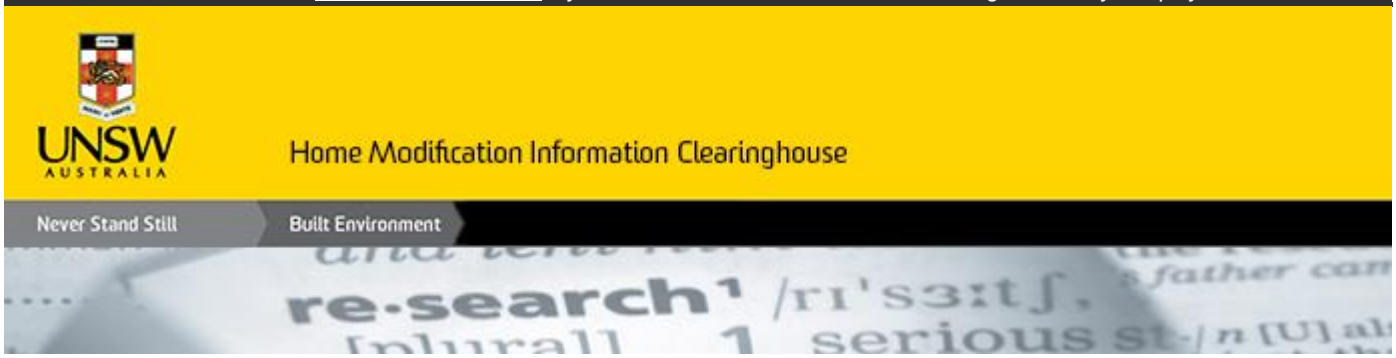

Newsletter

Edition 45 | 6th December 2017

From the Editor

As 2017 draws to a close and a new year is about to emerge, I am passionate to communicate the value of research and its application and influence on policy and practice which is of course, an on-going mission of the clearinghouse team. It is important to have a national voice for the home modifications in Australia, and there is no doubt that this has been a turbulent year with a lot of uncertainty concerning policy reform and funding for advocacy sector wide. Consequently, there have been some fantastic highs such as the launch of the DIY modify App (with 3,631 downloads to date) and lows such as the closure of the MOD.A office on September the 29th. MOD.A was advocating strongly for quality assurance standards for builders and the construction industry and this remains an issue with no standard training or internships within the industry in this area despite other countries like Canada recognising this issue and working collaboratively with their Building Industries to address this. Our team has seen some change too with the departure of Joanne Quinn who has been a dedicated and outstanding researcher with us for the last five years. She has been replaced by Konstantina Vasilakpoulou, a very experienced and competent research architect with an interest in inclusive design.

On a bright note the Enabling Environments team is currently working on a number of projects. As well as the crucial work with the Clearinghouse, it's involved in projects with the Australian Building Codes Board: and this year has seen work concerned with design regulations concerning ramps, and another concerning stairs. Our work isn't just about the built fabric - it's also about the voids and the transitions, like stairs and ramps and we are currently working on has ways of testing alternative solutions that satisfy requirements but allow innovation and creativity. One of the techniques we rely on is active participation from people with disabilities, older people and carers and most research uses co-design - as we believe strongly that nothing concerning vulnerable people should be conceived or carried out without their involvement. So a key principle of all our actions is not coming up with an idea and then imposing it on people, who might be very vulnerable, but instead involving them in designing the research from the beginning. This is of course a key principle of our Advisory Committee and we are deeply indebted to all the hours that they contribute towards what we do.

HMinfo Research

- HMinfo 2016-2017 Annual Report being finalised
- Report submitted - Access01/Ramps1 - Desk Audit/Literature Review of Ramp Traversability by Wheelchairs and Mobility Scooters (Quantification and Metrics)
- Draft Report submitted - Ramps 2 - Verification Method Traversability
- Report submitted - Stairs1 - Desk Audit/Literature Review of Stair Traversability (Quantification and Metrics)
- Draft Report submitted - Stairs2 - Verification Method Stair Traversability (Quantification and Metrics)
- DIY Report being finalised

Staff Updates

We are thrilled to welcome a new staff member to our team, Konstantina Vasilakopoulou. Konstantina is an Architect with a Master's in Light and Lighting and is in the process of finalising her PhD at the Environmental Engineering Department of the Technical University of Crete in Greece. Her PhD Thesis subject: "Smart natural lighting systems. Development/optimization of light pipes with integrated low energy consumption artificial lighting, managed by smart controls". Konstantina also has experience in the retrofitting of spaces to be more accessible to people with various needs, including Autism. She is the full-time HMinfo Research Associate and will prepare HMinfo publications and carry-out other day-to-day HMinfo tasks.

Occupational Therapy Australia - Webinar

Occupational Therapy Australia: NDIS OT Support Package - Home Modifications - NDIA expectations and requirements. This webinar is part of the NDIS OTA Support Package. This 9 part webinar series runs from August to November. The full recorded package will be available for purchase through the CPD Online Library from December 2017. Online Resource: Recorded Webinar can be found at https://www.otaus.com.au/professionaldevelopment/register/cpd-online-library-ndis-ot-support-package-home-modifications-ndia-expectations-and-requirements?type=myself

Recent Home Modification Publications

Giesbrecht, E. M., Smith, E. M., Mortenson, W. B., & Miller, W. C. (2017). Needs for mobility devices, home modifications and personal assistance among Canadians with disabilities. *Health Reports,* 28(8), 9.

Abstract: This Canadian study examined self-reported met and unmet needs of people with disabilities who use wheeled mobility devices, compared with non-users. The 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability followed up with 45,442 individuals who reported a disability on the 2011 National Household Survey, and obtained a 75% response rate. Descriptive statistics with variance estimates and 95% confidence intervals were used to compare wheeled mobility device users and non-users. Nearly 10% of wheeled mobility device users identified an unmet need for an additional mobility device. Compared with non-users, they were twice as likely to modify their home with a

ramp and three times as likely to install a lift. The prevalence of unmet need for each type of residence adaptation among wheeled mobility device users was at least double that of non-users. Wheeled mobility device users received assistance with an average of 4.4 activities, compared with 2.0 for non-users, and reported an average of 1.9 activities for which assistance was needed but not received. About one in three relied on paid assistance; for 14% of those who paid for assistance, out-of-pocket expenses amounted to $10,000 or more annually, compared with 2% among non-users. Wheeled mobility device users reported a higher prevalence of met and unmet needs for residence modifications than did non-users. They required help with more activities of life on a more frequent basis, with greater dependence on paid individuals, resulting in higher out-of-pocket expenses. Power and manual wheelchair users reported greater needs than did mobility scooter users.

Aplin, T., Thornton, H., & Gustafsson, L. (2017). The unique experience of home for parents and carers of children with disabilities. *Scandinavian journal of occupational therapy,* 1-10.

Abstract: The aim of this paper was to investigate the experience of home for parents and carers of children with disabilities in Australia. Data for this qualitative study were gathered using semi-structured interviews with four families living in their own homes. An inductive thematic analysis revealed two main themes. The first was titled 'Aspects making everyday life easier' explored the aspects of the home environment that facilitated home life for the child, including access to transport, services, family and home modifications. The second theme 'Decisions and efforts to create opportunities for the child' emphasized the efforts made by parents and carers to promote their child's independence and participation including a strong consideration for their children's future needs. The study indicated that the location of home, appropriate home modifications and planning for the future defined the experience of home for parents and carers. These findings identify some important considerations for occupational therapists when providing services in the homes of families with children who have a disability.

Powell, J., Mackintosh, S., Bird, E., Ige, J., Garrett, H., & Roys, M. (2017). The role of home adaptations in improving later life.

Abstract: This report summarises the findings of a systematic review of the best, available scientific evidence on how home adaptations can contribute to improving later life. Living in a suitable home is crucially important to a good later life. The right home environment can maintain or improve people's physical and mental health, wellbeing and social connections, enable them to carry out day-to-day activities safely and comfortably, and help them to do the things that are important to them. More than 90% of older people in England live in mainstream housing, as opposed to specialist housing or residential care. However, current UK housing stock is often not accessible or adapted to meet people's needs as they get older, with small room sizes, steep internal stairs, baths rather than showers and steps outside.

Allen, F., Cain, R., & Meyer, C. (2017). How people with dementia and their carers adapt their homes. A qualitative study. *Dementia,* 1471301217712294.

Abstract: The objective was to explore the ways in which people with dementia and their carers adapt their homes, including the barriers and use of available information. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 people with dementia and their informal carer. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis. Three core themes emerged: Maintaining familiarity and coping with change, having knowledge and finding knowledge and Meeting challenges through home adaptation. The most significant barriers to making home adaptations were lack of

knowledge and maintaining familiarity. Having more information and making home modifications earlier might enable individuals with dementia to adjust to their adapted environment.

Bamzar, R. (2017). Assessing the safety and quality of the indoor environment of senior housing: A Swedish case study. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*.

Abstract: The aims of this article are to assess the safety quality of the indoor living environment of senior housing in Hässelgården, Stockholm Municipality (Sweden's capital), and to suggest improvement strategies. First, the physical indoor environment of older adults is examined via a fieldwork checklist devised in accordance with the principles of universal design (UD). Second, their indoor environment is assessed through a survey that includes subjective questions about seniors' use of space, experience of falls, and safety perception. Third, the study explores whether the applications of UD in the seniors' indoor living environment contribute to the understanding of their use of space, experience of falls, and safety perception. Fieldwork inspections and a detailed survey with residents are used as a basis for the empirical analysis. Findings indicate that the living room has the highest UD score compared with those for the kitchen and the bedroom. The elderly spends most of their time in the living room and the kitchen. A low UD score (e.g. kitchen and bedroom) is associated with a higher number of falls but not with low levels of safety perception and use of space. The article concludes with suggestions to improve housing safety of Hässelgården's senior housing, which may also help prevent falls in the older population elsewhere.

HMinfo Team

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