

Who Can Use Home & Community Care (HACC) Services?

HACC is an ELIGIBILITY-based program, not entitlement; HACC eligibility does not guarantee provision of service

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA is not just frail aged & younger disabled; clients must meet all of the following:

- be living in the community
- capacity for independent living is at risk or at risk of premature or inappropriate admission to long term residential care
- need basic maintenance & support services provided or to be provided within the scope of the HACC Program
- have moderate, severe or profound (functional) disabilities which make it difficult to perform the tasks of daily living without help or supervision (ie. dressing, preparing meals, house cleaning & maintenance, using public transport)

Note: eligibility includes people who might not have access to long term residential care for cultural or geographical reasons (eg. some Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people in isolated communities); there are specific services for which unpaid carers of all of the above groups may be eligible.

Individuals do not qualify for HACC services solely on the grounds of advanced age. Eligibility for services is based on the level of functional disability.

Those **INELIGIBLE** are:

- persons already receiving a similar service from other government funded programs*
- residents of aged care homes, hostels & other forms of assisted/supported living
- persons eligible for specific purpose programs which may be more appropriate than the more generic services offered by HACC
- residents of retirement villages or special accommodation where his/her contract includes HACC-like services
- persons with only a mild or short-term disability

While HACC funds cannot be used for this purpose, like services can be purchased from HACC-funded agencies for people living in these settings under the following conditions:

- purchased services are provided on a full cost recovery basis
- services are provided only where the HACC funded provider has the capacity to take on additional people without adversely affecting people in the HACC target group
- fees are paid by the provider where the service is something they receive funding for
- fees are paid by the client where the service is not part of the package of care being provided

HACC provides **basic maintenance & support services** to eligible clients only. Also outside the scope of the HACC Program are:

- accommodation (including re-housing & supported accommodation)
- health aids or appliances (wheelchairs, crutches etc except where items are required for the operation of an eligible HACC service & would remain the property of the service)
- direct treatment for acute illness (including convalescent or post acute care)
- rehabilitative services directed solely towards increasing a person's level of independent functioning (this does not mean independence models of care)
- services for a specific disability (ie. general needs only, except people with dementia)
- services primarily for families in crisis
- specialist palliative care services for a person in terminal stages of illness

How Are Home & Community Care (HACC) Services Provided?

If assessed as HACC-eligible, an individual can request service, which is provided if possible.

HACC services can be offered to people in:

- their own homes
- retirement villages, independent living units, caravan parks, self care units, boarding houses, group/community housing in the community or in an aged care complex
- unstable housing circumstances (such as transient or homeless people)

Where demand for a service exceeds the supply, it is the responsibility of the service provider to allocate resources in a way that provides the most benefit to the greatest number of people.

Decisions should be based on the **assessment of each individual's situation** & consider factors such as:

- the level of service to be provided given that HACC funds the provision of basic maintenance & support
- the vulnerability of the individual to further deterioration
- the effect of service delivery on the unpaid carer
- the likely effect of the service provided in assisting individuals to attain their goals (eg. reduced risk of admission to residential care or maintaining quality of life in the community)
- the effect on other existing & prospective consumers of providing services for this individual
- safety for consumers & staff

Note: Where a potential client is refused a service, the reasons for refusing should be documented & should consistently comply with agency guidelines. Agencies which refuse services to potential clients due to resource constraints should demonstrate that waiting lists, if kept, are reviewed in order to re-prioritise client access to services as necessary.

Overall, the Program targets its services according to **relative need, cost effectiveness & with regard to the individual's assessed needs**. The strategies used by HACC service providers in allocating their services aim to:

- reduce use of residential & acute care
- reduce risk of premature or inappropriate admission to residential & acute care
- assist clients with high & complex care needs to remain in the community
- improve functioning & support independence of clients in the community
- support unpaid carers
- enhance clients quality of life
- reduce unmet need

Special needs groups may experience particular difficulties in gaining access to HACC services. These groups are:

- People from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders;
- People with dementia, memory loss & other related conditions;
- Financially disadvantaged people
- People living in remote or isolated areas

Strategies to improve access for special needs groups, including more responsive service design & well targeted information dissemination should be based on three key access principles:

- **Culture & language:** HACC services should be culturally & linguistically appropriate;
- **Physical access:** All HACC facilities (such as day care centres & transport vehicles owned by HACC services with a capacity of greater than eight people) should be accessible to people with physical or sensory disabilities
- **Without discrimination:** Eligible people assessed as needing a service should have access to HACC services without discrimination on the grounds of ability to pay, location, gender, ethnicity, language, Aboriginality, marital status, religion, sexual preference or type of disability