

Retrofitting, a response to lack of diversity: an analysis of community provider data

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The practice of retro-fitting existing homes is increasing. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Australians spent \$14,321 million on renovating residential dwellings in the year to June 2001. The Home and Community Care Program (HACC) is a collaborative program between the Commonwealth and State Governments that funds housing assistance to make homes suitable for frail older people and people with disabilities. To date limited analysis has been undertaken on HACC client housing assistance data. Thus, there is inadequate knowledge on the prevalence of housing assistance types (modification versus maintenance) in Australian states and the reasons for differences.

This paper outlines preliminary findings of secondary analysis of HACC client data for the 2001/02 reporting period, and selected comparisons with ABS data. Crosstabulations that included home modification, home maintenance, client age and client area of residence were conducted. This study funded by the New South Wales Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, indicated that 3% of all HACC clients incurred a home modification cost, and the costs incurred per individual were typically less than \$5,000. New South Wales had the most number of home modifications (56%, n= 10974), while Victoria had the fewest (0%, n=18) home modifications, despite having the second highest number of residents with a disability in Australia. This highlights regional differences in policy and funding structures that influence HACC housing assistance availability to consumers. Interestingly, Victoria had the largest number of home maintenance service instances (36%).

The presentation will highlight the major differences in home modification and maintenance trends between Australian states, and explore possible explanations for variations. It will also provide feedback from selected New South Wales state departments concerning the relevance of these findings to historical, current and planned policy implementation.

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