maintenance services include:

- Self referral or referral by a carer or advocate;
- Other HACC service providers;
- Local Council;
- ACAT Teams;
- General Practitioners;
- Allied Health; and
- Other agencies including Carelink.

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

- The Client Information and Referral Record (CIARR) should be the referral tool used by NSW HACC service. For more information refer to Section 3.1 of the NSW Guidelines for Home and Community Care Funded 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 open communication with the client to inform them 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 or the person empowered to make decisions on the client's behalf.

1.7 Screening and assessment for Home Maintenance services

The HACC National Service Standards, as they apply to the screening and assessment of potential clients of services, outline minimum requirements of 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 an eligible client is not provided a service, the reasons for this should be documented and should consistently comply with agency guidelines;
- Agencies which are unable to provide services to eligible 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 included in Section 3);
- Response times between referral and service delivery and between initial assessment and service delivery should be appropriate to clients' needs; and
- Individual assessments which take more than 30 minutes are reported in the HACC MDS as assessment units.

1.8 Restricted or excluded service requests

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

1.8.1 Public and private rentals

HACC-eligible tenants of public housing, boarding houses and private rented housing are restricted in the receipt of Home Maintenance services as they are not the owners of the property. They are not eligible for services where the responsibility for maintenance rests with the landlord.

The following assistance can be provided:

- Referral, advice and information;
- Adjustment services (i.e. adjustment to water temperature); and
- Minor maintenance which is not the responsibility of a landlord.

On rare occasions it may be possible to provide maintenance work 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. The following procedural guidelines should be applied:

- Where the labour and materials costs exceed \$1,000 (excluding GST) at market value and the service provider has the appropriate licence, the service enters into a contract with the landlord and tenant to do the work;
- Where the labour and materials cost less than \$1,000 (excluding GST) at market value, the service obtains written permission of the landlord to undertake work that affects the fabric of the building. An example of the consent required from a landlord to perform work on a rented property is set out in Appendix A; and
- Payment for work should be negotiated with the landlord.

1.8.2 Secondary residences

Home Maintenance services are applicable only to a HACC-eligible client's primary place of residence. Home Maintenance services are not available for secondary places of residence including holiday homes. In relation to Home Maintenance services, clients have a responsibility to nominate their primary place of residence when requesting home maintenance services, and should not seek out HACC funding for home maintenance services on additional properties.

1.8.3 New homes

Where a client is looking to purchase a new home, they should seek to ensure that the dwelling is suitable to their functional requirements such that the need for home maintenance to the dwelling following purchase is minimised. Clients purchasing new homes or carrying out major renovations would not be a priority for service. Clients purchasing new homes or carrying out major renovations could reasonably be expected to budget for any necessary ground and garden maintenance that they would not be in a position to carry out upon purchasing the home.

1.8.4 Duplication of services

HACC funded services should not duplicate services received by the individual from other government funded programs. In situations where the Home Maintenance 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 Maintenance provider are not similar to other services being provided to the same client by other government funded agencies.

For example, a client accessing Home and Garden Maintenance through the Veteran's Home Care program cannot access Home Maintenance services through the HACC program at the same time.

1.8.5 Cap for one-off maintenance services

To ensure that resources for Home Maintenance services are equitable and available to the greatest number of clients possible, DADHC imposes a cap on the delivery of one-off maintenance related services to any one individual service recipient or dwelling over a consecutive five year period. The cap is set at \$3,000 at

market value¹ per individual service recipient. The cap does not apply to approved services that involve repeated or regular occasions of service (such as lawn mowing or garden maintenance).

The only exception to the \$3,000 per five-year cap on one-off Home Maintenance services is in situations where there is an assessed risk that the safety of the applicant will be compromised unless urgent home maintenance is undertaken. In such cases services should ensure that the overall costs of the maintenance do not exceed the value of the asset being maintained and/or the cost of equivalent alternate accommodation arrangements.

1.8.6 Home Maintenance needs arising from neglect rather than disability

The provision of home maintenance services should be targeted at mitigating the immediate identified risks to the older person or person with a disability.

Maintenance 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. For example in a case where rusted gutters all around a home are causing water leakage, the Home Maintenance service could replace only those sections of gutter which are causing safety problems such as slippery surfaces. Re-guttering of the whole house would not be an appropriate HACC-funded Home Maintenance service, but could be purchased outside the of the HACC program on a fee for service basis.

1.9 Prioritising eligible clients for Home Maintenance services

Home Maintenance services should ensure there is a process for determining priority between consumers and for allocating service provision.

The HACC National Service Standards outline a minimum requirement for agencies to demonstrate assessment criteria that are clear and appropriately comprehensive for the service provided and the circumstances under which they operate. Assessment tools are also required to provide the basis for determining the ongoing relative need and priority of each consumer, as appropriate to the service.

Home Maintenance services are responsible for developing a priority of access policy to manage the allocation of available resources. Even within the limits set by the nature of the HACC target population, and the range of Home Maintenance services provided, demand for a service may outstrip available resources in an area. Home Maintenance services need criteria to assist in determining the priority of one request over another.

The prime criterion for determining priority of access to Home Maintenance services should be the degree to which the provision of the service will support the client's ability to live independently at home. This is the fundamental objective of the HACC program.

¹ This amount is subject to cost indexation. As HACC services are Goods and Services Tax (GST) exempt, this amount is exclusive of GST.

The National Program Guidelines for the Home and Community Care Program 2007 provide a framework for the development of a prioritisation policy and identify the following as being key to determining priority of access:

- The level of service to be provided given that HACC funds the provision of basic maintenance and support;
- The vulnerability of the individual to further deterioration;
- The effect of service delivery on the carer;
- The likely effect of the service provided in assisting individuals to attain their goals, for example, reduced risk of inappropriate or premature admission to residential care or maintaining quality of life in the community; and
- The effect on other existing and prospective consumers or service providers of providing services for this individual.

In considering the cost effectiveness of possible maintenance, services should first ascertain whether the existing home is a suitable environment that can be made safe for the client and their carer.

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

Purpose served by service	<p>Priority can be given to services that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide independence from the need for ongoing service provision; • reduce the need for ongoing service provision to the client; or • promote safety for clients, carers or care workers, including avoiding hazardous environments.
	<p>Services that maintain the appearance of the home are of a lower priority.</p>
High Risk	<p>A person whose safety is significantly at risk without the receipt of a Home Maintenance service may be given priority.</p> <p>Home Maintenance service needs of HACC eligible clients returning home from hospital are a high priority.</p>
Impact on Carer(s)	<p>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.</p>

Impact on other service providers Priority may be given to providing a Home Maintenance service that reduces the demand for other HACC services in the context of maintaining independence in living in the community. For example, Home Maintenance services may assist a client to manage other affairs and activities of daily living by providing a safe and habitable environment. As such, these services may facilitate the maintenance of the client in the community.

Availability of other alternatives A person who has other alternatives to Home Maintenance 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 e.g. a home with fewer ongoing maintenance needs;
- the availability of privately purchased home maintenance services; or
- an available piece of equipment being just as effective in meeting the needs of the person.

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

Availability of social or family support Priority can increase as the availability of social or family supports for a member of the HACC target population decreases. Thus, the highest priority can be given to the member of the HACC target population living alone and who is without any social or family supports. "Supports" in this case means practical assistance with home maintenance.

Home Maintenance service providers should refer to the HACC National Service Standards (Objectives 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 cost required to provide the service (unless it exceeds the upper limit); or
- The ability or inability of the client to pay for the service.

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 care.

1.10 Client care coordination

The HACC National Service Standards (Objective 4: Coordinated, Planned and Reliable Service Delivery, Standard 4.2) outlines requirements for service providers to deliver services that are determined by the clients' needs and are part of a documented care plan. HACC service providers are required to develop policies regarding care planning and review.

While the nature of maintenance services does not require Home Maintenance providers to develop care plans for their clients, it is important that Home Maintenance providers develop effective communication mechanisms with other HACC and community based service providers who will be providing services in the home of the client. In these cases services may work to coordinate the timing of services. Communication on ongoing maintenance needs arising in the home that may represent a risk to the client, carer or care-worker or other service staff should also occur.

1.11 Exit planning

The nature of maintenance services does not require Home Maintenance providers to develop exit plans for their clients.

1.12 Links with other services and programs

Links with other relevant service providers and programs that can provide complementary services are essential to establishing an appropriate service response for clients.

Home Maintenance services are not funded to provide HACC case management or comprehensive assessments. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that linkages with relevant local providers are established. Links with assessment providers such as the Aged Care Assessment Teams are essential.

Home Maintenance providers should build productive working relationships with other Home Maintenance providers and other HACC services in order to achieve local service coordination and sharing of resources to achieve optimal service outcomes. It is important that Home Maintenance providers establish ways of informing other agencies of the range of services they provide and obtaining information and feedback from other agencies.

Local community and aged care providers are two key agency groups with which Home Maintenance providers should develop strong working relationships. In addition, linkages with dementia-specific services including the National Dementia Behaviour Advisory Service and the local Dementia Advisory Service are key to achieving service delivery outcomes and providing appropriate support for staff and volunteers working with this special needs group.

Key strategies for coordinating service delivery with other agencies include the establishment of informal networks to liaise directly on client issues. Service

providers are also encouraged to form local cross-program, area-based committees to facilitate information sharing and relationship building.

Information on HACC services is maintained by Commonwealth Carelink and may also be accessed through the online Human Service Network (HSNet).

2 Funding, accountability and management of service provision

2.1 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 Maintenance services. Funds are also available to recover the costs of Home Maintenance where services are unable to obtain fees contribution.

Home Maintenance service providers requiring assistance from the Quality Assurance Rectification Program will 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 Home Modifications Information Clearing House website:

www.homemods.info

Information can also be found on the NSW Home Modification and Maintenance State Council website:

www.nswhmms.org

2.2 Reporting requirements

2.2.1 Minimum Data Set (MDS)

Detailed instructions for reporting HACC MDS data items can be found in the HACC Program MDS User Guide V2.0a (2006).

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

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.

2.2.2 How to count MDS outputs

HACC service providers are required to report on each item in the minimum data set quarterly for each client included in the HACC MDS who has received any HACC-funded assistance in that reporting period. Home Maintenance services report the

total hours and minutes of assistance provided to a client. The total hours of assistance are the product of the number of staff and length of time assistance is provided.

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 Full cost recovery work

Although Home Maintenance service providers are funded to provide service to the HACC target population, it is recognised that, on occasions, they are called on to provide service to people who receive assistance under other Commonwealth/State Programs.

Work done for the following agencies or for clients receiving similar services 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);
- Aboriginal Lands Councils;
- Department of Housing;
- Extended Aged Care in the Home (EACH) packages;
- Department of Community Services;
- Ventilator Dependent Quadriplegics Program; and
- Hospital in the Home Program.

Work undertaken for these organisations, service providers or clients should not receive priority over service provision to the HACC target population.

It is essential that, prior to any work undertaken for other organisations, a signed written agreement between the Home Maintenance service provider and the agency involved is developed that specifies the terms of payment for the work being undertaken.

Work undertaken for non-HACC clients should not be counted in the HACC MDS reports.

It is recommended that Home Maintenance service providers develop specific policies and procedures for managing full cost recovery in cases where individuals

who are seeking Home Maintenance services are compensable or are assessed as having sufficient income to pay for the full cost of services delivered. The Home Maintenance service provider should ensure that a written agreement with the service recipient is signed by both parties prior to the commencement of service provision. The agreement should detail the payment terms and conditions and the likely total cost for major work (over \$5,000).

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.

2.4 Calculating Unit Costs

In calculating and recouping costs associated with service provision, Home Maintenance service providers should adopt the following principles:

- Full cost recovery for all materials associated with the service;
- Charging of labour costs at a rate discounted to market rate;
- Charging of administration costs associated with service provision;
- Monitoring of administration and non output costs as a proportion of total service costs as a guide to the measure of efficiency in service provision; and
- Adoption of a means-tested fee scale for provision of Home Maintenance services.

2.5 Employment Practices

2.5.1 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 Maintenance service provision to the following areas:

- participation in management committees;
- office administration activities such as bookkeeping; and
- undertake non-trade tasks such as gardening and lawn mowing.

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

Information on the requirements of the Home Building Regulations with regard to the work required to be undertaken by licensed tradespersons is at Appendix B.

2.5.2 Use of subcontractors for Home Maintenance

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 Maintenance 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 Maintenance service provider who is overseeing the job and has engaged the subcontractor.

Home Maintenance 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 Maintenance service provider.

Home Maintenance 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 Maintenance 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 Good Practice Guide.

2.5.3 Staff screening and checks

It is a requirement that Home Maintenance service providers screen staff to determine their suitability to provide home services to frail, elderly and/or disabled persons. All Home Maintenance service provider employees, volunteers and subcontractors must undergo a police check prior to commencing work.

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

2.6 Occupational Health and Safety

All Home Maintenance service providers 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>

Other supporting information and advice relating to Occupational Health and Safety can be accessed through WorkCover NSW:

www.workcover.nsw.gov.au or phone 13 10 50.

2.6.1 Asbestos

Home Maintenance services may encounter asbestos in 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 meet these requirements, outlined on the WorkCover 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.

2.7 Vehicles policy

All service providers should have a vehicles policy in place.

2.7.1 Transport of tools, equipment and hardware items

Occupational Health and Safety policies for Home Maintenance service providers 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.

2.7.2 Security/operational issues

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

2.7.3 Types of vehicle

The choice of vehicle is at the discretion of the Home Maintenance 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.

Further information on alternatives for obtaining vehicles is provided in of the Good Practice Guide.

2.7.4 Funding of vehicles

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

Initial capital	Home Maintenance services with permanent paid
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costs builders, tradespersons or handypersons are eligible on establishment of the service, to apply for a non-recurrent grant to purchase a vehicle.

Running costs Running costs are met through the Home Maintenance service recurrent budget. This is for the full running costs of the vehicle (i.e. including depreciation).

Replacement costs Home Maintenance services are responsible for replacing their vehicle. They are expected to reserve some of their income for this purpose. Services should refer to their annual acquittal packages for information on vehicle replacement options available.

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

2.8 Contracts

Client consent for any maintenance and fees to be incurred must be established prior to starting any work.

All work performed by Home Maintenance services, where the total cost is more than \$1,000 at market value, will require a contract to be signed by all parties before the work can commence². The New South Wales Office of Fair Trading Home Building Service stipulates the following requirements for contracts³:

- 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 consumer, 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 consumer 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;
- 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 consumer 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

² 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.

³ From New South Wales Office of Fair Trading website: <http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au>,

- 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.

The NSW Home Modifications and Maintenance State Council has developed a contract specifically for Home Maintenance services, in consultation with the New South Wales Office of Fair Trading. It is necessary for all Home Maintenance 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.

2.9 Licensing requirements

2.9.1 Types of labour that may be used

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

- Labour directly employed by the service; and
- Subcontracted labour.

There are strict limitations placed by the Office of Fair Trading on the amount and type of building work performed by non-licensed labour or performed without the supervision of a licensed tradesperson. Depending on the types of work being done, the New South Wales Office of Fair Trading may require the Home Maintenance service to become licensed, except where the service provides lawn-mowing and garden maintenance only.

Licensing requirements are a major determinant of the type of labour that can be used by a Home Maintenance service. Under the Home Building Act, 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.

Persons who carry out specialist work (i.e. electrical wiring, plumbing, gas-fitting, air conditioning and refrigeration) require a licence, regardless of the value of the work. Details of Office of Fair Trading requirements under the Home Building Regulations are provided in Appendix C.

2.9.2 Benefits of licensed Home Maintenance services

Unlicensed organisations are only able to offer a restricted range of services - those of low cost and usually only requiring non-trade labour. A full builders/contractor's licence is necessary to provide the majority of Home Maintenance services.

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care requires funded Home Maintenance service to confirm builders/contractor licence status or employ a builder or tradesperson who is licensed to meet the requirements of the Home Building Act and the New South Wales Department of Fair Trading.

The building contractor's licence benefits Home Maintenance services by:

- allowing the organisation to carry out the full range of Home Maintenance work;
- providing consumer protection against faulty work;
- meeting Local Government building regulations and those of other Statutory Authorities;
- offering a credential that is accepted by the community; and
- providing advantage when negotiating discounts and other accounts with suppliers.

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.

The New South Wales Office of Fair Trading specifies the possession of relevant formal qualifications and/or practical experience as a requirement for licensing.

2.9.3 DADHC responsibility

DADHC will provide support to Home Maintenance service providers in situations where a provider has received a client complaint and the provider has been deemed by an independent party to have acted in compliance with the HACC National and the NSW HACC Home Maintenance Guidelines.

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 Building Regulation Requirements

The Home Building Regulation which came into effect on 1 September 2004 introduced some changes to the way builders and contractors can operate when contracting building operations. Key elements of current legislation as they apply to Home Maintenance services are as follows⁴:

- 1 The threshold for residential building work (other than specialised work) to be subject to the Home Building Act has increased from \$200 to \$1,000 at market value (inclusive of GST) and now includes the value of materials as well as labour. Thus, a handyman (i.e. non-trade labour) is only permitted to carry out Home Maintenance work up to a total job cost of \$1,000 at market value, unless supervised by a licensed builder or contractor or licensed organisation and there is a written contract to meet the requirements of the Home Building Act 1989.
- 2 Specialist work, i.e. plumbing, gas fitting, electrical, refrigeration and air-conditioning, is subject to the Home Building Act 1989 and must be performed by a suitably qualified tradesperson. There is no maximum threshold for specialist work under the Home Building Act 1989.
- 3 Residential building works funded under the Home Maintenance program are exempt from the insurance requirements under the Home Building Act 1989.
- 4 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
 - or any combination of these fields to a labour and materials cost of more than \$1,000 at market value must either:
 - a. hold a contractor's licence covering that particular field or fields and enter into a written contract under the Home Building Act 1989; or

⁴ From NSW Office of Fair Trading www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

- b. be supervised by a Licensed Contractor.
- 5 Any organisation that acts as an agency in procuring or coordinating any building maintenance or modification work of labour and materials cost of greater than \$1,000 at market value must hold a Contractor's Licence or, employ a licensed builder or tradespersons or engage the services of a licensed contractor to complete the work required. A written contract meeting the requirements of the Home Building Act 1989 applies.