



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

## Feature Article: The Costs and Benefits of Using Private Housing as the 'Home Base' for Care for Older People: A Systematic Review

By Catherine Bridge, Peter Phibbs, Hal Kendig, Mark Mathews & Helen Bartlett

By Catherine Bridge

This joint project between Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) and the University of Sydney aims to inform policy and program delivery issues associated with achieving the most appropriate health care and housing interventions. It does this by answering three research questions:

What are the financial costs and benefits to individuals and governments of using private housing as the home base for the provision of care services for older people?

How do the different aspects of housing, such as tenure, dwelling type, location, and access to support, contribute to the financial costs and benefits of using private housing as the home base for the provision of care services for older people?

How do different forms of housing assistance and related programs affect the costs and benefits of using private housing as the home base for the provision of care services for older people?

The absence of economic evaluations of care at-home for older people in Australia is significant given that policy and care arrangements vary substantially from country to country. To date, cost-benefit studies associated with home care for older people have used inconsistent terminology and inconsistent methodologies. They have not viewed costs and benefits from similar perspectives or considered the same dependent or independent variables. As a consequence, results have at times been contradictory. One significant limitation of prior research is its focus on either care or accommodation, without analysing the relationships between the two.

A systematic review of relevant literature was conducted to determine the influence of a range of housing variables on the cost of aged care, focusing on the impact of different aspects of housing (i.e., tenure, dwelling type, location). Much of the research relating to economic evaluations of care in the home for older people was conducted outside of Australia, and the features posited as significant in regard to in-home care for older people and the formulas used to calculate their respective economic impacts vary widely. All of the most recent systematic reviews located concluded that there was insufficient evidence to estimate the likely benefits, harms, and costs of institutional or at-home care for older people.

The review also found that there were a number of methodological issues that require careful thought in regard to any future studies. These included more clarity concerning methods for control of: variation of effect in relation to amount of care provided; variation of effect across the type of care received; the lack of a clear distinction between respite and hospital care; the lack of information about supportiveness or otherwise of the home environment.

Stage two will involve constructing the data cube and applying secondary data analysis methods to estimate cost-benefit outcomes over time and across functional capacity, income, and housing variables.

A copy of this paper can be obtained at the AHURI website

<http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/p60313/>

## Featured Web Site: Home Modification Information Clearinghouse [www.homemods.info](http://www.homemods.info)

By Tanja von Behrens and Lara Oram

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The new HMinfo Clearinghouse website, which has been in residence at a beta testing address for the last few months, has now been moved across to the HSNNet server and is back at its old website address, [www.homemods.info](http://www.homemods.info).

Those at the HMM services will know that over November and December, staff at HMinfo spent time on the phones and email, updating the contact details of all of the HMM services for the website database. As a result, we now have approximately 66 services registered to edit their own contact details on site, and all services have been emailed about how they can register when they have the opportunity. This process works well for the HMinfo, HMM services and members of the public as, whenever any of the service details change, the registered member of a service can now go online and update their page. This will allow the contact pages to be kept current, rather than the infrequent process that has occurred to date.

Thank you for your patient responses to telephone calls and emails during this process. Talking through the process of registration with users has given us a good opportunity to make contact with some of the services, and to make people aware of the HMinfo website. The process has also made us aware of some aspects of the site that have been difficult for users to understand. As a result, we will be making some changes to the registration form, including drop down menus to replace some text fields that caused confusion.

The developments on the website have been steady, but slow. As a few changes are still occurring and we attempt to make the website stable, things may shift around a little on screen. Please be patient with these changes and feel free to let us know if you have any feedback that could help us to improve the site.

There are many benefits to being a registered user to the HMinfo website. All registered website users

are able to access the forums section of the website, where you can post all your home modification questions and seek answers from occupational therapists and others with field experience. Unregistered users are still able to post comments, but these must be approved before they are posted. Registering also ensures that you have full member privileges, including submitting events and training; submitting case studies; and receiving notification emails of new events, publications and newsletters.

One of the exciting new features on the updated website is video posting. Users are able to take short videos of homes and fixtures on their mobile phones and post them to the HMinfo Forums section to help explain a practice query. Video posts can also be added to other areas of the website where useful in explaining modification projects such as the Casestudies section.

You may have noticed a category list on the right-hand side of the website with various font sizes. This list, although it needs tweaking, indicates the amount of website content on a particular topic area. The larger the font, the more content related to that topic. You can click directly on the categories to link to the content.

The “My Buddy List” link that sits underneath your username when you are logged in links registered users who have the same fields of interest when it is working to full capacity.

### **To all HMinfo website users...**

Register to the site by clicking the register button in the top right corner. Make sure that you have indicated in your account any notification emails you require, such as newsletters, publications and events. Log in and click on “my account” on the right-hand side, then choose “my notify settings”.

# Publication Review: Architect's Pocket Book of Kitchen Design

By Charlotte Baden-Powell

By Tanja von Behrens

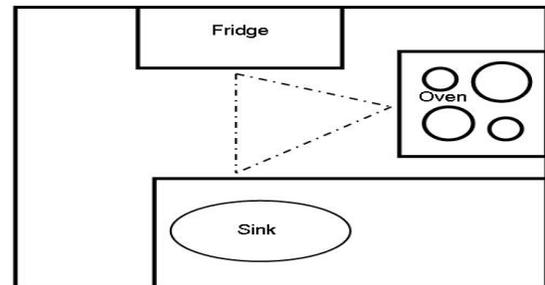
This small, pocket sized text provides home owners, architects, builders and kitchen designers with a succinct summary of the history of kitchen development. From the world's earliest open fire kitchens to central hearth's, through the development and progression of oven design using electricity, wood and gas, this little handbook provides the user with a good understanding of how the design of current day kitchens, often with bench lined walls, a central podium and integration with the remainder of the family home, came to be. As the kitchen is known as the 'most highly serviced room in the house, and the room on which most money is spent' (Baden-Powell, 2005), it is important to consider it's design – from the specifics of users, through to the safety, style, design and finish of all of the kitchen fittings.

Today's living spaces include not only one storey houses, but also apartments, bed sitters, communal housing and multi-level houses. The first chapter of this book provides useful considerations that should be kept in mind when any sort of modifications are to be undertaken to a kitchen space, or when new kitchens are designed. Who will be using your kitchen? What are the skills and capabilities of the users? Do they prefer to sit or stand? Do they require extra space for storage depending upon their ability, or inability, to shop on a regular basis? Will they need to carry groceries a long distance to reach the kitchen? Will kitchen users need to be able to observe children and family from the kitchen space? All such considerations will impact the most appropriate design and modifications for a kitchen area.

Baden-Powell does not recommend 'Island' kitchen units for use in kitchens, as they require greater movement and the coverage of further distances. This is particularly so in the case of users with ambulant disability, or people who use wheelchairs. The greater the distances needed to walk or move, the greater the likelihood of accident or injury - particularly when hot plates, heavy items or wheelchairs are involved.

The placement of sinks, ovens/cook-tops and refrigerators' is considered very important in the

design of a kitchen, such that it is easy for a user to move between all three without obstruction.



They may be on opposite walls (as above), or in one continuous sequence along a wall, which provides access to fridge, sink and oven without the need for excessive turning and maneuvering.

The chapter of this book most relevant to home modifications is the chapter on 'Designing Kitchens for the Disabled'. Although written with the initial planning of a kitchen in mind, the short, matter of fact presentation of the information covered makes it a good reference for any modification considerations, covering a wide variety of challenges that may be experienced by people with disabilities. Planning, services, appliances, cabinets, useful devices and considerations for wheelchair users are considered in simple, clear detail.

The references used in text refer to UK standards, manufacturers and suppliers, as well as UK based advisory organisations. Although this does provide a challenge, the design suggestions provided are relevant to the Australian context. The list of suppliers may provide ideas for the types of products that could be sourced in Australia, while Australian users may need to refer to the requirements of the Australian standards when acting on any design suggestions. All measurements provided are in millimeters.

The clear index would make this portable reference useful for quick, on the job queries, and in explaining and demonstrating design features to clients.

## How to contact us

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### Latest Publications:

- ▶ Understanding Indigenous Australians for More Effective Provision of Home Modification Services: Summary Bulletin

### Upcoming Publications:

- ▶ Modification or Relocation: Summary Bulletin
- ▶ Home Water Management: Summary Bulletin
- ▶ HMinfo Annual Report 2005-5006
- ▶ Research on the cost-benefits of caring at home
- ▶ Research on environmental determinants and interventions in the home pertaining to aggressive and self-injurious behaviour of people with a cognitive impairment

**Go to the Resource Library to view these publications**

## HMinfo Background

Our team brings together a range of experience. The Directors are Catherine Bridge from the Faculty of Health Sciences, The University of Sydney and Peter Phibbs from the Urban Research Centre, University of Western Sydney. Katrina is our librarian. Lara, Lisa, Stephanie, Tanja and Brian are the research assistants. Andrew and Gordon are our web programmers.

**Editor:** Lara Oram

## To the HMMS Coordinators...

If you haven't yet registered, please take just 5 minutes to register, so that you can be given editing privileges over your HMM service. Click on the register button in the top right-hand corner of the homepage, fill in the form and email us requesting "editing privileges". Once you have been made 'editor', log in at the top right-hand corner and go to 'Service Directory; HMM Services; List of Services'. Open up your service details by clicking on the name of your service. The 'edit' tab is located underneath your service name. Edit any new details and then click on 'submit'. If the 'edit' tab does not display, contact the HMinfo team with your username.

### Latest Events & Training

- ▶ ACROD NSW Annual Conference 2007 – What's Next? 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007
- ▶ ILC Professional Certificate in Accessible Buildings 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Feb and 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007
- ▶ HMinfo statewide Asbestos Training – various dates & locations across NSW
- ▶ Include 2007: Designing with People 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> April 2007
- ▶ NSW HACCC & Community Care Conference 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> May 2007
- ▶ Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology (Canada), 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> June 2007
- ▶ 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Mobility & Transport for Elderly & Disabled Persons 18<sup>th</sup> Jun 2007