



Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting of the HMinfo Advisory Committee

18 June 2020

3-4 pm

Zoom

Welcome, Introduction, Attendance & Apologies

Professor Catherine Bridge opened the meeting at 3.00pm. Welcome new member Andrew Chia who replaces Robyn Chapman from Assistive Technology Australia (ATA).

Attending via Zoom

Konstantina Vasilakopou (KV)	Home Modification Information Clearinghouse (HMinfo)
Nicholas Loder (NL)	NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC)
Annette Hanly (AH)	SCOPE Home Access
Hayley Stone	Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN)
Deborah Hammond (DH)	Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA)
Susan Dinley (SD)	Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA)
Karen Appleby (KA)	Council on Ageing NSW (COTA)
Steve Pretzel (SP)	Technology for Ageing and Disability WA (TADWA)(MODA)
Lyndal Millikan (LM)	iCare
David Sinclair (DS)	Assistive Technologies Suppliers Australia (ATSA)
Andrew Chia (AC)	Assistive Technology Australia (ATA)
David Clarke (DC)	Paraquad
Angela Peri (AP)	Wesley Mission
Julian Werrett (JW)	3 Bridges Community
Agnieska Kuna (AK)	Domiciliary Equipment Services South Australia (DES SA)

Apologies

Irene Stein (IS)	National Seniors Australia (NSA)
Donna Dives (DD)	National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
Anthony Ryan (AR)	Young Care (YC)
Suzette Skobier (SS)	Australian Government Department of Health (DOH)
Greg Killeen (GK)	Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA)
Frank Riggio (FR)	Odyssey Builders Kuri Kuri Community

Chair

Prof Catherine Bridge (CB)	Home Modification Information Clearinghouse (Mino)
----------------------------	--

Minute Taker

Vincent D'Cruz (VC)	Home Modification Information Clearinghouse (HMinfo)
---------------------	--

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes from 19 March 2020 Meeting were approved by CB and accepted by NL.

Follow up actions from 18 June 2020 meeting:

- (i) VDC to circulate proposed strap line designs for the HMinfo website landing page for both desktop and mobile versions, to solicit feedback from committee members.

1. HMinfo Website

Action

1.1 HMinfo Website Report

SP noted in Google Analytics there has been an increase in visitors to the website in June. KV explained it was probably due to people seeking information during covid19 crisis as well as our efforts in improving the website's visibility through ad campaigns and keywords, plus SEO enhancements.

1.2 HMinfo Website Progress

Accessibility/Usability

- A method to significantly improve the accessibility of PDFs hosted on the website was developed and documented in a draft guide and tested by staff.
- The guide aims to help staff overcome technical limitations that impede the generation of accessible PDFs from Microsoft Word. It includes instructions for improving the readability of content for audiences with visual impairments.
- Estimated delivery: October 2020

Helmut

Website Manual Update

- The website manual is in the process of being updated to ensure that content is re-organised by staff role and to include technical information about the website such as third-party integrations and backup storage locations.
- The update is currently on hold due to development resources being delegated to building a peer review module for the HMinfo website as part of the ARC LIEF project.
- Estimated delivery: October 2020

Helmut

1.3 Website Development

Real Time Report Progress

- Website reports require a few minutes to generate but currently do not provide an indication of progress to staff, such as a progress bar or status text in giving an estimated remaining processing time for the report to be produced.
- These changes are currently on hold due to development resources being delegated to building a peer review module for the HMinfo website as part of the ARC LIEF project.
- Estimated delivery: October 2020

Helmut

Proposed strapline for HMinfo website landing page

- Based on Google's SEO for its keywords and Ad Campaigns, it was evidenced that a strapline was required for the HMinfo website landing page to present a concise and precise introduction about the organisation in a Google search.

Helmut

2. Publications and Research Activities

Action

2.1 HMinfo Publications

a. Current

- (i) Consumer Factsheet: Home lighting
- (ii) Industry Factsheet: covid19

b. Future

- (i) Summary Bulletin and/or Industry Factsheet and/or Consumer Factsheet on Assistive Technology – Smart Controls
- (ii) Summary Bulletin and/or Consumer/Industry Factsheet: Home modifications that enable self-care

KV

2.2 Grant Applications

The following grant applications were made in the last quarter:

- a. NSW Health COVID-19 Research Grants, Round 2, opened in June.
- b. Information Linkage and Capacity Building (ILC): Individual Capacity Building grant Round 2019-2020- Proposal submitted.

3. Events & Training

Action

NIL

4. Governance & Administration

Action

4.1. Governance

CHSP contract extension for 2020-2021 endorsed.

4.2 HMinfo Annual Report July 2019-June 2020

.Will commence shortly the report preparation.

5. EBEP Funded Projects

Action

5.1 Australian Research Council's (ARC) LIEF scheme

Develop methods to produce accessible PDFs and generating functional requirements for triple peer review module.

5.2 GWA / Caroma: Under basin clearances for wheelchairs

Recruitment ongoing to get more volunteers to participate.

5.3 AHURI – AT for ageing and disabled housing

After conducting focus sessions, next step is to analyse results for report. Report due by end of April 2020.

6. Reports from Committee Members

Action

AP

- Work schedule busy as ever and receiving approvals from NDIA and major jobs being assigned from CHSP.
- Some clients for major home mods have opted to defer for a few more months before commencing works.
- OTs transitioning out of telehealth assessments and going on-site instead.
- Received extra funding for home mods in the Nepean area.

NL

- LAHC Home modifications still going ahead, with strict COVID safeguards/precautions.
- The FACS Disability Modification policy links to all relevant guidelines for home modification works to LAHC owned and FACS managed properties: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/policies/disability-modifications-policy>. Within the Dis Mod Policy, OTs and others will find guides like the Home Modification Guidelines.
- Properties owned by LAHC but managed by a Community Housing Provider may execute disability modifications differently to LAHC, as they (the CHP) may wish to relocate the tenant in the first instance.
- The use of side entry bath modifications is not prohibited, but decision will be escalated to the appropriate Regional Portfolio Director.
- Inexperienced OTs need to be aware it is their role to provide full specifications for fittings i.e. padding for padded walls, as the Contractor has to price items accurately.
- OTs need to be aware that some LAHC policies will prohibit certain security items to be installed as a disability modification. The Alterations to a Home Policy and the Supplement set out relevant security items:
<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/resources/policies/housing-policies/lahc>

SD

- Most DVA funded ipads to all the contracted allied health, medical and nursing advisers across Australia so they could work from home instead of working in the state based DVA offices. Otherwise, DVA organised for all the DVA contracted health advisers to listen into the Federal Dept Health's live webinars pertinent to best practice guidelines when managing veterans in the community.
- In order for the veteran community to continue to receive services, DVA permitted the community-based allied health, nursing and medical service providers to be funded for conducting telehealth (until around the end of August 2020) in order to minimise the risk of health personnel and the veteran community from becoming unwell.
- Demand for some equipment surpassed the availability of supply in Australia, and therefore delivery times were slightly longer than normal for some veterans. Most private builders continued with home mods but those government-funded building service providers, were often unavailable, and therefore, to expedite the home modifications, some of the building works were transferred to those builders who were still working.

LM

- General Manager regarded home mods as an essential service. Undertook triaging process with senior management for people who were vulnerable and at risk in the hospital, under Category 1 and 2, wanting to be discharged and return home.
- People in the community who were vulnerable and required home modifications because of covid19. Implemented rapid response home mods by installing temporary rails and ramps.
- Because of public hospitals managing covid19 cases, most of clients have been admitted in the Private system.
- Undertook telehealth with providers in regional Australia because of logistical problems in commuting to locations.

AH

- During the lockdown period, adopted a hybrid telehealth and on-site visits for assessments, so as to minimise on-site questions, which worked well. Constraints faced knowing that some older people were unable to use telehealth because of being hearing or cognitively impaired. If clients were not deemed as high risk, will then proceed to on-site visits. Had sufficient PPE for site visits.
- Had to prioritise the urgent major home mods due to be completed and defer the less critical ones. Received a number of approvals from NDIS which is / was encouraging.

DH

- Reminded occupational therapists on the committee about the virtual OT Exchange in September. The conference organisers will advise the presentation logistics. NOTE: Immediately following this meeting, I was advised that our presentation had been accepted for the conference.
- Facing work challenges with organising travel and associated increased costs during COVID 19.
- Anecdotal feedback from NDIA advisor that it is anticipated that disputes may increase as the budget tightens for all areas in government.
- Discussion point in the media about safety of NDIA participants during COVID 19. Concern raised by health professionals as to safety of participants who self-fund as NDIA do not know whether they are safe during this period and whether they are utilising funds it on care services
- Anecdotal feedback that when toilet paper shortage became an issue in the community, there was an increased demand for bidet.

KA

- COTA launched a hotline for older people during covid19 so that they could refer callers to the right places, to provide information and social support.
- NSW Government undertaking consultations around the NSW Ageing Strategy via an online survey:
<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/inclusion/seniors/overview/chapters/whats-in-the-strategy>

AC

ATA announced on their website that they would be launching a home mods online course via Zoom. Training schedule had been updated.

SP

- Received 20 requests from clients to defer home mods till lockdown is over. Problem faced in complying with the limited number of workers allowed in a particular work area, which is slowing down work progress. Noted significant increase queries for NDIS home mods.
- Undertook telehealth assessments with disability sector which proved to be more successful as they had computer literacy as compared to older people who lacked competency in using it.

AK

- Changes are continuing to occur in SA at Domiciliary Equipment Service (DES), with DES gradually withdrawing from providing home modifications by the end of June to NDIS and external customers. SA Government will continue to provide equipment and home modifications for people who are not eligible for the NDIS, and those eligible for the DHS Equipment Program. Home modifications will be provided by outsourcing project management and builders.
- Over the past few months, only a few clients deferred their home mods during covid19, but as for the rest, assessments were still being undertaken and home modifications installed complying with PPE protocols.

DS

- DuringDuring covid19, the industry has been impacted by loss of freight space and limited shipping that in turn has increased the freight cost and effecting supply timelines. In addition the decline of the Australian dollar has greatly increased the cost to bring in product. However, the overall demand has picked up quickly across the country since the beginning of the pandemic for the supply of AT. The industry is working on the issues to ensure supply is maintained.
- Localise tourism being the only likely option for holidays in the short term, provides an opportunity for more locations for disability travel.

DC

- Covid19 had impacted three areas – accommodation, warehouse and personal care, for which it was difficult to offer services via telehealth, remote or online.
- There were 7 OTs and 7 RNs doing consultancy and it was challenging to conduct it via telehealth.
- In terms of healthcare distribution through Bright Sky requested for increased volume of essentials that had to be rationed e.g. hand sanitisers.
- Paraquad recently been certified as SDA provider and impacted how Ferguson Lodge is being operated in which the villas can qualify as SDA.

Close

Professor Catherine Bridge closed the meeting at 4.30pm.

Next Advisory Committee Meeting 17 September 2020