

# Rolling across Australia

Lloyd Walker

*Tech4Life & University of Sunshine Coast*



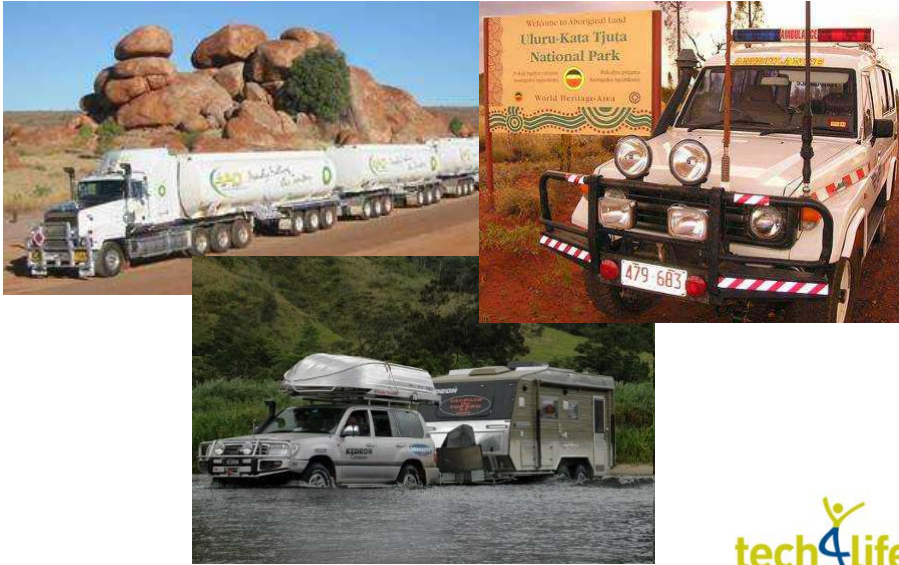
## WM&S in Australia

---

- Over 500 000 people use wheeled mobility
- Second most common 'aid or equipment'
- Majority of services in capital cities



## Rolling rural and outback!



## But if you have mobility disability...



## But you probably won't get...



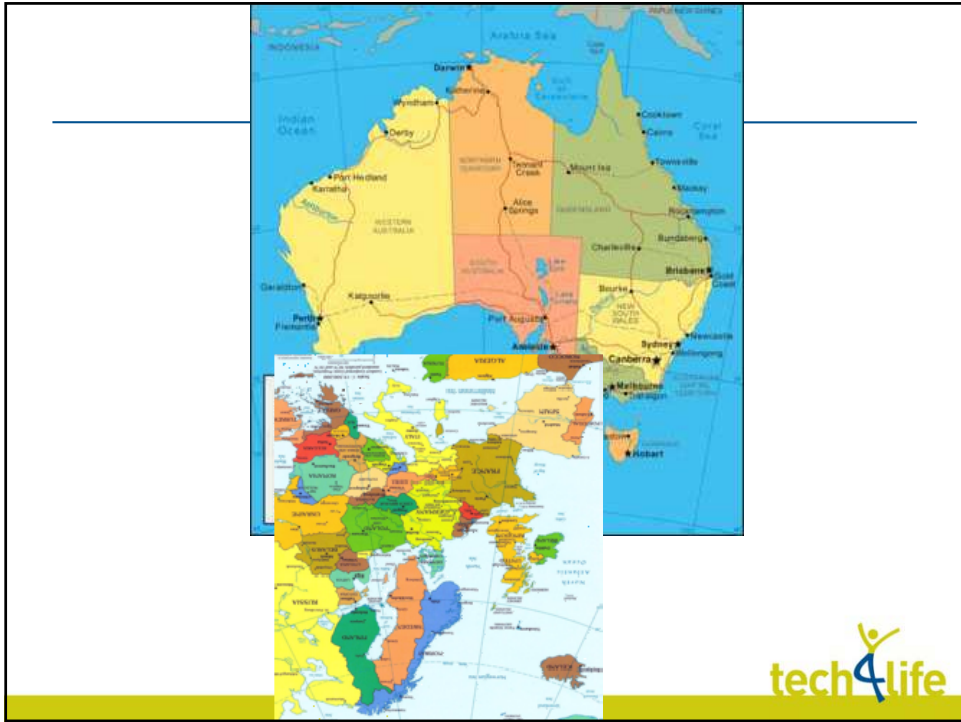
tech4life

## National Disability Strategy says...

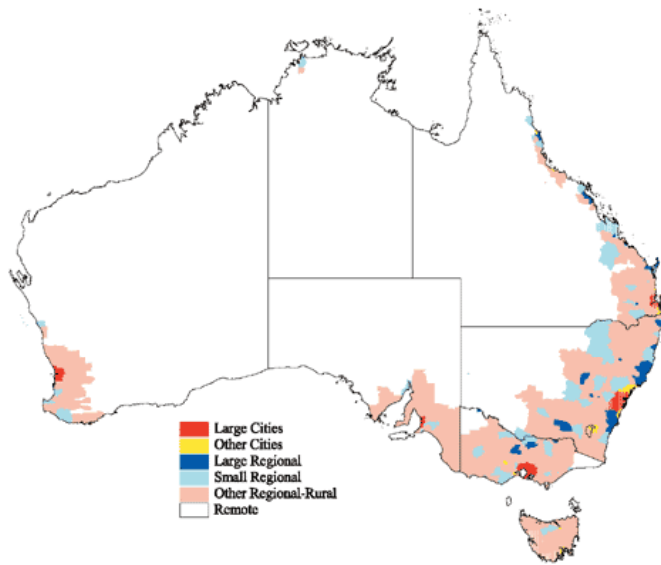


- 1 Inclusive and accessible communities:
  - ▣ the physical environment including public transport; parks, buildings and housing;
  - ▣ digital information and communications technologies;
  - ▣ civic life including social, sporting, recreational and cultural life.

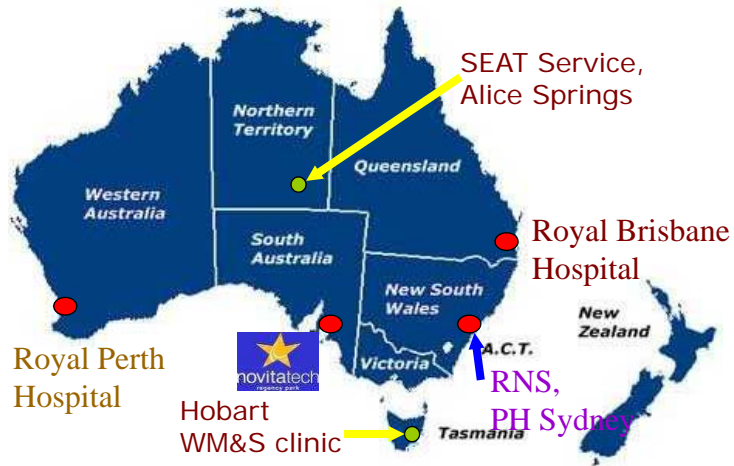
tech4life



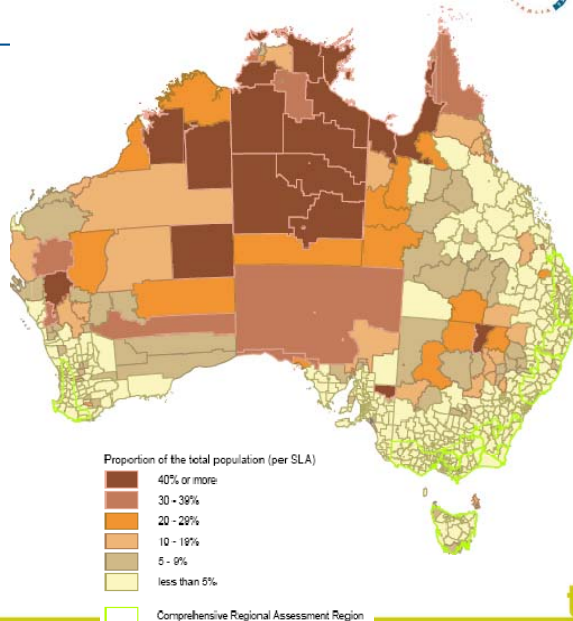
## Australia – Land of Contrasts



# Australia's RECs



Map 2C: Australia's indigenous population, 1996



## Wheelchair Funding Schemes

---

- ❑ Funding is fragmented, predominantly “home environment” and not linked to other disability funding/costs (eg care).
- ❑ Largest schemes are state/territory based.
- ❑ Progressively restricting to a ‘procurement list.’
- ❑ Repairs funded, but not routine maintenance.
- ❑ No scheme funds “backup” equipment (except basic manual backup for power wheelchair users).
- ❑ Most schemes operate a ‘reuse’ program.

***But this is true for all Australians...***



## WM&S Rural and Remote Survey April/May 2010

---

- ❑ Statistical information on demand
- ❑ Models used
- ❑ Waiting times
- ❑ Initiatives
- ❑ Top 2 issues



WM&S R&R Survey May 2010

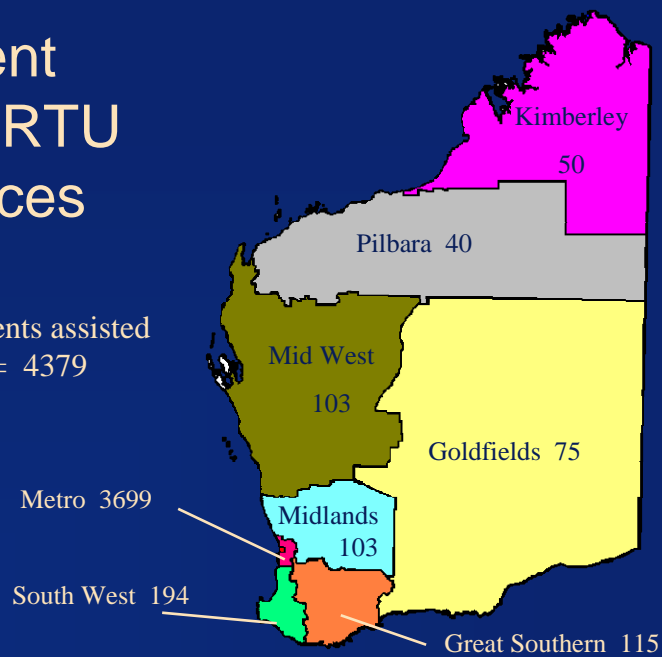
## Statistics

- Virtually no reliable statistics for rural & remote WM&S demand
  - Assessed by cases seen
  - % indigenous range from 3 - 80+%



## Current RPH RTU Services

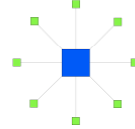
Total Clients assisted in 2009 = 4379



## Delivery model

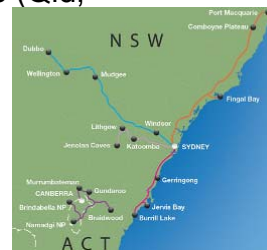
- Where a public funded, state service exists tends to operate

- Hub-spoke (SA, WA)



- Central service with travelling clinics (Qld, NSW, Tas, NT)

- Triage of clients typical – but not in a structured way
- Funding from various sources



## Getting the service

Waiting times for the chair user to get:

- Assessed (1mth – 1yr)
- Begin trialling solution (2wk-12mths) – *if trial stock is available in region*
- Get approval to buy device (instant if a state clinic, otherwise 6-12 mths)
- Then get their wheelchair (1wk-6 mths)



WM&S R&R Survey May 2010

## A complete service?

---

Follow-up is not guaranteed

- 3 centres have 2wk check, 6-12mth followup
- rest focus on 'at risk' clients only

Repair & maintenance

- included in 'leased' arrangement (eg Qld)
- many agencies use local providers/trades (make do)
- user involvement – highly variable (Pythonesque)



WM&S R&R Survey May 2010

## Initiatives

---

Several centres have trialled telehealth

- mostly reserved for rural/remote staff training & support
- many link to (& train/support) other health/community networks

Three hospital based services can offer patient travel & accommodation funds



## Information is power!

---

UNCRPD Article 4 Clause 1h

- To provide accessible information to persons with disabilities about mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, including new technologies, as well as other forms of assistance, support services and facilities

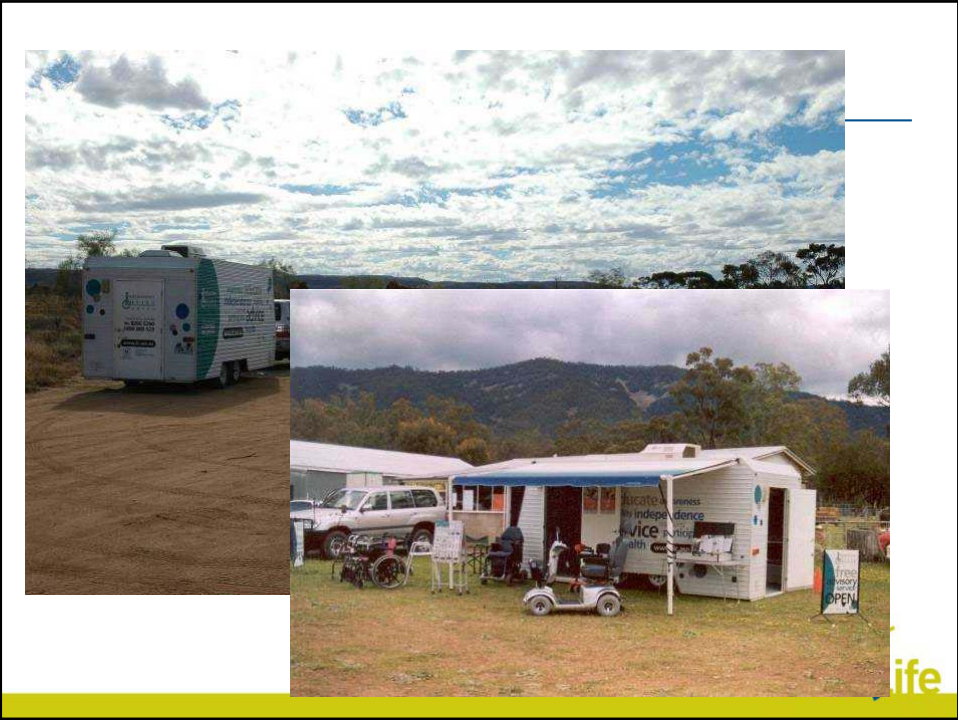


## Other initiatives

---

- Travelling Independent Living Centre services

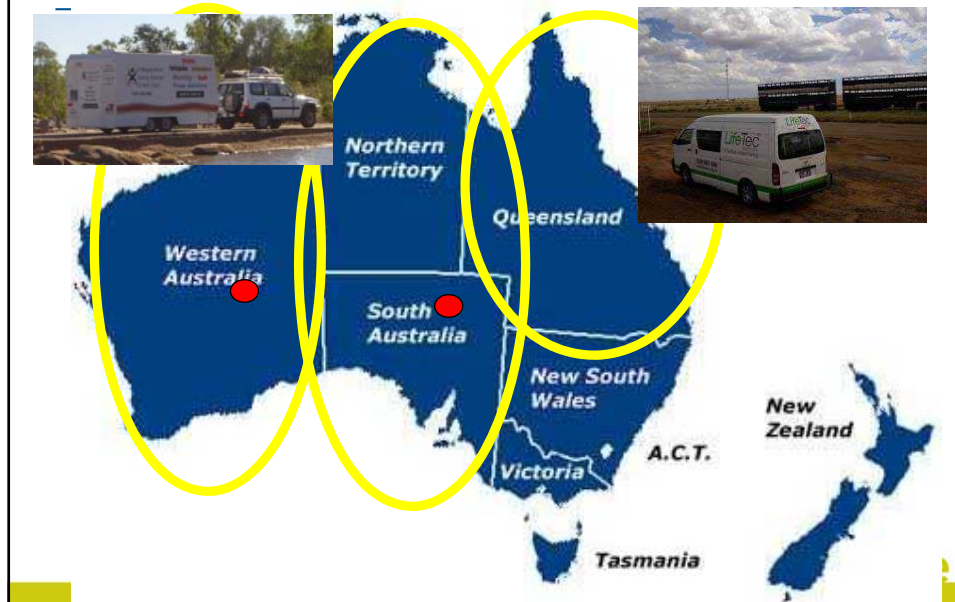




## ILC in Coober Pedy



## Mobile ILCs

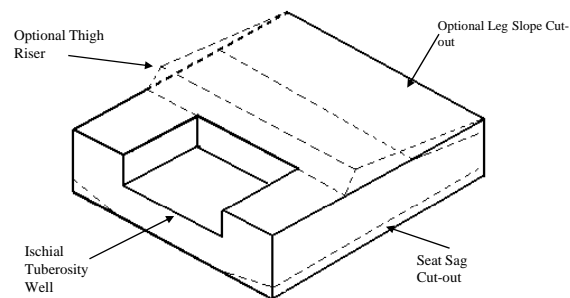


## Other initiatives

- Travelling Independent Living Centre services
- Pressure care & management – RPH
  - UNCRPD Article 20 – access to personal mobility with the greatest independence at an affordable cost, empowering and developing user and professional skills and autonomy.

## RPH – WA pressure care program

- Developed a consistent and reliable cushion



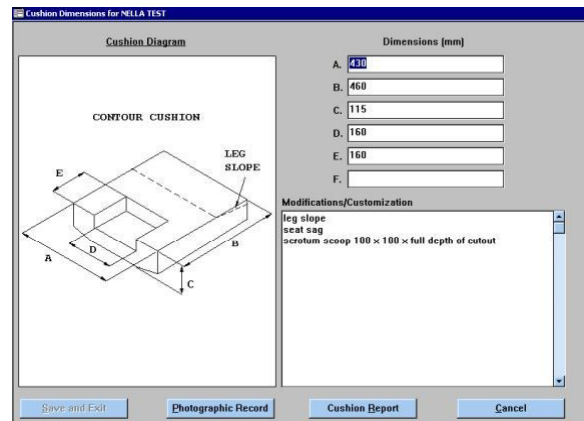
## RPH – WA pressure care program

- Developed a consistent and reliable cushion, out of well tested materials



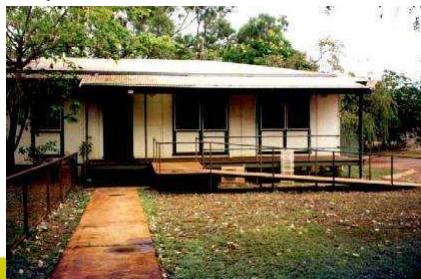
## RPH – WA pressure care program

- Developed a consistent cushion prescription/delivery service



## RPH – WA pressure care program

- Developed a consistent cushion and prescription/delivery service
- Pressure care nurse coordinator
- Regular follow up (6 monthly)
- Can supply custom-made replacement cushions (by courier) after tele-health interaction



## Other initiatives

---

- Travelling Independent Living Centre services
- Pressure care & management – RPH
- More appropriate wheelchairs and potential service approaches
  - Lifetec (Qld)/MASS Qld
  - NT Health, SA DFC
  - Motivation Australia



## Tropical settings...

---



& Motivation Worldmade trials in NT/SA



## Keys to improvement

---

- ❑ Maintain/enhance allied health staff (with training/support) in rural/remote communities
- ❑ Strengthen user capacity in own care
- ❑ Satellite clinics in major regional hub (Qld, NSW, WA, Tas)
- ❑ Coordination (esp. Vic)
- ❑ Availability of appropriate equipment locally for clients to trial



## Conclusions

---

- ❑ WM&S delivery into rural and regional areas remains patchy
- ❑ Relies on local skills and networks
- ❑ Flexibility in service (eg climate) and appropriate technology critical (empower!)





# Thanks

- Australian WM&S centre colleagues
- ILC Australia members
- MADO
- ANZSCoS

Contact: [lloyd@tech4life.com.au](mailto:lloyd@tech4life.com.au)

[www.tech4life.com.au](http://www.tech4life.com.au)

Tel (07) 5439 7085

